



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 program 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 like 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.

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READING WITH BACKGROUND ON 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 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. Called the "best workplace monitoring program" in the U.S. on the front page of the New York Times, the Fair Food Program has distributed nearly \$20 million to farmworkers in Fair Food premiums and conducted worker-to-worker educations in tomato farms across Florida and six additional states along the East Coast since its inception in 2011. Thanks to the Fair Food Program and the CIW's relentless organizing in solidarity with consumers, Immokalee has evolved from being one of the poorest, most politically powerless communities in the country to become today an important national presence with forceful, committed leadership directly from the base of its community - young, migrant workers forging a future of livable wages and modern labor relations in Florida's fields.

This past March, the CIW launched its second-ever corporate boycott after Wendy's actively shifted its tomato purchases away from Florida following the implementation of the Fair Food Program there, to Mexico, where workers continue to confront wage theft, sexual harassment, child labor, and even slavery without access to protections. Wendy's empty version of corporate social responsibility is one that ignores the very people who make their successes possible: farmworkers. Until Wendy's decides to pay a penny more per pound for the tomatoes they buy and commit to purchasing exclusively from growers that abide by the farmworker-designed human rights Code of Conduct, both central requirements of the Fair Food Program, the only responsibility they seem to care for is their own profit. Nevertheless, Wendy's participation in the Fair Food Program is critical to strengthening and expanding

human rights for farmworkers -- and eliminating the alternative market it is 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 sacred invitation is to say 'Yes!' to the Boycott. And 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](#).

CALL AND RESPONSE SONG

Feel free to add percussion to this or invite handclaps. And the last stanza with the (...) it could be a repeated percussive riff on a djembe, for example.

+ *"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!

+ 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.

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY

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

+ [Fair Food for Kids](#)

This resource is from T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights. It features an activity that can be done with children, using text from the Torah or linking to other traditions through common values around equity and fairness. It also features a classroom activity.

CENTERING MOMENT OR PRAYER

+ A United Methodist Prayer for Workers

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 (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 have a
guided meditation that takes people
through the hell of a farm worker's life in
fields untouched by fair food program
and its protections. The meditation
would then lead to the hopeful vision of
the "New Day" dawning: a fair food
nation and the call to commit to action
for this New Day)*

SERMON SUGGESTIONS

+ D'var Torah for 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 McDonalds 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.

+ Sermon for a Christian or Unitarian Universalist setting

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 have endorsed the boycott, be sure to mention it! **Here is an updated list of the organizations that have endorsed the Wendy's Boycott.**
- 3) How can the assembled take action? 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 resources** to educate the gathered about fair food and about Wendy's recalcitrance.
 - + **Fair Food Program's website**, which includes more background and statistics.
 - + **Wendy's Boycott website**
 - + For the latest with CIW and the Wendy's Boycott, **the CIW website**.
- 5) Invite the gathered to embody their faith:
 - + Could you work ahead with an Alliance for Fair Food organizer to organize a public witness in front of your congregation's nearest Wendy's and invite them to join you after the service or the next morning? Contact organize@allianceforfairfood.org to get in touch.
 - + Photo petition (**see below**)
 - + Could you have letters for individuals to bring to Wendy's managers?
 - + Could you invite the assembled to sign a pledge to boycott Wendy's as they engage in some kind of weekly ritual/ liturgy you do for worship (candle-lighting, 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.

OFFERING OR TZEDAKAH

Can include a special offering as a way to support workers, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, or the Alliance for Fair Food.

“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, *Three African-American Classics: up from Slavery, the Souls of Black Folk and Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

PHOTO PETITION

✦ If there is a community time after service and such activities are possible, you may choose to invite attendees to participate in a photo petition action. Participants can fill out the attached petition template with the name of your congregation, take a picture, and send it to organize@allianceforfairfood.org to be compiled and shared with Wendy's and the AFF network.

"As a member of _____,
I pledge to
boycott
Wendy's!"

I'M A MEMBER OF



AND I PLEDGE
TO BOYCOTT
WENDY'S!

[BIT.LY/BOYCOTT-WENDYS](https://bit.ly/BOYCOTT-WENDYS)

#BOYCOTTWENDYS

VIDEOS



+ For an overview about the Fair Food Program from PBS:

<https://youtu.be/Or0AKnbaf7>
<https://youtu.be/Or0AKnbaf7>



+ For a rousing shorter video about beginning of Wendy's boycott in NYC:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7j28dNHHOcl>



+ For a longer overview (if you did not have a sermon in the service):

<https://youtu.be/b6s4YAOISns>

ADDITIONAL LABOR DAY RESOURCES

While not CIW-specific, these resources can be used in Labor Day services in conjunction with the following that are specific to farmworker justice in the Campaign for Fair Food.

- ✦ [Interfaith Worker Justice Labor Day resources for Muslim, Buddhist, Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish contexts](#)
- ✦ [For UCC Labor Sunday calls to worship, prayers, confessions and readings, check out](#)
- ✦ [For Unitarian Universalist perspectives and words to use on Labor Day, visit](#)
- ✦ [T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights' Haggadah on Modern-Day Slavery, for an example of how these themes can be incorporated into services](#)