



FAITH & FACTS

Living Wage

Economic and Environmental Justice

What does the Bible say?

Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness and his upper rooms by injustice; who makes his neighbors work for nothing, and does not give them their wages. **(Jeremiah 22:13)**

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 5:4)**

How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses to help? **(1 John 3:17)**

God has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; God has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. **(Luke 1:52-53)**



What does The United Methodist Church say?

As early as 1908, the Methodist Church stood for "A living wage in every industry. The highest wage that each industry can afford, and for the most equitable division of the products of industry that can ultimately be devised."
(1908 Social Creed)

Every person has the right to a job at a living wage. Where the private sector cannot or does not provide jobs for all who seek and need them, it is the responsibility of government to provide for the creation of such jobs. (Social Principles, ¶163.C)

In calling for a living wage in every industry, The United Methodist Church recognizes its own responsibility to model fair and faithful compensation. To this end, The United Methodist Church adopts the living wage as a model for justice in the world and in the household of faith.
(2008 Book of Resolutions, "Living Wage Model")

The United Methodist Church supports efforts in the U.S. Congress to raise the minimum wage to a living wage and index it to inflation
(2008 Book of Resolutions, "Rights of Workers")



What do the facts say?

After 10 years frozen at \$5.15 per hour, the U.S. federal minimum wage will rise to \$7.25 in July 2009. Even after the increase is fully phased in, this wage will still be \$2 lower (in inflation adjusted dollars) than the minimum wage in 1968.



The U.S. federal poverty threshold for a household with one adult and two children is \$16,530. If that adult earns the new minimum wage (\$7.25 after 7/24/09) and works 40 hours per week 52 weeks per year, s/he would earn only \$15,080 before taxes.

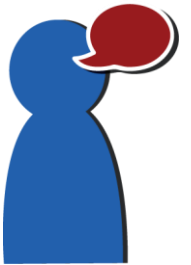
Ratios of executive to worker pay (dollars earned by executives for each dollar earned by a worker): Japan 11:1, Germany 12:1, South Africa 22:1, Great Britain 22:1, USA 455:1. *(The Economist Magazine)*

12.5% of U.S. residents (and 18% of all children) live in poverty: 37.3 million people including 13.3 million children. *(US Census Bureau – statistics are for 2007 - the latest year available)*

What do you say?

Take action for justice ...

- **Get involved!** Visit Let Justice Roll, a faith community effort to support fairer wages across the country. Go to www.letjusticeroll.org for information, worship resources and contact information to help you connect with activists in your state or community.
- In the U.S., write your Member of Congress and ask them to support efforts to increase the minimum wage and make it a living wage. Take action at www.umpower.org.
- Find out if your local church has adopted a living wage model for its entire staff.



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