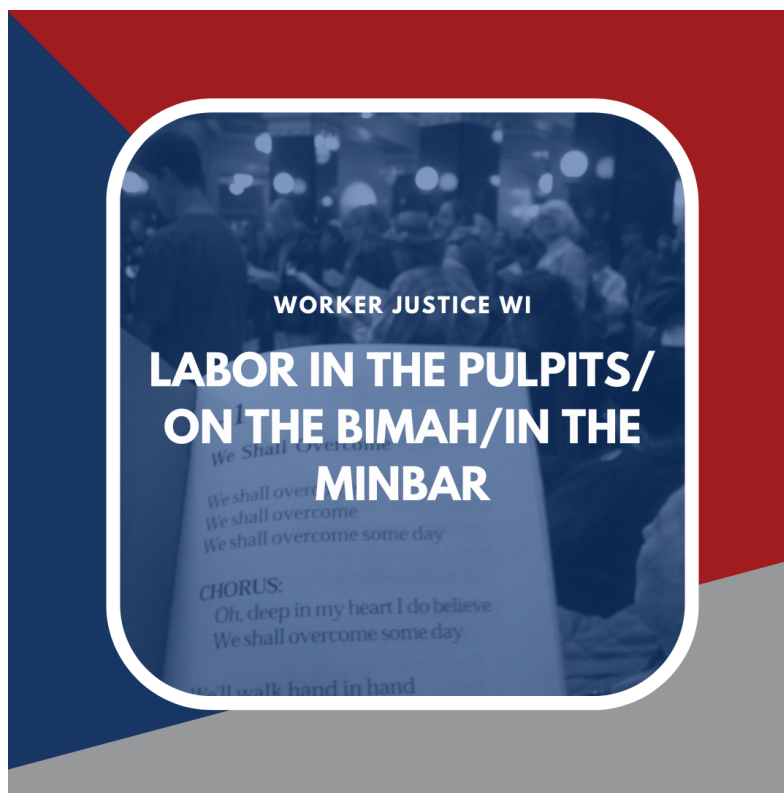




*Worker Justice Wisconsin advances justice in our community by building collective worker power together with Faith and Labor allies.*

~ WJW Mission Statement

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## 2022 Toolkit

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[Worker Justice Wisconsin](#)  
1602 S. Park St. #115, Madison, WI 53715  
(608) 255-0376  
[info@workerjustice.org](mailto:info@workerjustice.org)

**Greetings from Rebecca Meier-Rao,  
Executive Director of Worker Justice Wisconsin**

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We at Worker Justice Wisconsin (WJW) recognize the many commitments our faith allies make to immigrant justice, addressing systemic racism, safeguarding lives of those most vulnerable, and providing mutual aid/services to those in need. As part of your commitment to justice, we invite you to participate in our **Labor in the Pulpits/On the Bimah/In the Minbar program** this year. Historically, during Labor Day weekend (or the month of September), faith leaders participate by sharing a reflection or sermon on worker justice with their respective communities during a worship service or education session. In this toolkit, we provide interfaith resources about worker justice. But first, I want to begin by sharing a bit about what we're doing at WJW and why our faith allies are so important to us.

Experience has taught us that the most effective way to create just working conditions is by empowering workers to collectively advocate for themselves. We partner with workers who are primarily immigrant, Latinx and BIPOC because they are among the most abused in Madison and Dane County, and because we believe in the power of their collective voice to raise working conditions once and for all. In the past year we have done a number of things to move this vision forward, including:

- increased two part-time staff to full-time and added a third part-time position to our worker center;
- started a monthly three-part worker organizing training at the worker center, and reached out to multiple faith and community organizations to host the training cycle for their communities;
- initiated our monthly worker member meetings to build collective consciousness among those experiencing workplace injustices;
- partnered with workers during workplace campaigns and to develop worker cooperatives.

As faith allies, we ask you to focus on worker justice because work is where most people spend the majority of their time, and where, regrettably, they often experience the worst forms of discrimination, economic injustice and hazardous conditions. **When faith allies stand with workers, you give moral legitimacy to their efforts and a crucial public voice. Your support gives them courage and the knowledge that they are not alone.**

We look forward to your participation and contributions to the mission of worker justice. We could not do this work without you!

