



CIW LABOR DAY WORSHIP RESOURCES

Though it has become synonymous with cook-outs and the end of summer, Labor Day's meaning is rooted in the value and importance of workers and their labor. For allies of faith in the Fair Food Nation, Labor Day (Sep. 2-4) represents an opportunity to amplify the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' longstanding struggle for justice in the fields. With the [CIW's second-ever corporate boycott](#) in full swing, Labor Day also provides a platform to take meaningful action in response to Wendy's unconscionable refusal to commit to the Fair Food Program, the groundbreaking worker-driven human rights initiative that's bringing an end to the exploitation and poverty that were for decades the hallmark of agricultural labor in this country.

Wendy's participation in the Fair Food Program is necessary in order to shrink the market for growers that continue to abuse workers with impunity, and make human rights and Worker-driven Social Responsibility an industry standard – therein lies the urgency of our call. As people of diverse faith traditions, and as people of conscience, we stand behind farmworkers' unrelenting and righteous pursuit of justice.

During Labor Day weekend this year, the CIW invites allies of faith to [incorporate the fight for Fair Food and the Wendy's Boycott into the weekend's religious services – through sermon, ritual, prayer, or another avenue – and then take action with a community photo petition](#) to show Wendy's that the longer they stall, the longer they delay – and thereby deny – justice, the louder and more insistent our call will be.

The following guide includes resources such as service elements, sermon points, and links to supplemental texts, readings, and reflections that may be of use in your sacred gatherings. These resources are far from exhaustive, so we look forward to continue expanding them in the years to come.

This Alliance for Fair Food guide is complemented by Interfaith Worker Justice's excellent "Labor in the Pulpits/Bimah/Minbar" resources specific to various religious traditions, which can be found online [on IWJ's website](#).

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READING WITH BACKGROUND ON THE CIW

Labor Day is a time for us to celebrate the contributions of workers to our country and the continuing struggle for fairness and justice by and for them. The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) is a farmworker-based human rights organization internationally recognized for its achievements in the fields of social responsibility, human trafficking, and gender-based violence at work. Built on a foundation of farmworker community organizing in Immokalee – an agricultural town at the heart of Florida's tomato industry – starting in 1993, and reinforced with the creation of a national consumer network since 2000, the CIW's work has steadily grown over more than twenty years.

Most recently, as allies to the CIW, people of faith and consumers of conscience are invited to boycott Wendy's.

Wendy's stands alone as the last of the five major fast food corporations in the country to refuse to sign on to the Presidential Medal-winning Fair Food Program, an historic collaboration between farmworkers, growers, and 14 major corporate retailers that is preventing abuses in the fields and changing the lives of tens of thousands of farmworkers across the East Coast for the better.

Through the Fair Food Program, participating retailers pay a penny more per pound for the tomatoes they buy in order to raise farmworker wages. Retailers also commit to purchasing exclusively from growers that abide by the farmworker-designed human rights Code of Conduct. Since its inception in 2011, the Fair Food Program has distributed over \$25 million to farmworkers in Fair Food premiums, representing workers' first real wage increase in thirty years, and conducted worker-to-worker educations in tomato farms across Florida and six additional states along the East Coast. Called the "best workplace monitoring program" in the U.S. on the front page of the New York Times, the Fair Food Program has ushered in a transformation of human rights in the fields. It is ensuring never-before-seen rights, from access to shade and water to freedom from sexual harassment and modern-day slavery. Said one worker recently, "Our dignity has been restored."

Thanks to the Fair Food Program and the CIW's relentless organizing with the solidarity of consumers, Immokalee has evolved from being one of the poorest, most politically powerless communities in the country to become today an important presence with forceful, committed leadership of young, migrant workers forging a future of livable wages and modern labor relations in Florida's fields.

In March of 2016, the CIW launched its second-ever corporate boycott after Wendy's actively shifted its tomato purchases away from Florida to Mexico, following the implementation of the Fair Food Program.

