

For & Dignity. & Respect.

People of Faith Standing with Walmart Workers

We gather today in support of the Workers here at Walmart. We join our voices with those who cry out for justice. We come together to pray and to remember that God is, as the writer of Deuteronomy says, "...a faithful God, without deceit, just and upright is he (Deut. 32:4b)." We pray to a God who longs to see Creation restored and for people to be free – able to live and thrive without struggle and toil.

Let us join together for a responsive reading
Isaiah 55:1-2, 6-9

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters;
and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near;
let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts;
let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Hear what the Lord says. Hear the Creator's call to restoration, the call towards equity. We

gather here to speak into the lives of those who have power over us. Those who have authority to provide and to withhold. The ones who reign on this earth and impose their desires on those beneath them. The ones who the prophet Zephaniah calls out when he says:

*Ah, soiled, defiled
Oppressing city!
It has listened to no voice;
It has accepted no correction.
It has not trusted in the LORD;
It has not drawn near its God.*

*The officials within it
Are roaring lions;
Its judges are evening wolves
That leave nothing until the morning
Its prophets are reckless,
Faithless persons;
Its priests have profaned what is sacred,
They have done violence to the law.
(Zeph. 3:1-4)*

We see the oppression placed on the backs of the people and we pray.

Creator God, we ask for fair wages in a time of want. We ask that we might be treated and

afforded the dignity of being paid for the work we do and paid fairly.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We ask for Walmart to stop the bribery and coercion so that they might get what they want and deny people what they need. Let them remember that, "You must not distort justice; you must not show partiality; and you must not accept bribes, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of those who are in the right."

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We ask for the board of Walmart to listen to the words of the God that they claim to serve. To remember what the prophets and the gospels say, and to cease their oppression of not only their own workers but the people in their neighborhoods and cities.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We ask for the officials of this city and cities around this country to look out for their own people and not be tempted by the siren's call of financial ease. May they see what this kind of dealing does to a neighborhood, and defend their own people instead of sacrificing them before the god of the Almighty Dollar.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for those in this neighborhood and neighborhoods around this country that suffer because of the acts of a juggernaut like Walmart. Give your people strength to fight the oppression that they suffer at the hands of such a corporation. Give the small business owners success that they might continue to thrive even the face of such struggle.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Finally, we pray for the restoration of your Creation. We long for the day when heaven and earth are one, and the days of oppression are over. We long to see your will worked out on this earth even now. We long for the day when all are cared for and no one wants for anything.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

To the ones who control the Walmart corporation. We cry out against you. We cry out against your oppressive scheduling practices. We cry out against your degrading treatment of workers. We cry out against your low paying jobs. We confront you on your own claimed beliefs. Many of you claim a faith tradition, and yet you do not listen to the words of your own faith. You oppress the weak. You degrade your fellow humans. You live off the fat of the land and make the people toil to survive. You are not what you claim to be, and yet you continue to lie. Listen to the words of the Psalmist and heed his cry:

Depart from evil, and do good;

So you shall abide forever.

For the LORD loves justice;

He will not forsake his faithful ones.

(Ps. 37:27-28)

Remember the one whom you claim to serve and hear how you have treated him:

The Rock, his work is perfect,

And all his ways are just.

A faithful God, without deceit,

Just and upright is he;

Yet his degenerate children have dealt

Falsely with him,

A perverse and crooked generation.

Do you thus repay the LORD,

O foolish and senseless people?

(Deut. 32:4-6)

Do you thus repay the LORD, Walmart? Do you claim to believe in the One who created you and your workers and the land you sit upon and yet still oppress those whom you employ? Do you take your wealth and use it for selfish gain? Why do you oppress your people? Why do you use your wealth for selfish gain? Does the American Dream seduce you so much? Are you lost to the incense you burn to your gods of Money and Power? Hear what the Psalmist says:

*They sacrificed to demons, not God,
To deities they had never known,
To new ones recently arrived,
Whom your ancestors had not feared.*

*You were unmindful of the Rock that Bore you;
You forgot the God who gave you birth*
(Ps. 37:17-18)

Depart from the false gods of Money and Power. Return to the God who bore you. Return to justice that you might receive mercy. Give mercy to your own workers. Show mercy to those who serve you. Remember that this is not yours. You are a steward of Creation. Be not selfish with that which is not your own.

As we leave this vigil, let us remember that the Creator is on our side. Let us sing of the joy that is to come. Let us not wallow in the misery of our oppression, but rejoice in the justice which is to come.

Isaiah 55:10-13

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,

and do not return there until they have watered the earth,
*making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,*

so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
*but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.*

For you shall go out in joy,
and be led back in peace;
the mountains and the hills before you
shall burst into song,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

*Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;
and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial,
for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.*

Amen.



1020 W. Bryn Mawr
Chicago, IL 60660
773-728-8400
www.iwj.org