

LABOR DAY FOR WORKERS

Labor Sabbath 2018

The Labor Day weekend is an excellent time for faith communities to explore the many ways our faith traditions call us to work for fairness and justice for working people. This Labor Day weekend, we hope you will join faith communities across the state and nation in lifting up working people. Enclosed is a toolkit with information about how to engage with Labor Sabbath in one or more of the following ways:

- **Talk about an issue impacting workers during the worship service** through a sermon, a mission moment/announcement/guest speaker, prayer or other aspect of the service. We can provide you with resources from your faith tradition. This year we hope you will consider focusing on wages. Included in this toolkit are resource links.
- **Do an activity during your congregation's gathering time.** We have included our Love Letters to Workers template as a way for congregants to personally thank a local person working for a low wage which can be used as an activity with youth groups, Sunday school, committees or the congregation as a whole. We would also be happy to talk to you about doing a workshop during your educational time. Finally, we invite you to include Scripture passages related to the sacredness of work in any of the congregation's Scriptural study.
- **Provide Information about an issue impacting working people.** We have included a sample bulletin insert or table piece as people are coming into worship and a messaging document for you to use in your newsletter or on social media.
- **Engage with the local coalition of Raising Wages NC beyond Labor Day weekend.** We have listed a number of ways for your congregation or justice committee to get involved in efforts to raise wages and other issues impacting working people.

Please let us know how your congregation would like to participate in Labor Sabbath and what support we can assist you with by ***filling out the attached participation form.***

RESOURCES FOR WORSHIP SERVICES



Worship Planning Helps and Other Resources:

AFLCIO of NC

Labor Sabbath focusing on unions from a faith perspective:

What is Labor Sabbath? Labor Day weekend is a good time for people to talk about labor unions. We ask people who meet together to worship God on Labor Day weekend to say the words “labor union” in a prayer, a song, a talk, a lesson, a homily, or a sermon. Learn more about the people working together in unions for a better life in North Carolina by calling 919-833-6678 or connecting with the NC State AFL-CIO online: facebook.com/laborsabbath, @laborsabbath, www.AFLCIONC.org

Labor in the Pulpit, Bimah, Minbar, as well as other faith traditions

Interfaith Worker Justice's website:

<http://www.iwj.org/resources/labor-day-weekend-resources>

Living Wages celebrated in worship:

NC Council of Churches

<https://www.ncchurches.org/lectionary-archive/year-c/living-wages-proper-21/>

contains liturgy/prayers, hymn suggestions, Scripture readings and sermon helps

Organizations with Fact Sheets and Other Timely Information on Raising Wages:

Raising Wages NC Campaign

www.raisingwagesnc.org

United for a Fair Economy

www.faireconomy.org/

Just Economics of WNC

www.justeconomicswnc.org

We are happy to help point you to additional resources specific to your faith tradition.

Please contact amy@justeconomicswnc.org or vicki@justeconomicswnc.org or call Amy or Vicki at 828-505-7466 for support.

ACTIVITIES FOR WORSHIP SERVICE



This Labor Day Week, we are sending **LOVE LETTERS** to working people!

Across the country, working people are doing difficult work-work that makes our cities and towns flourish and yet often their work goes un-noticed and underappreciated. Often people who work are struggling to feed their families, put a roof over their heads, and are making hard choices between which necessities they can afford and which they will have to skip on. Many of these neighbors are also taking personal risks to raise wages and improve working conditions in low-wage sectors.

This Labor Day, we want send working people messages, love letters. These messages are words of recognition ("we see you") and words of hope ("we stand in solidarity and are working on better wages and union protections with you.") Join us in sending these Love Letters during the week of Labor Day!

The Love Letter Template can be used in a variety of ways in your faith community!

- 1) Children's Education Hour, Children's Service or other Kid's groups: children can color the heart on template. Older children may add simple messages like "Thank you!"
- 2) Adult Education or community groups: Write a message inside the heart and also learn more about justice issues for working people and the work of Raising Wages NC Campaign.
- 3) Tabling around your congregation's services: Love Letters can be an activity at the table. Folks can write short messages on the cards for workers and find out more about actions they can take that will bring about justice for working people.

Distribute or Return Love Letters

- Assign people in your congregation to deliver batches of love letters to low wage work places as an education class, mission team, youth group project.
- Congregation members can make and take out the love letters to working people individually as you go about your routine during Labor Day week (convenience store/gas station clerks, grocery/drug store/variety store clerks, restaurants, etc.)
- You can also mail or deliver to Just Economics, 50 South French Broad Ave., Suite 207, Asheville, NC 28801 as we will be distributing them as a part of an event on the Thursday after Labor Day.

