

For Baptists, Labor Day weekend can be more than just an opportunity for one last cookout or day at the beach. It can be a time to remember the sacred worth of all workers, and to consider our call from God to protect the equality, dignity, and humanity of all who labor.

The Bible tells us of God's special concern for poor and working people. "Blessed are the poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God." *Luke 6:20* The Bible condemns greed and the abuse of power. "Listen! The wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts." *James 5:1,4* The Bible tells owners to treat workers fairly and with respect. "Do we not have the right to our food and drink? Whoever plows should plow in hope and whoever threshes should thresh in hope of a share of the crop." *1Corinthians 9:4,10*

The American Baptist Churches, USA, applied these and similar Biblical principles in crafting a Resolution adopted in 1966 and reaffirmed in 1981: "We reaffirm our position that workers have the right to organize by a free and democratic vote of the workers involved. This right of organization carries the responsibility of union leadership to protect the rights of workers, (and) to guarantee each member an equal voice in the operation of its organization."

Many American Baptist congregations are proud to partner with Arise Chicago, a 28 year-old interfaith workers-rights organization. Arise Chicago teaches workers their rights, builds leadership skills, and advocates for public policy changes – all of which transforms lives and communities. This weekend, in partnership with the Chicago Federation of Labor, Arise Chicago has speakers in over 100 worship services, lifting up the sacred link between work and faith.

As a part of our Labor Day reflection, let us turn away from the illusion that we are self-sufficient and instead, embrace the truth that we are all connected to each other. We cannot live in a world without car mechanics, teachers, hotel workers, grocery store clerks, nurses, etc. Arise invites you to honor the dignity of workers that you encounter in your daily interactions and reflect on how each of us, through our work, contribute to the common good of humanity. Happy Labor Day!

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