Rather than support growers and longtime suppliers setting new standards for human rights in the agricultural industry, Wendy's took its tomato purchases to an industry where wage theft, sexual violence, child labor, modern-day slavery, and other human rights abuses are endemic and go unchecked. An exposé in *Harper's Magazine* last year revealed that one of Wendy's principal Mexican suppliers is a massive farm (Bioparques de Occidente) tarnished by a 2013 slavery prosecution, which followed the rescue of nearly 300 workers held in brutal forced labor conditions. Wendy's defends their purchasing shift and their ongoing rejection of the Fair Food Program, stating "We are quite happy with the quality and taste of the tomatoes we are sourcing from Mexico."

Wendy's approach to abuses in its supply chain is the company's Code of Conduct for suppliers. Developed without the input of workers and without any enforcement mechanisms to ensure that farmworker rights are actually respected, Wendy's code is no match for the Fair Food Program's gold standard of human rights protections. While Wendy's code merely 'expects' suppliers to comply with applicable laws and communicates no commitment to discontinuing purchases from suppliers that don't comply, the Fair Food Program thrives and succeeds on a worker-designed code, comprehensive third-party monitoring, and market consequences – that is, a commitment from 14 buyers to cut purchases from noncompliant growers. These elements constitute the Program that has recently been called "an international benchmark" in the fight against modern-day slavery by the United Nations.

The CIW has already proven that the dream of dignity upheld in the fields is possible. Yet, more corporate retailers must join the Fair Food Program so that other states and crops adopt the same human rights standards. By washing its hands clean of responsibility and turning to Mexico, and by presenting empty alternatives that do little to really protect workers' human rights, Wendy's undermines a vision in which all farmworkers can labor in an environment rooted in justice.

Wendy's participation in the Fair Food Program is critical to strengthening and expanding human rights for farmworkers and eliminating the alternative market their current purchasing practices are creating for less reputable growers.

As consumers and as people of faith allied with the CIW, our role is to stand with farmworkers in their resounding call for justice by holding Wendy's accountable to the workers in its supply chain. The Wendy's Boycott has been endorsed by the National Council of Churches, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Church of Christ, the Unitarian Universalist Association, T'ruah: the Rabbinic Call for Human Rights, and many more.

The sacred invitation is to say 'Yes!' to the boycott. As we celebrate Labor Day, we are called to say yes to solidarity with a group that is a prophetic presence in our world.

For more background, visit the [CIW's website](#), the [Alliance for Fair Food's website](#), and the [Wendy's Boycott website](#).

ELEMENTS OF A SERVICE

The following prayers, activities, and rituals can be incorporated into your congregation's service on Labor Day weekend. They can also serve as inspiration for crafting elements particular and appropriate to your faith tradition.

OPENING WORDS

+ Opening Words for Labor Day
by Megan Dowdell

*Note: The phrase "meeting house" can
be replaced with "sanctuary."*

We enter this meeting house for
kindness and comfort.
May rough-worn hands and aching
backs be healed.
We enter this meeting house of hope for
equality.
May those who labor to survive live to
know justice.
We enter this meeting house of love and
vocation.
May our bonds of solidarity be
strengthened.
We enter this meeting house of courage
and friendship.
May we move hand-in-hand toward
freedom.

CENTERING MOMENT OR PRAYER

+ From the United Methodist tradition

Blessed are you, ever-creating God,
in your image, our lives are made;
in your glory, we offer all the work of our
hearts and hands and minds.

Blessed are you,
O God, now and forever!

Blessed are you whose work is repaid,
for by your work, and by the payment
you receive your lives and the lives of
others around you and around the world
are blessed.

We thank God for you day by day.
Blessed are you whose work is unpaid,
who offer what you can to enrich the
lives of others, through time, talents,
skill, strength, and love.

We praise God for your generous labor!
Blessed are you who seek work but have
not found it, or whose work now is not
yet what it may be yet still you seek, that
your gifts may be shared more fully.

We praise God for your diligent seeking
and pray you may soon find!

Yours is the glory in their labors.
Yours be the glory in all our lives, in
Jesus' name.