INFORMATION TO SHARE:

See attached Bulletin Insert

For Verbal or Bulletin Announcement:

Today, we will honor workers in our worship service and we invite you to participate in learning more about the work to raise the minimum wage in North Carolina. We know as people of faith that it is important to pray for and work alongside our neighbors working for low wages to create an economy that works for all!

For more information [*fill in the blank with any that apply to your community*], read the bulletin insert, visit the table before/after worship, or participate in X event (announce special Bible Study, education class, youth group activity here with time, date, and other details).

For Social Media Posts:

Message 1: This weekend, we honor the sacredness of work in our worship and we support low wage workers in working to raise the minimum wage in NC.

Message 2: Did you know the last time the minimum wage was raised was 2009? It's no wonder people say: "We can't survive on \$7.25!" A worker who has a child working for minimum wage (\$7.25 hour) will be \$1,000 below the poverty line set by the Federal government. Those with incomes below this line do not earn enough to meet their basic necessities. Our congregation is joining Raising Wages NC this Labor Day weekend to honor workers and to raise the wage in NC! Sign the petition to the NC legislature at www.raisingwagesnc.org/take-action

For Newsletter or E-news Article:

Bree is a single mom juggling two part time jobs to make ends meet. She often has to choose between healthy food, paying the rent, taking her child to get a haircut, and transportation. If you work 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year at \$7.25 an hour, you only make \$15,080 a year. That is \$1,000 less than the poverty line (the level at which you are living in poverty set by the Federal government meaning you do not earn enough money to meet your basic expenses). Bree works as a childcare assistant and as a dish washer. She is like many in our City who work hard every day and help the community function, but who are struggling to survive. Low wage workers are rendered invisible though their labor is essential to our community. Did you know the last time the minimum wage was increased in the US was in 2009? Did you know that due to inflation, the real value of the current minimum wage is actually lower than in 1968! The \$1.60/hour minimum wage of 1968 would've amounted to at least \$11.60 an hour in 2016, adjusted for inflation.

We believe that all people were created in the image of God. We believe that work is sacred. We believe that workers should both be honored on Labor Day and should be able to make enough to put food on their table and a roof over their heads. Join us this [insert the day of your worship gathering], to pray for workers, to talk about the sacredness of work, and to commit ourselves to join low wage workers by taking action to raise the minimum wage in the state of NC in partnership with the Raising Wages Coalition. For more information, come to our worship and educational events on Labor Day weekend or visit www.raisingwagesnc.org!

***Indicate on your Commitment Form if you need logos or pictures to use on your social media platforms.

BEYOND LABOR DAY:



Beyond Labor Day Weekend, your congregation can continue to lift up the sacredness of work and honor working people throughout the year.

The Western Region Coalition of Raising Wages NC has a number of ways for congregations and/or interested persons to engage with the campaign to raise wages in North Carolina. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Host a **Workshop** led by Raising Wages NC local coalition members- The local coalition has created a workshop that includes short videos and interactive activities. The workshop can range from less than an hour to more than two hours to accommodate your timeframe and can be conducted with small groups or your mission/social justice committee (less than 15) or large groups.
2. Host the **Display** created by Duke University that illustrates the impacts of low-wages on North Carolinians- The display includes 4 stand-alone panels (approximately 2 foot by 6 foot) and some i-Pad stands with headphones for displaying short videos from the display (the display can be used with or without the i-Pad videos). The display can be put up in the lobby or display area at your place of worship.
3. Host a **Poverty Simulation**- The Western North Carolina Poverty Simulation facilitated by Just Economics is a 2 hour experiential exercise designed for 20-45 people aimed at giving people a deeper understanding of the challenges of living on a low-income. The poverty simulation is an effective tool for groups of individuals who want to go deeper in their understanding of poverty. There is a \$250 fee to bring the poverty simulation to your congregation.
4. Invite Congregants to participate in **Labor Day Week Activities** including the Rally and Celebratory Walk to distribute Love Letters to Workers on Thursday, September 6th.
5. Continue to **Explore Issues** impacting workers through Scriptural study groups, book clubs, peace and justice committee work, adult education programs or other outlets for learning. The regional coalition is happy to work with your congregation on this exploration or provide additional resources.
6. Join the **Regional Coalition of Raising Wages NC**. Your congregation is welcome to join the regional coalition that meets monthly to develop strategy for outreach around the campaign to raise wages.

Just Economics is the convener of the Western North Carolina Coalition or Raising Wages NC. To learn more or schedule any of the above activities, Please contact Amy Cantrell or Vicki Meath at 828-505-7466 or amy@justeconomicswnc.org or vicki@justeconomicswnc.org