In solidarity,

Rebecca Meier-Rao, Executive Director  
Email: [rebecca@workerjustice.org](mailto:rebecca@workerjustice.org)

## **Registration and Participation Information for Labor in the Pulpits/On the Bimah/In the Minbar Program**

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For this year's program, we invite you to consider the theme, "Being Faith Allies," and reflect on this question: As people of faith, what is our role in ensuring that low-wage and immigrant workers are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve?

In addition, we at WJW understand that you have many demands on your time as a faith leader, and so, we offer different ways to be involved in this program as outlined below.

### **Ways Faith Allies Can Participate:**

#### **1) Share our WJW resources with your community:**

- a) Distribute our 2-page WJW handout to your community (see the last two pages of this document; also attached as a separate PDF)
- b) Post our video to your social media (available on our [YouTube](#) channel on Friday, August 26th)
- c) Invite a WJW member to speak to your community (the deadline to request a speaker is August 15th)

#### **2) Personally educate your community about worker justice:**

- a) Create & share a video about worker justice
- b) Preach or present on worker justice in your community during a service or education session in September

#### **3) Financially support our advocacy work:**

- a) Take up a collection to support the work of Worker Justice Wisconsin
- b) Donate specifically to the worker solidarity fund
- c) Become a community member ally (through our membership program)

To confirm your participation, please complete our **registration form**. In addition, if you would like to request a speaker from WJW to visit your community in September, please complete our **speaker request form**.

As you prepare, we invite you to explore the resources provided in this packet. If you have questions during your planning process, please do not hesitate to contact me at the email addresses below. Thank you!

In peace,

Gretchen Baumgardt, Faith Outreach Coordinator  
Email: [faithoutreach@workerjustice.org](mailto:faithoutreach@workerjustice.org)

## Statistics on Immigrant and Essential Workers

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### *Did you know...?*

#### **In the United States:**

- “69% of all immigrants in the labor force, and 74% of unauthorized immigrants are essential workers.”<sup>1</sup>
- “Immigrants constitute 22% of food service workers while comprising only 17% of the civilian workforce.”<sup>2</sup>
- “Immigrants make up as much as 73% of farmworkers in the country.”
  - o “Immigrant farmworkers are pillars of the country’s food supply chain and agricultural economic prosperity. They not only allow the United States to maintain a self-sufficient food supply, assuring a level of food security, but they also help our nation to be the largest exporter of food in the world.”<sup>3</sup>
- “Seventy percent of refugees and 78 percent of Black refugees are essential workers.”<sup>4</sup>

#### **In Wisconsin:**

- “Immigrants comprise 5% of the state population and 6% of the Wisconsin labor force.”<sup>5</sup>
- “Immigrants in Wisconsin have contributed billions of dollars in taxes.”
  - Immigrant-led households in the state paid \$1.7 billion in federal taxes and \$968.3 million in state and local taxes in 2018.
  - Undocumented immigrants in Wisconsin paid an estimated \$156.9 million in federal taxes and \$101.1 million in state and local taxes in 2018.
  - Wisconsin DACA recipients and DACA-eligible individuals paid an estimated \$15.9 million in state and local taxes in 2018.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>“Immigrant Essential Workers and COVID-19,” Xavier Roberts and Christian Burks, July 27, 2021, National Conference of State Legislatures, <https://www.ncsl.org/research/immigration/immigrant-essential-workers-and-covid-19.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> “Why Businesses Should Support Immigration Reform,” March 10, 2022, <https://immigrationforum.org/article/why-businesses-should-support-immigration-reform/>.

<sup>4</sup> “US Foreign-Born Workers in the Global Pandemic: Essential and Marginalized,” Center for Migration Studies, <https://cmsny.org/data-on-essential-workers-recent-publications-and-tables/>

<sup>5</sup> “Immigrants in Wisconsin,” Fact Sheet, August 2020, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-wisconsin>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

## Links to Planning Resources

Theme: "Being Faith Allies"

Reflection Question: As people of faith, what is our role in ensuring that low-wage and immigrant workers are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve?

