

# The quiet conversation about a living wage

By HEBER TAYLOR | Posted: Monday, September 1, 2014 12:00 am

Quietly, a discussion has been going on in Galveston County about the notion of a living wage.

The discussion has not been initiated by political parties. The conversation has been largely initiated by people of faith, people who unashamedly talk about the obligation to love their neighbors as they love themselves.

Last year, Gulf Coast Interfaith had a Living Wage Conference at Live Oak Baptist Church in Galveston. A second conference is scheduled this month.

A living wage is a relevant topic today as we recall the social and economic gains of the American worker, including the eight-hour day and the 40-hour week. Those gains don't mean much to the people who work two or three jobs. There are no eight-hour days, no 40-hour weeks for the working poor.

So how much would you have to earn to get by on one job? What wage would you have to get to meet average expenses, adjusted for average prices in this county?

That, in a nutshell, is the idea of a living wage. The idea was developed by the Economic Policy Institute. The Living Wage Calculator is now maintained by Amy K. Glasmeier and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

In celebration of Labor Day, take a look at the Living Wage Calculator for Galveston County. Find the category that fits you or your family. Think for a minute about your monthly budget.

Could you live on that?