



## The Unfinished Work of Raising the Wage, and Happy New Year!

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### *Clergy & Laity United For Economic Justice*

Dear Elizabeth,

First, let me start off by wishing my Jewish and multi-faith friends who celebrate Rosh HaShanah a Happy New Year! May it be a wonderful one for you, with more justice, and more celebration of life!

Hearing that Irvine's City Council actually [rescinded their living wage](#) for contracted services, your visceral reaction might be "Seriously?! When other cities are successfully raising wages?" Despite the efforts of mean-spirited politicians—with clergy such as **Rev. Paul Tellstrom**, **Rev. Mark Whitlock** and **Rev. Paige Eaves** taking the lead together with an extraordinary UC Irvine student, **Luis Aleman**—Irvine publicly launched their [Irvine Living Wage Initiative Petition](#) this past Labor Day. And why is CLUE-LA's newsletter starting off with news about Orange County? Well, we have great news: CLUE-LA and CLUE-OC are uniting, to become CLUE! Three of CLUE-OC's board members – Rev. Sarah Halverson, Beatriz Topete, and Rabbi Steve Einstein – have joined our own board ranks, and CLUE has now held meetings in Santa Ana and Irvine for our Irvine work. The next meeting will be in **Garden Grove on Wednesday, October 7<sup>th</sup>**. [Email me](#) to connect with Sandra, Karina, or Joyce, who continue to faithfully staff CLUE in Orange County (new email and URL, hopefully [cluejustice.org](#), coming soon!).

Los Angeles, of course, [won the fight for 15 by 2020](#). But even as we rejoice, the struggle is far from over: We still need to finalize other parts of the coalition platform, including sick days and anti-discrimination language. Also, we must further saturate the county of Los Angeles with new minimum wage policies—indexed to inflation—in other cities, such as Santa Monica, Glendale, Pasadena, West Hollywood, Malibu, and Long Beach. CLUE is well-positioned to offer critically-important moral framing; our wide-array of clergy invested in justice for all, whether wealthy or poor, whether black or white or Asian/Pacific Islander or Latino. Support from religious leaders is vital to the fight because: (1) 89 jurisdictions (88 cities plus the unincorporated areas) need this increase; (2) relationships with elected leaders all over must be built with justice-driven leaders to persuade our politicians to take up the mantle of livable wage leadership; (3) every successful campaign, thus far, has had a strong religious influence.

[Santa Monica just held an event](#) to gear up for their policy this past week. West Hollywood will move this most likely in October (PLEASE [let me know](#) if you want to help!). Our community, and especially those in the margins of the economy, need fellow community members and religious leaders to do what is right and stand proudly and in support of raising the wage because we all fully know that a person working full-time should, at the very least, be able to afford to feed their family.

Currently, [Pasadena](#) has an ordinance in place to [increase the minimum wage](#). In a city with [blatant economic disparity](#), where the middle class is increasingly dwindling, raising the minimum wage is necessary for families in Pasadena, as [echoed by the president of Pasadena Unified School District](#).

Besides the Livable Wage Campaign, things have been really heating up in Pasadena. Upon the recent [arrest of Jasmine Richards](#), organizer at Black Lives Matter in Pasadena, the pang from police violence has only grown. As of now, Los Angeles is considering a Memorandum Of Agreement between the LA County Board of Supervisors, the Los Angeles Police Department, and the LA County Inspector General, **Max Huntsman**, to provide an added level of transparency for the newly-established Civilian Oversight Commission. If this Memorandum Of Agreement is inadequate, then we will demand subpoena power to be added to the County Charter, via ballot initiative. CLUE, and specifically our [Black Jewish Justice Alliance](#), will continue to push at the smallest sign of it not working and will continue efforts in [gaining subpoena power](#) for a safer community.

Please peruse this newsletter, it's chock-full-o-content; thank you to Sarah Shin, our new communications staffmember, for working hard to put this together! See below for a Rosh HaShanah Message to close us out.

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## *The Justice of a Livable Wage*



*Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amos 5:24*

**CLUE continues to fight for a living wage in every corner of the region, pursuing justice for working families in a livable wage that provides dignity for every individual along with wage theft provisions and sick days. Please join us by finding a region below to which you can help bring livable wages!**

### **Pasadena**

Pasadena [Mayor Terry Tornek](#) introduced the minimum wage measure at a City Council hearing in July. Discussion of the measure really began in August at the Edtech Committee. For more information please check out [Pasadenans For a Livable Wage](#), email [Robert Cristo](#) (CLUE Faith-Rooted Organizer), or [Rabbi Klein](#).

