

FALL 2021

# NATIONAL FARM WORKER MINISTRY NEWS & VIEWS

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National  
Farm Worker  
MINISTRY

## Message from the Executive Director

As I reflect on NFWM's last 50 years of history, I am struck by several things. First, I am reminded of those who were there in the early days. They were people inspired by farm workers, dismayed at the terrible conditions farm



Chris Hartmire, Sue Miner, Cesar Chavez

workers faced, touched by the faith and determination these workers exhibited, and invited to join the struggle. Through migrant ministries, people of faith and conscience brought much needed supplies, services, a shared faith, and their presence to farm labor camps around the country - where farm workers existed in isolation, often hidden from view. It was about relationships; it was about solidarity; it was about friendship; it was about a shared faith. It still is.

Over the years, it was clear that farm workers appreciated the charity offered through migrant ministries but really wanted/want solidarity in their farm worker campaigns. The Ministry has adapted and focused on education and mobilization to join farm workers as they boycott, march, protest, and seek to raise awareness in the wider public.

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The meeting to become incorporated as the National Farm Worker Ministry was 50 years ago. There have been a variety of changes over the years such as: moving from carbon copies of letters to electronic outreach; changing national office locations from CA to Chicago to St. Louis, (and maybe others) to its current location in Raleigh, NC. The United Farm Workers Union was NFWM's first farm worker partner, and in the last 50 years we have added many others and seek to support many more as they continue leading the charge in the farm worker movement. Each farm worker group, union, coalition, association, committee, etc., brings a unique perspective based on those they represent. NFWM is committed to supporting all of them in the best way possible utilizing our supporters for state or regional engagement while also leveraging our position as a national organization to address corporations as consumers and legislation as citizens. It is challenging but it is what we are called to do.

I was inspired at our summer board meeting by someone who shared a story of Pat Drydyk's (a former NFWM Director) response to the challenge that she couldn't possibly be a nun because she didn't wear a habit. Sister Pat said, "I wear the habit of social justice."

¡Presente! Pat Drydyk and thank you for giving us that example. We wear the sign/message/clothing/presence of social justice with you!

Another inspiring moment from the board meeting was when Mary Jean Friel shared about watching a young farm worker woman non-violently exercising her right to protest by yelling in jail. Her response when asked why she was doing this, "If we're going to exercise, we can do it loudly especially when something is wrong." Si se puede! Yes, sometimes LOUD is necessary.

At the core of creation is love, friends. Love is the simple, yet profound definition of who God is and who we should be to each other. It is the motivation and reality, as Bro. Mark Schroeder shared at our meeting, of the fourth word in our name: Ministry. If Ministry is transformation as so many have expressed, it is transformation by relationship, and love is the path.

Our work is not complete but continues as we work together to be in solidarity, in relationship, and joined in faith with farm workers until they have justice. Thank you for sharing this journey of more than 50 years past into a future where it will be made visible. Si Se Puede!

Julie Taylor, Executive Director of NFWM

## Founding Member Organizations in 1971:

The United Methodist Church Board of Missions, National Division;  
The California Church Council, California Migrant Ministry;  
The Church of the Brethren World Ministries Commission;  
The Christian Church (Disciples) Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Church and Society;  
The UPUSA Board of National Missions (PCUSA);  
The LCA Board of Social Ministry (ELCA);  
Church Women United, Inc.;  
The United Church Board for Homeland Ministries (UCC)  
The Florida Christian Migrant Ministry;  
The Wisconsin Council of Churches Wisconsin Migrant Mission

To see current member organizations go to <http://nfwm.org/faith-based-partners/member-and-supporting-organizations/>

# BAT Faith Leader Letter News



This spring NFWM participated in FLOC's campaign with British American Tobacco (who own Reynolds American Tobacco) by asking faith leaders to sign on to a letter which asked for BAT to guarantee freedom of association without retaliation to farm workers employed on Reynolds American contract farms and prohibit contract growers and H2A farm labor contractors from retaliation against farm workers for exercising basic workplace rights, such as signing union cards, advocating for higher wages, or organizing for better living and working conditions.

Over 600 faith leaders signed the letter which was mailed, emailed and presented to British American Tobacco via a virtual meeting.

BAT responded to NFWM with a letter of their own. Their response was through the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company from Chris Dixon, VP Leaf, and included the following, "Mr. Jobin requested that I write on behalf of R.J. Reynolds to accept your request for a meeting. Consider that, as a matter of policy, BAT and R.J. Reynolds agree with you: Employers must not retaliate against workers for

exercising their rights, including their right to freedom of association.

The real work is in designing processes and programs to prevent, identify, and address violations of worker rights. Built into these processes is the concept of continuous improvement requires feedback from stakeholders. We look forward to hearing your views on these issues; appreciate the chance to describe our present supply chain responsibility program; and we welcome any feedback you might have to offer."