Amen

+ From the Unitarian Universalist tradition

Dear God,

Blessed are the change-makers! This day, as we approach Labor Day, we are invited to take specific action – to bear witness to the work of farmworkers who do the sacred work of feeding our nation. We ask for blessings upon them, especially those members of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, who invite us into the vision of a Fair Food Nation and into deeper ways of living into our faithful (alternatively: conscientious) call to do justice. Embolden us as we pledge to accompany and be good allies to the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, for their work has made waves globally in a new model of Worker-driven Social Responsibility. Remind us that every Wendy's boycott pledged, letter delivered, faith witness attended, shows the power of people united in you, O Spirit of Love. It brings us that much closer to making earth a little more like heaven.

(Another option would be to lead a guided meditation that takes people through the abusive reality of farmworkers in fields untouched by Fair Food Program's protections. The meditation would then lead to the hopeful vision of the "New Day" dawning and the call for consumers to commit to action for this New Day.)

CALL AND RESPONSE SONG

+ “Blessed are the change-makers”

by Rev. Allison Farnum

Blessed are the change-makers
for faith in the face of apathy

Blessed are the change-makers
who name oppression and inequality

Blessed are the change-makers
For powerful courage and boldness

Blessed are the change-makers
For nonviolence and compassion

Blessed are the change-makers
knowing risk and sometimes failure

Blessed are the change-makers
For trying again and again in love

Blessed are the change-makers
for they are among you.

Blessed are the change-makers
for you are among them

Blessed are the change-makers
Rejoice and be glad

Blessed are the change-makers...
Blessed are the change-makers...
Blessed are the change-makers...

Amen and Blessed be!

This song works well with percussion. You can invite handclaps, for example, and incorporate a repeated percussive riff on a djembe or other drum to end each line in the final stanza with the (...).

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

This resource is from T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights.

+ Fair Food for Kids

This short curriculum for kids was created by T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights. It features a discussion guide to introduce and explain the Fair Food Program's protections for workers to kids, focusing on farmworkers' new standard of a flat tomato bucket that weights 32 lbs – instead of the overfilled bucket, weighing up to 36 lbs, required by crewleaders in the past. The guide includes visuals and a worker testimony.

The suggested activities can be done with children of various ages (5 and above) using text from the Torah or linking to other traditions through common values around equity and fairness.

SERMON SUGGESTIONS

There are many possibilities for incorporating information about the CIW's history, Fair Food Program model, and the Wendy's Boycott into your Labor Day weekend sermon or homily.

In this section, we have included a set of guiding questions you can use to build your sermon, followed by a d'var Torah on Parshat Re'eh 5776 which can inspire a reflection on this year's Labor Day text and a sermon previously delivered by Lupe Gonzalo, a CIW farmworker leader.

General sermon guidelines

Sermon in a snap! Answer these questions and then quilt them together. You might find some pieces go better before another – play with it. Have a friend look it over for smooth seams.

1) What about your religious tradition informs this engagement – even, perhaps, requires it of you?

2) Why might it matter to those assembled in your faith community? How might it grow their faith and learning? If any key leaders or clergy in your tradition have been involved and written testimony or have videos/readings to send to you, include them.

If any key leaders in your tradition or denomination have endorsed the boycott, be sure to mention it! [Here is an updated list of the denominations, organizations, and individuals that have endorsed the Wendy's Boycott.](#)

3) How can the assembled take action this weekend and beyond? What calls you to involvement and allyship with the CIW? Share your story about how you are connected to the Fair Food movement.

4) Use [**CIW and AFF resources**](#) to educate the gathered about the CIW, the Fair Food Program, and about Wendy's recalcitrance to join a proven solution to farmworker abuse.

+ [**The CIW website**](#) provides the most up-to-date information about the CIW's Fair Food Program and advancements in the Wendy's Boycott campaign.

+ The [Wendy's Boycott website](#) contains educational and action resources to bring the boycott to your community, including printable CIW- and boycott-specific handouts and flyers.

+ The [Fair Food Program's website](#) includes more background on the Program and statistics about the human rights results it has produced to date.

5) Invite the gathered to embody their faith by taking action:

+ Participate in the photo petition campaign this Labor Day weekend (see below)

+ Could you work ahead with an Alliance for Fair Food coordinator to organize a public witness in front of your congregation's nearest Wendy's and invite congregants to join you in the witness? Contact organize@allianceforfairfood.org for more information.

