



Labor in the Pulpit/On the Bimah/In the Minbar

September, 2020

Dear Faith Community Leaders,

My name is Rebecca Meier-Rao, and I'm the new Executive Director of Worker Justice Wisconsin (WJW). I earned a Ph.D. in theology at Marquette University and then taught Religious Studies at Edgewood College for several years. The focus of my study and teaching has always been at the intersection of spirituality and justice. I am privileged to now be a part of an organization that integrates faith with a passionate advocacy for worker justice. I invite you to lift up the dignity of work with WJW this Labor Day weekend (or another day in September) by participating in our annual Labor in the Pulpit/On the Bimah/In the Minbar.

Labor in the Pulpit/On the Bimah/In the Minbar offers communities of faith the opportunity to lift up the dignity of work and support low-wage and immigrant workers' struggles for justice in our midst. Lifting up the dignity of work is especially important during this time of COVID-19, when frontline workers risk their lives daily, too many low-wage laborers face the agonizing choice between working in dangerous environments to provide for their families or not working and losing their only source of income, and millions are deprived of work altogether. We believe this is an important time to educate people about what workers are facing in Madison and Dane County, and to reflect on why workers' struggles should matter to people of faith.

In order to participate in Labor in the Pulpit/On the Bimah/In the Minbar, all you need to do is commit to a day in September when your faith community will lift up workers and their struggle for justice (particularly during this time of COVID-19). Then let me (rebecca@workerjustice.org) or your WJW contact person know what day you have decided on, and we'll help you plan it out!

Here are some of the choices we will be able to provide:

- a) Have one of our speakers offer a reflection to your congregation via an e-platform like Zoom or Facebook Live.
- b) A few of us are willing to speak in person as long as everyone is wearing a mask and maintaining proper social distance.
- c) Worker Justice Wisconsin may be able to provide a short video for you to distribute.
- d) Or just incorporate the materials I have provided in addition to this letter to offer your own reflection on worker justice (If you take this option, please share your reflection with us – we could love to add it to Labor in the Pulpit/On the Bimah/In the Minbar materials!).

So again, just let me or your WJW contact person know what day you plan on participating in Labor in the Pulpit/On the Bimah/In the Minbar, and we can help you plan from there!

And one more thing – please also consider taking one or more of these actions when you participate in Labor in the Pulpit/On the Bimah/In the Minbar:

- ⇒ collect a special offering for Worker Justice Wisconsin to help in its advocacy for low-wage and immigrant workers;
- ⇒ provide material donations to WJW such as PPE or gift cards for our workers in need;
- ⇒ commit to worker advocacy by participating in labor actions/campaigns, and/or by signing letters to government officials for worker justice;
- ⇒ commit to regular remembrance of, and prayers for, workers (and then please share them with us so we can post them on our website!);
- ⇒ commit to standing up for workers (or yourselves) when they (you) face abuse at work (for help, leave a message for our Worker Advocates at 608-255-0376!).

I hope you are all doing as well as possible during this difficult time. I look forward to meeting each of you in the weeks and months ahead, whether in person or virtually. And I wish you many blessings as you advocate for worker justice in your communities!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Meier-Rao". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rebecca" being more prominent.

Rebecca Meier-Rao
rebecca@workerjustice.org