### **Irvine**

A majority of the city council of Irvine voted to repeal the 8-year-old Living Wage Law effectively cutting the lowest paid contract workers for the city from \$11 to \$9 an hour and in response [CLUE along with community and faith partners have publicly launched](#) a new initiative to reinstate the law this past Labor Day on September 7th.

### **Long Beach**

On August 11th, Long Beach officially launched its Raise the Wage campaign; key Long Beach CLUE leaders gathered at Long Beach City Hall when council voted unanimously to do a citywide study on the prospect of raising the minimum wage. Our coalition wants to ensure that council passes not only a \$15 minimum wage but also wage theft enforcement and earned paid sick days, too. On **September 18th**, over 500 workers, community, and faith leaders will march to stand up against poverty and wage theft. Contact [Nina](#) if you are interested in joining us for this powerful action. We anticipate many more actions, council visits, and hearings in the next few months.

### **Santa Monica**

Santa Monica launched its campaign to increase the minimum wage on September with a launch party. The goal is to do something even greater than Los Angeles City and County. Emcee for the launch party was former CLUE board member and 2014 Giant of Justice, **Vivian Rothstein**. **Mayor Kevin McKeown** spoke in support of a minimum wage increase, and the panel included 2015 Giant of Justice **Rabbi Neil Comess-Daniels**, Elsa Mercado of the Viceroy hotel, Joe Silva of the Doubletree hotel, Sophia Cheng of the [Restaurant Opportunities Center–Los Angeles](#), and Derek Smith of Unite Here Local 11. The closing prayer was by **Rev. Nathan Rugh**.

Santa Monica has been in the forefront of fighting working poverty. Now, we have a chance to raise to wage for all who work in this city. Hope you will be a part of this historic change.

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## ***Reinstate Your Workers, Pico Rivera Walmart!***



**"Even though I was working at Walmart, I could not afford my rent. I think it's a shame that workers, including myself, are homeless. We should not be homeless if we are working. I strongly feel Walmart should reinstate us and give us a better pay rate." - Jenny Mills, OUR Walmart**

On September 10th, in front of the temporarily closed Pico Rivera Walmart, clergy stood with OUR Walmart in solidarity at a [protest and press conference](#) that voiced the need for reinstatement and better wages – a direct reaction to the 530 employees who were fired due to "[plumbing issues](#)" with only a [5-hour notice](#).

At the press conference, personal stories like Mills' (above) and other similar stories were shared. However, the platform was not limited to stories of struggle and speaking against the evils inflicted by Walmart. Workers, community members and leaders, and clergy also protested that they will not stop

fighting until Walmart reinstates the hundreds of workers they laid off. And if the needs of the workers are not being met, then Walmart can expect to see us at the store's opening.

**"Today, we see bread on this table. It is a symbol of the bread that we all work so hard to put on the tables for our families. It is also a reminder of our unity, and our strength, and the hope we find in coming together to stand up to the King Herod of our day -- Walmart. They think we can be broken by lashing out at some of our vocal leaders. But all they have accomplished is to bring us closer together and deepen our resolve, and helped us see that in our unity, we can find strength to carry on. In the end, did King Herod win out in defeating their movement? No, the movement grew and grew and grew to be so much greater than his tiny kingdom.**

**Today, THIS movement -- OUR movement -- is launching a food drive to support these workers who are unjustly laid off, and to support any and all Walmart workers who are experiencing food insecurity." -Reverend Andrew Schwiebert**

(To read the full sermon, please click [here](#).)

Pico Rivera Walmart workers are facing hunger issues. Here are some ways you can help: (a) invite a Walmart worker to share his/her story at your congregation; and/or (b) hold a consistently held food drive of non-perishable foods that can be donated to a local Pico Rivera church. Also, we urge you to sign this religious letter addressed to Doug McMillion, President and CEO of Wal-Mart.