+ Could you present stock letters for individuals from your congregation to sign and deliver to Wendy's managers in the area? (A printable manager letter can be downloaded from the [Wendy's Boycott website](#).)

+ Could you invite the assembled to sign a pledge to boycott Wendy's as they engage in the weekly ritual/liturgy you do during worship (candlelighting, communions, or offering time)?

Share/remind the gathered of the vision and how it would feel/ look/ be to have a real Fair Food Nation -- one that's fair for workers and consumers alike.

D'var Torah for a Jewish setting

"Re'eh: See Immokalee with your own eyes and you'll understand"

A d'var Torah on Parshat Re'eh 5776 by Rabbi Barbara Penzner

See. Re'eh. Much of Sefer Devarim instructs us to listen—Shma. Listening is one important way that people understand and empathize with the stories of others.

When we hear or read these from afar, we feel great empathy and outrage. But in our portion, the mitzvot we are called to fulfill require that we see life's pain with our own eyes as it were—that we witness that pain for ourselves. Just as Moshe had to witness the ever-burning bush for himself and the pain of the Israelites for himself before he could truly hear God's divine call, we, too, are enjoined to open our eyes and apprehend how broken our world truly is.

There is no way that I could fully understand the meaning of slavery in the Florida

tomato fields until I saw the [Modern-Day Slavery Museum](#). The image of people chained inside a semi-trailer, unable to escape their oppressive work and debt, was chilling. Like many [#tomatorabbis](#), I was profoundly moved by the migrant workers I met in Immokalee, Florida: their courage, their fortitude, and their shared commitment to worker justice. I saw and I listened and I began to understand.

And until I visited Immokalee again in May, I could not grasp the **Coalition of Immokalee Workers'** phenomenal achievements through empowering migrant workers to take control of their workplace conditions. The CIW has made leaps and bounds to end slavery in the tomato fields in Florida by involving large corporations like McDonald's and Walmart in making growers accountable for abuses. Even [the White House](#) has recognized the CIW's Fair Food Program for their remarkable success. Having met with workers and seen the changes, I now have a close-up view of how this model can work for workers in every field, every dairy, every industry.

What I've now seen with my own eyes is that the migrant workers of the CIW have built a system of empowerment that transforms the relationship between farmworkers, farm owners, corporate buyers, and consumers. Worker-driven Social Responsibility is at the heart of the CIW's model, training workers to demand and oversee accountability from their corporate partners.

What is **Worker-driven Social Responsibility**? Many corporations use "corporate social responsibility" to promote what they have determined are ethical practices. By bringing workers into the board room to advocate for themselves, the CIW calls corporations to account for their espoused ethical practices. [The New York Times](#) has called the model "the best workplace-monitoring program" in the US.

So we ask, why is Wendy's the only major fast-food chain to refuse to participate in this ethical and successful venture? Why did Wendy's move out of Florida altogether, choosing to buy tomatoes from growers in Mexico who are notorious for human rights violations? And more troubling for the [#tomatorabbis](#), why does Wendy's largest shareholder, Nelson Peltz, a Jewish leader, not care?

When Mr. Peltz reads this week's portion he will learn that the Torah teaches, "there shall be no needy among you" (Deut.15:4). An ethical corporate leader would live up to this aspiration, as stated in [Wendy's statement of social responsibility](#). But the Torah does not leave us with that vision, which is still beyond our reach. The Torah follows with "there will never cease to be needy ones in your land, which is why I command you to open your hand to the poor and needy" (Deut.15:11).

We can't depend on the corporate leaders to live up to their own words. On this Labor Day weekend, we are reminded that we need the workers, and their allies, to enforce them. In truth, until we get to the future time when there are no needy, we all have an obligation to work as hard as we can to see the needy, to listen to them, to understand their needs, and to be accountable to them.

The Torah presents both a dream of our highest virtues and a gritty account of our most shameful sins. When we actually see the brutal realities and acknowledge how

far we are still from our noble dreams, we ought to be enraged. The gap between what is and what we hope for must compel us to act. As this Shabbat is also Rosh Hodesh Elul, we can renew our commitment as the moon renews its light, to bring our world closer to our dreams.

