



LABOR SABBATH TOOLKIT

Through Labor Sabbath, congregations have the opportunity to talk about faith, work, and justice. This toolkit offers some introductory resources to help celebrate Labor Day in your community. Across the state this year, we are focused on honoring labor and supporting the need for education to raise the minimum wage in NC. This toolkit provides helpful information for honoring the sacredness of work in your faith community this year. Feel free to email us at info@raisingwagesnc.org with questions and for more information.

GETTING STARTED

There are different ways to plan a Labor Day service that lifts up workers within your community and around the country. The suggestions below can help you get started. Many of these can be incorporated into groups and programs that already exist in your congregation as well.

- Read through the toolkit (kit includes: the Getting Started page, Bulletin Insert, Sunday School/Education class/Tabling activity--Love Letters to Workers explanation, Love Letter template, and check out our Resources page which includes helpful links to in-depth resources for different faith traditions.)
- Register as a participating faith community (Register here: <http://bit.ly/NCLaborSabbath>)
- Invite a speaker (worker, union leader, worker advocate) or host a worker justice table. Recruit someone from your community to speak on Labor Day weekend. If no one is available, Raising Wages NC can connect you to a worker in your area who will speak. Speakers could do a short 3-5 minutes as a “mission moment,” or announcement, during the service, and/or could table before or after service.
- Focus on education. Labor Day weekend offers congregations the opportunity to highlight issues that impact workers within the community. This year, our focus is honoring labor, raising the minimum wage, and introducing this new state-wide campaign to faith communities. Additional resources are also available at www.raisingwagesnc.org.
- Get the word out. Promote your Labor Day service in your congregation’s bulletin and/or newsletter.
- Develop a worship planning committee. A worship committee can explore creative ways to integrate worker justice themes into the service either by using resources included in this toolkit or creating their own to include workers in songs, prayers, message, children’s activities, education hour, and tabling.
- Lead a study on worker justice from your sacred book/scriptures. Throughout the month of September, have someone (maybe you!) teach a Bible study or lead a prayer group focusing on labor and faith.
- Honor an outstanding member (or members) or your congregation. Feature the good work of members of your community in your city and in the work of justice.



RESOURCES

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](https://www.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:

Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

<http://rac.org/living-wage-and-minimum-wage-new-page>

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



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 unnoticed and underappreciated. Often people who work are struggling to feed their families, put a roof over their heads and are making hard choices between necessities they can afford and those which they can't. Many of these neighbors are also taking personal risks to raise wages and improve working conditions in fast food restaurants, hotels, grocery stores, and many other low-wage sectors.

This Labor Day, we want to send working people messages as 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 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 and we will distribute them as a part of our activities around Labor Day.



Join the work for economic justice by getting engaged in the Raising Wages NC campaign. We are working to raise the minimum wage in the state of North Carolina to \$15

over 5 years! We know when we raise the wage floor, we are creating a better economic community for everyone!

Learn more at www.RaisingWagesNC.org

Raising the Minimum Wage: an issue of Faith



Raising wages to \$15 over 5 years!

Learn more at www.RaisingWagesNC.org.

“There is nothing but a lack of social vision to prevent us from paying an adequate wage to every American whether he [or she] is a hospital worker, laundry worker, maid, or day laborer.”

– Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

What We Know

- The minimum wage in North Carolina is \$7.25 an hour (or \$15,080 a year), the same as the federal minimum wage.
- That’s \$1,000 less than the federal poverty level for a family of one adult and one child.
- It’s \$20,000 less than what it would take to truly make ends meet, according to the NC Justice Center’s Living Income Standard for a family of one adult one child.
 - Due to inflation, the real value of the current minimum wage is actually lower than in 1968.
 - The \$1.60/hr minimum wage of 1968 would’ve amounted to at least \$11.60 an hour in 2016, adjusted for inflation.

The Need is Clear:

- An estimated 1.3 million people would benefit from raising the minimum wage to \$12 an hour—that’s a third of our state’s total workforce.
 - The ripple effect of raising the wage floor gives a boost to the hundreds of thousands of working people making just above the minimum wage.
 - Because most people working for low wages are women, increasing the minimum wage would also help close the gender wage gap.

