

Celebrating Labor



Labor Day is coming soon — Monday, September 7, 2020. Will you have a Service honoring it?

Congress and President Cleveland designated it as a federal holiday — a day meant to honor and support labor after 250,000 workers in 27 states joined forces with the Pullman Company workers who were striking because their wages had been cut, but their rent in company-owned housing was not.

What is your Congregation doing to celebrate the Day or even the concept — at a time when union membership has been drastically cut (starting with President Reagan’s union busting in the 80’s), at a time when millions of workers are unemployed because of the COVID Virus, and millions are being pushed to poverty; at a time when so many of us are realizing for the first time how very much we all, depend upon our nation’s labor?

What is your Congregation doing to celebrate the Day or even the concept when our recent UUA General Assembly approved UUJEC’s “The Pandemic: A Religious Response” which speaks for justice for all Americans; when the Interfaith

Worker Justice (www.iwj.org), the Poor People’s Campaign (www.poorpeoplescampaign.org) and the Southern Workers Assembly (southernworker.org) are national resources ready to help UU congregations celebrate and support labor?

And do your Coffee Hours use Equal Exchange Products, and your Services resound with hymns such as # 109 (often known as Bread and Roses), #305 (DeColores, identified with farm workers) and #169 (We Shall Overcome) that are found in our gray "Singing the Living Tradition" hymnal?

Please speak to your congregation about the need for economic justice during and after the pandemic. Use songs and stories to celebrate today's working people and to call attention to their experiences and their concerns. In the United States, the major holidays are exploited by capitalism. It's possible to liberate and reshape holidays like Labor Day. Even a small fellowship, with limited resources, can send a holiday message that will do some good.