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### Articles on Faith & Labor

- ["The History of Labor Sunday,"](#) by Heath Carter (1 page)
- [Biographies of Jewish Labor Leaders](#)
- [Labor Day and Islamic Principles of Social Justice and Fair Treatment,](#) by Ejaz Naqvi, MD
- Brief [articles on Faith and Labor](#) from *Sojourners* magazine
- Understanding [Collective Worker Power](#)

### Statements on Worker Justice Issues by Faith Traditions (interfaith perspectives)

- [Link to Statements on Worker Justice Issues](#)

### Jewish Resources:

- [Text Study - JFREJ Shabbat Vigil for Domestic Workers](#)
- [A Jewish Approach to Economic Justice - Text Study](#)
- [Living the Legacy Labor Lessons](#) ~ Jewish Women's Archive (jwa.org)
  - *"These eight lesson plans weave stories of immigration and collective action together with traditional Jewish texts to create a rich investigation of Jewish involvement in the American Labor Movement."*
  - Example lesson: ["We Have Found You Wanting:" Labor Activism and Communal Responsibility."](#)
- [Passages from the Tanakh](#)
- [Labor on the Bimah Resource](#)
- [Reflection by Rabbi Renée Bauer, former Executive Director of ICWJ](#)

### Christian Resources:

- See preaching resources and ideas for the Revised Common Lectionary during September 2022 on the next two pages of this toolkit.
- ["A Theology of Labor,"](#) article by Adam Ericksen (UCC pastor)
- [Link to U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops \(USCCB\) Resources on Labor](#)

### Muslim Resources:

- Link to [Labor Rights in Islam by Sh. Abdool Rahman Khan](#)
- Link to [Your Rights as an Employee](#) (from the Council on American-Islamic Relations)
- [Passages from the Qur'an](#)
- [Labor in the Minbar Resource](#)

### Buddhist Resources:

- [Buddhist Reflection](#)

### Additional [Resources on the Worker Justice Website](#)

## Scripture Readings (Cycle C) from the RCL (Revised Common Lectionary) for September 2022 & Preaching Ideas

Links to readings from the RCL are from the [Vanderbilt Divinity Library](#). This site includes additional resources, such as art, prayers, and PowerPoint slides, for the [Season after Pentecost](#), which can be found by clicking on the Proper Sundays below. Article suggestions and preaching ideas are from the staff of WJW.

Date & Celebration	Readings	Preaching Ideas
<b>September 4, 2022</b> Labor Day Weekend  <a href="#">Proper 18 (23)</a> Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost <a href="#">ART – PRAYER</a>  <b>Articles:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Article by Jesuit Jon Sobrino on a <a href="#">"civilization of wealth"</a> &amp; possessions.</li> <li><a href="#">Mennonite reflection</a> on the "crucified people."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Jeremiah 18:1-11</a> and <a href="#">Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18</a></li> <li><a href="#">Deuteronomy 30:15-20</a> and <a href="#">Psalm 1</a></li> <li><a href="#">Philemon 1:1-21</a></li> <li><a href="#">Luke 14:25-33</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Theme of Christian Discernment (Jer 18 &amp; Ps 139):</b> How is God the potter "molding" and calling us to help bring forth the kingdom of God? To use our gifts to advocate for the dignity of all people and just working conditions for all?</li> <li><b>Philemon:</b> As people of faith, we are called to speak out against modern forms of human slavery, including unjust working conditions, and promote human dignity.</li> <li><b>Luke 14:</b> We are challenged to recognize today's "crucified people," the poor and oppressed in our midst, (as expressed in the work of Jesuit liberation theologian, Jon Sobrino), including low-wage and immigrant workers. We are called to stand in solidarity with them.</li> </ul>
<b>September 11, 2022</b>  <a href="#">Proper 19 (24)</a> Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost <a href="#">ART – PRAYER</a>  <b>Article:</b> In <a href="#">"Wage Theft: How Many Women of Color Are Left Out of Minimum Wage Hike"</a> , Sarah Ngu highlights the role of the church in supporting workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28</a> and <a href="#">Psalm 14</a></li> <li><a href="#">Exodus 32:7-14</a> and <a href="#">Psalm 51:1-10</a></li> <li><a href="#">1 Timothy 1:12-17</a></li> <li><a href="#">Luke 15:1-10</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Ex 32 &amp; Ps 51:</b> Invite reflection on "sins of omission": in what areas of our lives have we been complicit in injustice? What can we commit to doing today to create a "clean heart" open to the suffering of workers and willing to take action on their behalf?</li> <li><b>Luke 15:</b> Jesus is patient with us as he calls us to discipleship, to be partners with him in mission. Despite the derision he received, he continued to associate with those on the margins of society. As his disciples, we are called to stand with the poor and vulnerable, including low-wage and immigrant workers.</li> </ul>