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### ***CLUE-LA and CLUE-OC are Uniting: CLUE***



Our first CLUE-OC Committee meeting with CLUE-LA at Templo Calvario in Santa Ana, August 4, 2015. Economic and Restorative Justice in Santa Ana, district elections in Anaheim, Hyatt workers in Garden Drove, and Living Wages in Irvine were among the issues discussed.



CLUE-LA Board meeting, July 7, 2015, where three CLUE-OC board members were added to the newly-renamed CLUE board.



Father Arturo Querijero of Saint Matthew Ecumenical Catholic Church demanding justice for Hyatt Garden Grove workers.

After considerable discussion, guided by the notion that we should PURSUE JUSTICE (Deut 16:20), CLUE-LA and CLUE-OC leaders have chosen to unite organizations together into a super-CLUE! By December 31st, 2015, CLUE will serve as a regional powerhouse dedicated to justice and working families in both Orange and Los Angeles counties. We would like to welcome our new board and staff members to the reconstituted CLUE:

Board: Rev. Sarah Halverson-Cano, Rabbi Steve Einstein, Beatriz Topete  
Staff: Joyce Cottage, Karina Paredes-Arzola, Sandra Ortega

We are excited to partner with our wonderful allies in Orange County to Build a Just and Sacred Society!

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# ***CLUE's 7th Annual Labor in the Pulpit, September 6th 2015***



Jenny Mills, OUR Walmart

This past Labor Day, CLUE brought workers into congregations throughout the southland, accompanying workers as they shared their plight.

Here is the list of congregations that participated:

West LA

[Culver Palms UMC](#) (Rev. Leonardo Wilborn)

Walmart & Flying Foods

Faith-Rooted Organizer: Grecia Reyes

Long Beach

[Trinity Lutheran Church of Long Beach](#) (Rev. Scott Fritz)

Long Beach Hospitality

Faith-Rooted Organizer: Nina Fernando

The Valley

[Emerson UU Canoga Park](#) (Rev. Mike Young)

El Super

Faith-Rooted Organizer: Angie Jimenez

Downtown

[Centenary United Methodist Church](#) (Rev. Mark Nakagawa)

OUR Walmart

Faith-Rooted Organizer: Gabriella Rosco

Pasadena

[Throop UU](#) (Rev. Tera Little)

Restaurant Opportunities Center Los Angeles

Executive Director: Rabbi Jonathan Klein

Pasadena  
First Congregational Church of Pasadena (Rev. Andrew Schwiebert)  
Restaurant Opportunities Center Los Angeles

Pasadena  
Urban Village of Pasadena (Elbert Newton)  
Faith-Rooted Organizer: Robert Cristo

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## ***UCARE*** ***(Unaccompanied Central American Refugees for Empowerment)***



The past three months there have been a wonderful display of faith-in-action to foster and build a network of support and care around refugee children and their families. These are some of the things we celebrate:

- [The California Pacific Conference of the United Methodist Church](#), for providing free summer camp attendance in the mountains for the unaccompanied immigrant children
- Opening the first "Welcoming Congregation" for families in North Hollywood,
- Our allies obtaining an injunction to prevent the U.S. Government from holding children and their mothers indefinitely at detention centers

- [World Vision](#), for donating thirty-three pallets to CLUE loaded with **800 backpacks** stuffed with school supplies and hygiene items for the children and their extended families.

We also had successful national TV press coverage of the "Welcoming Center" at United Methodist Church and held the first "Prayer Breakfast Resource Event" for the children and families at CARECEN, where faith leaders **served food to about 150 families while distributing the donated backpacks.**

We are also thankful for World Vision providing CLUE with a \$25,000 grant to further our work with these youth in risk. Thank you!

Also, thank you to [Presbyterian Disaster Assistance](#), for ongoing support for this important work!

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Please sign onto this [letter](#) from faith leaders for Senator Feinstein and Boxer on Community Trust Policies.

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The day is coming to a close, and with it arrives the Jewish holiday of Rosh HaShanah. Rosh HaShanah has the word "Shinui," or change, embedded in it. As we close one year and begin another one, may it bring many changes, for personal growth and the strength for us as a society to meet the challenges of a fragile world with deep resolve to fix that which is broken. As I blow the *Shofar* this season, I hope it will usher in *Hishtaprut* (improvement) for all.

Shanah Tovah U'Metukah,  
A Sweet New Year!



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