

## **Faith Action for Community Equity--FACE**

by Bob Joseph

FACE is an interfaith, grassroots organization on the islands of Oahu and Maui. Founded in 1995, FACE uses the power of collaboration to take faith values into the public sphere and work for social justice in our community. Calvary-by-the-Sea Lutheran Church is one of about 30 churches, synagogues, temples, and housing associations on Oahu that have joined FACE. (There is a similar number of FACE members on Maui.)

Last autumn FACE held over 60 talk story sessions with FACE members to identify areas of pressing concern. The principal concern that emerged was economic insecurity and the FACE response was a campaign to raise the minimum wage. A second area of concern was the rapid growth of an aging population, and FACE has developed a proposal for public long-term care insurance. Other concerns included affordable housing, public education, and the need to improve conditions for new immigrants to the State.

In the past year FACE scored a major success in working with other groups to see the Legislature pass a minimum wage bill on 23rd May 2014, which raises the minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10 per hour over a three-year period.

FACE has been active on the state commission on long-term care and is working to implement the recommendations made by the commission--which may include a public long-term care insurance fund.

One of the major barriers to full participation in the society is inability to drive legally. FACE achieved another major success in reversing the "English only" policy for drivers' license exams, and the Department of Transportation is now translating all of its tests to all the relevant languages. FACE is also continuing to work on several other immigration initiatives.

FACE is continuing to work on affordable housing. Influencing what the City plans to do with three mixed-income projects in Chinatown is a continuing FACE concern, as well as the inequitable rent schedule which has evolved over several years.

Each summer is the annual FACE Investment Drive in which we ask members of our units to contribute to the operation of FACE, and we also request support from corporations and foundations. In August I will include envelopes in the Sunday bulletin which you may use to further invest in FACE's activities. I have set Calvary a goal of \$2,000, and we already have \$500 from an anonymous donor. The Investment Drive runs through 15th August.