

AFL-CIO BLESSING Given 10.18.17

Opening Session Oklahoma State AFL-CIO Convention by Reverend Lori Walke, Associate Minister
Mayflower Congregational Church, UCC

"I would like to offer a blessing over the AFL-CIO. This week is full of learning, planning, and organizing - work that is not always easy. It's unlikely you'll get a pat-on the-back, so I'd like to name the ways you are a blessing to our state and communities. If you've never received a blessing before, don't worry. You just get to bask it in - nothing else required.

Bless you, teachers, firefighters, plumbers, bakers, painters, engineers, pilots, grocers, public employees, letter carriers, welders, doctors, nurses - the heart and soul of the AFL-CIO - bless you. Without you, the AFL-CIO does not exist. There would be no one to advocate on behalf of workers and families. There would be no one to collect stories, to show up when things get hard, to speak for those who have been silenced. There would be no one to demand accountability. The values of AFL-CIO are reflective of your heart and your spirit. May you always stay true to family, progress, and community.

Bless you. Bless you, AFL-CIO, for knowing that trickle-down economics is, and always has been a lie. When people are paid a living wage, when they have access to education and training, when they are safe at work, everyone is better off, top to bottom. May the AFLCIO continue to lift the lives of our entire community through its work.

Bless the messy, frustrating, important work of collective bargaining. Bless the arguing, the back-and-forth, and the impasse. Bless the compromise, the give-and take, and the final agreement. Bless the process by which we hear the other side and they hear ours. May it always be that no one gets everything, but everyone gets something.

Bless you, AFL-CIO, for showing up to knock doors, stuff envelopes, and make phone calls for candidates who advocate for you. It's one thing to say you'll support a candidate; it's another to actually get out the vote for them. They cannot do it without you.

Bless you, AFL-CIO, for believing everyone should have access to quality, affordable health care. Perhaps you could put in a call to Congress. They seem to be having trouble lately. Gracious God, we know that there is still much to be done, but the good news is there seem to be plenty of volunteers in the room, and we know that many hands make light work.

Bless this room of workers, doers, and change-makers, for they are making a better world for all of us. May the rest of us do all we can to be counted among you.

Bless you, AFL-CIO, bless you.

Amen."