



**WISCONSIN FAITH VOICES FOR JUSTICE  
Presents**

**THE MINIMUM WAGE CHALLENGE**

As people of faith, we honor the dignity of work and the ability it should bring to provide your family with the essentials – food, housing, clothing, medical care, transportation, and those things which bring joy to your life. Unfortunately, for hundreds of thousands of hard-working Wisconsinites making minimum wage, too many of these essentials are out of reach.

Just as one example - in Madison, fair market rates for rent on a 2-bedroom apartment is \$898/month. (<http://frugallandlord.com/2014-HUD-Fair-Market-Rents/WI> Go here to find the cost of rentals in your area.) To afford that rent on minimum wage, you would have to work 95 hours a week.

The minimum wage in Wisconsin currently matches the federal minimum wage of \$7.25/hr. At this rate of pay, a minimum wage worker’s weekly income is \$290. Subtracting average taxes and housing costs, the average worker has \$77 available each week to spend on all the rest of her expenses (55% of minimum wage workers nationally are women).

Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice challenges clergy, legislators, journalists, and individuals to take the Minimum Wage Challenge to gain insights into the daily struggles minimum-wage workers face just trying to make ends meet. Choose a week and see if you can live on \$11 a day. What would this mean for your daily living? Many low-income workers do not have credit cards or checking accounts, so put away your credit cards and checkbooks. Gas and auto insurance are probably out of reach, so public transportation is the only way to go! Your morning latte is an unaffordable luxury. What else would change in your week’s routine?

**Two Ways to Take the Challenge:**

<p>1. <b><u>In Real Time</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spend no more than \$11 a day for the whole week.</li> <li>• Keep track of what you spend money on.</li> </ul>	<p>2. <b><u>Virtually</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Record every time you spend money. What did you spend it on? Did you pay cash, write a check, use your</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>AND Join the Community</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track your daily expenditures in your Minimum Wage Challenge Checkbook</li> <li>• Share with us: Post</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most low-income workers do not have credit cards or checking accounts, so put away your credit cards and checkbooks.</li> <li>• Gas and auto insurance are probably out of reach, so public transportation is the only way to go!</li> <li>• What choices did you have to make about what to spend your \$11 on, and what did you have to forgo? Did your morning latte is an unaffordable luxury? What else would change in your week's routine?</li> </ul>	<p>credit card? Include any automatic payments you make in a week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep a running total each day. Note when you have used up your \$11 allotment.</li> <li>• How far into each day did you get before you exceeded your budget?</li> </ul>	<p>something to our FaceBook Minimum Wage Blog about your experiences during the Minimum Wage Challenge (. How would your day have been different if you really only made minimum wage?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share with your community: Join us on social media using the hashtag #raisethewage</li> </ul>
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For some of us, living on minimum wage is not an exercise, it is a reality. We want to hear from workers about your lived experience. Please share on [WFVJ Minimum Wage Challenge Blog](#) on FaceBook as far as you are comfortable: How would your day have been different if you made a living wage? For those taking the challenge, please share on the Blog what this exercise meant to you.

Of course, taking the Challenge for a week cannot truly duplicate the experience of minimum wage workers who subsist on this income all the time. What it can do, however, is to help us gain some insights, spark conversation, and hopefully impel us to take action to let our legislators know we want them to raise Wisconsin's minimum wage to a true living wage.

**For more information and to pledge to take the Challenge, go to <http://wisconsinfaithvoicesforjustice.weebly.com/toolkit-minimum-wage-challenge.html>**