The CIW has met some of its immediate goals. Yet the work continues, building on the aspirational goal of treating all workers with dignity, by including their voices in corporate decision-making. If you haven't seen it with your own eyes, Re'eh—go to Immokalee with the #tomatorabbis and you will begin to understand.

CIW leader's sermon

"Harvesting fruits of dignity and justice"

A sermon delivered by Lupe Gonzalo, a CIW farmworker leader, at an interfaith service for farmworker justice in July 2017 to conclude the [month-long Florida faith leaders fast](#).

Isaiah 58:6. Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free...

More than 20 years ago, farmworkers in Immokalee decided to break these bonds Isaiah tells us about. And they searched not only for freedom, but to ascribe value to their dignity.

In 1997, six farmworkers undertook a fast that lasted more than 30 days in order to prick the conscience of growers about shameful wages and conditions. In doing so, they demonstrated to the world beyond what was then the forgotten town of Immokalee – that behind the rosy tomato that appeared on their dinner plate were men and women facing conditions of grave exploitation.

These six farmworkers chose to use their own bodies to let their message be heard. Bodies that day after day confronted violence and misery in the fields.

Their sacrifice watered the ground of support from congregations in Naples and Ft. Myers. It created understanding, outrage, and determination among people beyond Immokalee. We are confident now because we have plowed this field before and the fruit is beautiful!

Thanks to the people of faith, students and consumers, we have been victorious, bringing 14 corporations to the table and 90% of the tomato growers in Florida. In

this, we have started cleansing the land of injustice. We have sowed seeds that have started to bear the fruits of freedom, dignity, respect and hope.

The Fair Food Program is that seed that has now expanded its roots to six additional states on the East Coast. For the first time, farmworkers have the right to report abuses in the field, the right to protect their health and well-being, the right to drink water and to take rest without retaliation. Basic human rights.

But one of the most important changes is that women are able to work free from sexual harassment. For so many years, we, women, have suffered in silence. We hushed ourselves in the face of violence and harassment for so many years. Thanks to the Fair Food Program, these tears have dried up and our dignity is no longer being stepped on.

These are the bonds that we have been able to break ourselves from in order to create a new day for justice. As Isaiah says: The light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear, then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.

Although we have achieved changes with thousands of workers, it is outrageous to think there are corporations who ignore our humanity and only want to continue exploiting us workers for an economic gain.

But we know – we know that their willful disregard of farmworkers' humanity will not go unanswered. Your fast, your letters, and our protests answer such disregard with the insistence that we believe that every person is a child of God and every person should be treated with dignity and respect.

Today we are here, breaking one more fast, a fast for justice, but we are also here to demand that Wendy's sign the agreement that guarantees protection for human rights, so that we as women no longer have to keep sacrificing our dignity in order to provide food for our families.

For many years women have had to lower their head, to feed our children. Today thanks to the Fair Food Program, we are respected, and we are going united in solidarity with others who are still suffering violence. We are going to continue to fight for those who are under the bonds of injustice.

As the gospel of Matthew reminds us, it is about what we do when we see one another of us imprisoned, hungry, suffering. What we are doing is continuing to build a new kind of economy, a structural solution to the immoral operations of supply chains that chew up human beings.

And your witness as the religious community to this, your contribution to this movement, your willingness to unite together and stand shoulder-to-shoulder with us, demonstrates the kind of world God longs for.

A world where, in Isaiah's words, the "light will break forth like the dawn" and our common well-being is achieved.

Together, we are showing Wendy's that we are not alone and that we are not going to permit Wendy's to continue supporting violence against women. That we as women, as farmworkers, are not alone, and that we are stronger than ever, that we are against violence.

In a few moments you will have the opportunity to write your own message to Wendy's that we will deliver with flowers of hope during our protest this evening. Let your words come from deep within you, from that strong and loving place that caused you to take up this fast. Have confidence that your words will now join the fast you have taken to pierce through the callousness and fear that are driving Wendy's executives.