What You Can Do

1. Pray for all working people and especially people earning wages inadequate to sustain their families
2. Sign the petition to the NC legislature at www.raisingwagesnc.org/take-action
3. Make a consumer pledge to support employers paying living wages
4. Like us on Facebook
5. Educate yourself on the issue at www.RaisingWagesNC.org
6. Join a Regional Raising Wages Coalition

Prayer for a Living Wage

Living God, we acknowledge that we have not fully accepted the challenge of seeking Your justice in the world. We define justice in ways that preserve our own self-interest, forgetting that Your justice requires that we focus on the needs of others.

We pray for working people whose wages are so low that they face terrible choices between paying the rent and feeding their families. God of compassion, hear our prayer.

We pray that the courageous cries of working people for justice will be heard by their employers, by the community, and by our government. God of compassion, hear our prayer.

We pray for employers in our city, that they will accept their responsibility to pay their workers enough to live. God of compassion, hear our prayer.

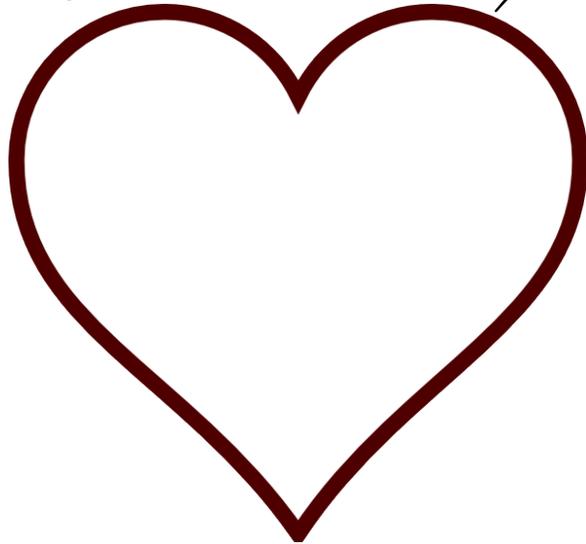
We pray for companies that abuse the dignity of their workers and refuse to see their employees as brothers and sisters. God of compassion, hear our prayer.

We pray for all the people of our community, that we will hold our government and businesses accountable for the ways they treat their working people. God of compassion, hear our prayer.

Hear now O God the prayers that we lift aloud or in silence to you.

By Rev. Rebekah Jordan, Mid-South Interfaith Network for Economic Justice

dear worker,



This **Labor Day Week**, we are sending

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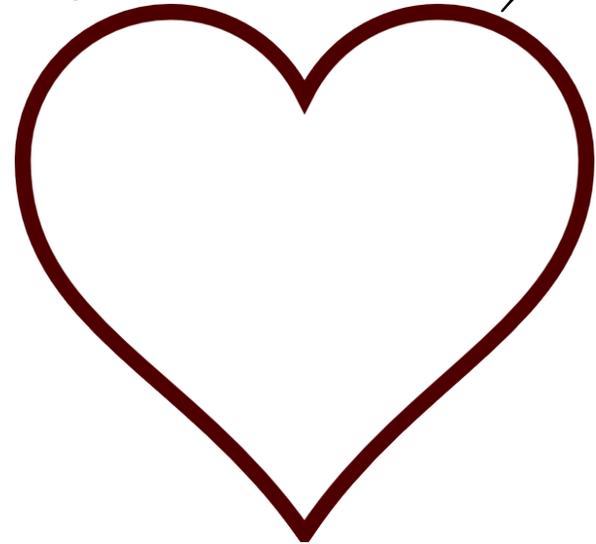
We want you to know we see you and are thankful for all that you do!
So much of the important work our neighbors do every day goes under appreciated. This Labor Day, we want you to feel our gratitude. And throughout the year, we will **honor you** by working to raise wages in our state. We hope you will join us!



Raising wages to \$15 over 5 years!

Learn more at www.RaisingWagesNC.org

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