*(continued on the next page)*

**(CONTINUED) Scripture Readings from the RCL for September 2022 & Preaching Ideas**

Date & Celebration	Readings	Preaching Ideas
<p><b>September 18, 2022</b></p> <p><u>Proper 20 (25)</u> Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost <u>ART – PRAYER</u></p> <p><b>Article:</b> In "<u>Trading Lives for Labor</u>," theologian Kelly Brown Douglas challenges us to rethink profit over the dignity of the human person.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Jeremiah 8:18-9:1</a> and <a href="#">Psalm 79:1-9</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Amos 8:4-7</a> and <a href="#">Psalm 113</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">1 Timothy 2:1-7</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Luke 16:1-13</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Amos 8:</b> The prophet clearly rebukes those who would "trample the needy" and use the poor and vulnerable for their own financial benefit.</li> <li>• <b>Luke 16:</b> "You cannot serve God and wealth." This Gospel passage provides a mirror to our society in which profit is promoted over the dignity of people, particularly the worker, and calls disciples of Jesus to work toward a more just world.</li> </ul>
<p><b>September 25, 2022</b></p> <p><u>Proper 21 (26)</u> Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost <u>ART – PRAYER</u></p> <p><b>Article:</b> In "<u>Wage Against the Machine</u>," Matt Bernico connects fair wages &amp; the biblical texts of Jeremiah &amp; 1 Timothy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15</a> and <a href="#">Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Amos 6:1a, 4-7</a> and <a href="#">Psalm 146</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">1 Timothy 6:6-19</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Luke 16:19-31</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Amos 6 &amp; Ps 146:</b> The prophet and the psalmist again draw contrast between a world of economic inequality and God's "justice for the oppressed" (Ps 146:7).</li> <li>• <b>1 Tim 6:</b> This passage clearly states that "love of money" is the root of many evils and in contrast, describes the virtues to which Christians are called to aspire.</li> <li>• <b>Luke 16:</b> The story of the rich man and Lazarus challenges Christians to reexamine their priorities and treatment of the poor and vulnerable. It is a perfect opportunity to connect this passage to the promotion of worker justice.</li> </ul>



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### **Worker Justice Wisconsin's Faith and Labor Statement**

Worker Justice Wisconsin is an interfaith nonprofit organization that advances justice in our community by building collective worker power together with Faith and Labor allies. It partners primarily with low-wage and immigrant workers because they are among the most exploited in our community. It empowers individuals to fight workplace injustice through education, community building, and collective actions.

As people of faith, we uphold the sacred and intrinsic dignity of every person. We believe that work should be a vehicle for discovering a sense of purpose and fulfillment, but that too often it is a means for abuse. We recognize that in today's climate, individual workers are at the mercy of more powerful employers, and we commit to joining forces with workers when they collectively summon the courage to demand fair and just working conditions. Finally, drawing on our sacred traditions, we stand together as communities of faith to advocate for:

- A just and living wage for all
- Paid sick and family leave
- Workplaces free from all forms of discrimination and harassment
- Opportunities for collective organizing without fear of retaliation
- A healthy work/life balance for all people regardless of race, gender, national origin, immigration status or creed

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Knowing that faith leaders and members of faith communities stand with them in their struggle for justice *greatly* increases workers' resolve to organize and advocate for the above issues.