Let your hearts reach out and call upon them, human being to human being, to become part of this new world of justice we are creating together.

Now our voices sing the melody of hope, our tears have risen as strength. Violence against women must stop, and we are in on this path, let us keep fighting for justice and let God guide our path.

Because our God is God of Justice, a God of universal love. God will guide us, because just like us God believes in justice and in love for others.

OFFERING OR TZEDAKAH

This week's service can include a special offering as a way to support the **Alliance for Fair Food in our efforts to expand the Fair Food Program's protections to more workers by bringing Wendy's to the table.**

CLOSING WORDS, BLESSING, OR BENEDICTION

"Now is the accepted time, not tomorrow, not some more convenient season. It is today that our best work can be done and not some future day or future year. It is today that we fit ourselves for the greater usefulness of tomorrow. Today is the seed time, now are the hours of work, and tomorrow comes the harvest and the playtime."

— W.E.B. Du Bois

SAMPLE INTERFAITH LITURGY

The sequence below was employed during the Interfaith Service for Farmworker Justice upon the conclusion of July 2017's **month-long Florida faith leaders fast.**

Words of welcome

Musical prelude

Call to worship by a Coalition of Immokalee Workers leader and a fasting clergyperson

Opening prayer

Reading #1: Isaiah 58 : 6-11

Hymn: "Un dia a la vez" by Los Tigres del Norte

Reading #2 and reflection: Matthew 25 : 31-40

Reading #3 and reflection: The Limits of Tyrants by Frederick Douglass (UU Singing the Living Tradition #579)

Sermon: "Harvesting fruits of freedom and dignity" by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers

Offertory set to "All Good Gifts"

During the offertory, participants were invited to reflect and and write a message to Wendy's on a square of colored paper provided inside this bulletin. Then, using the string also provided, they attached their message to the flower they received earlier in the service. Following the ushers, participants proceeded to the front of the sanctuary to offer their flower and message as well as any financial offering they wish to make to the CIW or the AFF.

Words of blessing

Hymn #714 in the UCC Hymnal: Shalom Chaverim

VIDEOS



+ For a concise overview of the Fair Food Program's mechanisms to protect farmworker rights, a three part series by CNN's Freedom Project (each ~4 min):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpKMHIUkPQk>

+ For a trailer of *Food Chains*, the documentary featuring the CIW available on Netflix and iTunes:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqZLrXVAde4>



+ For the short video of July 2017's Interfaith Service for Farmworker Justice:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TgYGU8REiAg&t=2s>

+ For an engaging short video featuring the Wendy's Boycott launch with a spirited 500+ march in NYC:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7j28dNHHOcI>



TAKE ACTION!

There are many ways to call upon Wendy's to join the Fair Food Program, from writing a letter to Wendy's leadership at their corporate headquarters to organizing a public witness at a local Wendy's restaurant. Resources for these actions can be found on the Boycott Wendy's website [resource page](#).

This Labor Day, we invite congregations to gather and publicize photo petitions of Boycott Wendy's pledges.

PHOTO PETITION

+ If there is a community or fellowship time after the service and such activities are possible, invite congregants to participate in a photo petition action. You can download and print the petition template from the AFF website and add the name of your congregation. Then, take pictures and upload to social media using the hashtag, #BoycottWendys. Please also send photos to organize@allianceforfairfood.org so they can be compiled and shared with both Wendy's and the AFF network.



ADDITIONAL LABOR DAY RESOURCES

While not CIW-specific, the following resources can be used in Labor Day services in conjunction with AFF's farmworker justice guide.

- + **Interfaith Worker Justice** "Labor in the Pulpits/on the Bimah/in the Minbar" resources for Muslim, Buddhist, Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish contexts
- + **United Church of Christ** Labor Sunday resources including calls to worship, prayers, confessions and readings
- + **Unitarian Universalist** perspectives and words to use on Labor Day
- + **T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights'** "The Other Side of the Sea" Haggadah on Modern-Day Slavery provides an example of how these themes can be incorporated into services
- + **United States Conference of Catholic Bishops** annual Labor Day statements and pastoral aid resources