Demonstrate your support today by clicking the link below:

**[Sign the Faith and Labor Statement](#)**



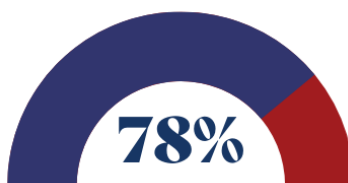


Worker Justice Wisconsin (WJW) is a Madison-based nonprofit that builds collective worker power together with faith and labor allies.

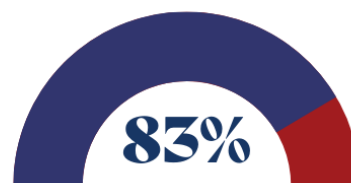
The centerpiece of WJW is our worker center, where non-unionized and mostly Latinx and immigrant workers come when facing workplace issues such as wage theft and discrimination.



51% of the workers who opened cases in 2021 were women



78%  
of workers self-identified as immigrants

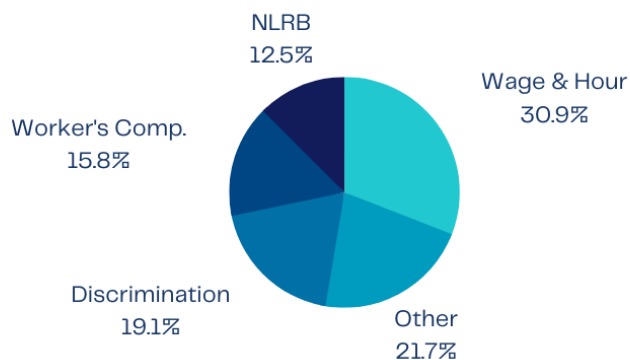


83%  
of workers self-identified as Latinx; 7.5% as African-American; 1% as Asian



Examples of other issues include: Covid-19 (4.61%), Unemployment (3.29%), Immigration (3.29%), Safety & Health (1.32%)

### Issues workers were facing in 2021



**\$111,762.26**

This is the amount of previously owed but unpaid wages that WJW helped recover in 2021.



### **Faith & labor allies partner with us to advocate for:**

- A just & living wage for all
- Paid time off for all
- Workplaces free from all forms of discrimination
- Opportunities for collective organizing without fear of retaliation

### **Did you know...?**

#### **In the United States:**

- “69% of all immigrants in the labor force, and 74% of unauthorized immigrants are essential workers.”
- “Immigrants constitute 22% of food service workers while comprising only 17% of the civilian workforce.”
- “Immigrants make up as much as 73% of farmworkers in the country.”
  - “Immigrant farmworkers are pillars of the country’s food supply chain and agricultural economic prosperity. They not only allow the United States to maintain a self-sufficient food supply, assuring a level of food security, but they also help our nation to be the largest exporter of food in the world.”

Sources: “Immigrant Essential Workers and COVID-19,” Xavier Roberts and Christian Burks, July 27, 2021, [National Conference of State Legislatures](#); “Why Businesses Should Support Immigration Reform,” March 10, 2022, [immigrationforum.org](#)

### **Labor Day Prayers**

God of justice,  
Open our eyes to the struggles of those exploited  
and help us speak for just wages and safe conditions,  
the freedom to organize, and time for renewal.  
For work was made for humankind  
and not humankind for work.  
Let it not be a vehicle for exploitation  
but a radiant expression of our human dignity.  
Amen.

*Adapted from a prayer for "Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers," U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, [www.usccb.org](#)*

Creator God, help us to build a new world in the midst of the old.

- A world where all workers are valued.
- A world where those who clean houses are also able to buy houses to live in.
- A world where those who grow food can also afford to eat their fill.

We pray for the coming of a world where all workers everywhere share in the abundance that you have given us.

We ask these things knowing that you give us the courage and strength to live out our faith in the workplace and the marketplace, as well as in the sanctuary.  
Amen.

*Adapted from, "A Prayer for All Workers," by Edie Rasell, of the United Church of Christ, [www.uwc.org](#)*