Although they claim to agree that farm workers deserve freedom of association and the right to organize without retaliation, BAT is not taking direct responsibility and we have to hold them accountable.

On October 15th, Reynolds reached out to NFWM, directly, to set up a meeting between Reynolds and some of the faith leaders. NFWM is coordinating with FLOC and the other faith leaders to prepare for the meeting. The letter and the 600+ signatures of faith leaders made a difference! Stay tuned for our next actions and THANK YOU for being part of this.



**American  
Friends  
Service  
Committee**

**NFWM Welcomes a New  
Member Organization  
The American Friends  
Service Committee (AFSC)  
of Florida**

AFSC Florida has agreed to the NFWM Membership Covenant and has joined NFWM. AFSC Florida builds the power of refugees and immigrants in South Florida through leadership development, community education, cultural work, art, coalition building, and campaigns for immigrant rights. They also accompany individuals and families through the complex immigration system by assisting clients in the process of becoming legal residents or naturalized citizens. Their leader is Lis-Marie Alvarado.

**To read more about the  
organization, go to  
[www.afsc.org](http://www.afsc.org)**

# **NFWM Summer Board Meeting Report**

**By Kimberly Emery**

The Board of the National Farm Worker Ministry (NFWM) held its summer meeting (July 23-24) on Zoom. Hopefully, the Board will be able to meet in person in California for its winter meeting in January and return to its tradition of participating in direct action to support farm workers. In the meantime, NFWM continues with its mission to “educate, equip, and mobilize” in support of farm worker-led efforts for justice. As the Ministry’s Executive Director wrote in her report to the Board, “Our work is not complete but continues as we seek, together, to be in solidarity, in relationship, joined in faith with farm workers until they have justice.”

There were reports on NFWM’s communications efforts, the Harvest of Justice season, the 50th Anniversary of the incorporation of NFWM, and the online history exhibit. On Friday night, there was a presentation about “How Faith Has Played a Role in the Farm Worker Movement” from a variety of faith leader from over the years of NFWM. It was an inspiring and story filled evening.

Abel Luna, the Campaign Coordinator for Migrant Justice provided an update on the Milk with Dignity Program and their work with Hannaford Foods; Baldemar Velasquez, President and Founder of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), spoke about organizing tobacco farm workers in NC and the campaign against British American Tobacco (Reynolds contract farms in the US), and Mily Trevino-Sauceda, Executive Director of Alianza Nacional de Campesinas shared details about her organization’s advocacy on behalf of farm worker women. Their struggles are ongoing and the NFWM stands in solidarity with them. May we be united in their struggle. Si, Se Puede.

***As Cesar Chavez once declared, “It’s ironic that those who till the soil, cultivate and harvest the fruits, vegetables, and other foods that fill your tables with abundance have nothing left for themselves.”***



# Harvest of Justice 2021: Farm Workers & Food Justice



Harvest of Justice 2021: Farm Workers and Food Justice focused on the overwhelming irony that the farm workers that feed the US face environmental, political, economic, and structural barriers that prevent them from being able to sustainably feed their families in affordable, healthy, and culturally appropriate ways. This season explored short-term and long-term solutions, recognizing that NFWM is focused on the long-term solutions that bring about systemic change.

In September, NFWM staff participated in a short-term solution, an emergency relief effort for local NC farm workers organized by the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) and Triangle Friends of Farmworkers (TFF). Although hunger relief efforts are important and needed, farm workers shouldn't have to rely on these programs to feed themselves and their families. This is why long-term systemic change is needed!

One of the long-term solutions suggested in the Harvest of Justice this year is to support food certification programs that help farm workers. The following efforts by a number of organizations are to collaborate with farm workers, farmers, restaurants, and grocery stores to ensure fair treatment and pay for all parties involved in getting food from fields to kitchen tables. Learn more about these solutions to create food justice, food security, and food sovereignty for farm workers in our Harvest of Justice 2021 resources, available on our website.

## Food Certification Programs



# NFWM News



## Thank you, Kim Lamberty

NFWM appreciates having Kim Lamberty as part of our board of directors for the last few years. Her representation of the Society of the Sacred Heart has been helpful to keep their order informed and to support NFWM efforts. We are especially grateful for her work as a reader on our Farm Workers and the Environment resource in 2020. Kimberly left her position as the Director of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation and she has accepted the role of executive director at the Quixote Center. NFWM wishes her the best in her new position.

## Thank You, Emily Miller

Emily Miller, our Director of Communications for the last 22 months, left NFWM on September 3rd to take on a new challenge. She did good work for us during her time with the Ministry and she's looking forward to the next adventure in her life. Of particular note is her work on Harvest of Justice materials including the oversight of our annual



videos. With this year's theme, Food Justice, Emily wrote the six sessions on the website. Perhaps her greatest effort was to create an online history exhibit for the 50th Anniversary which went live earlier this year. About that, Emily says, **"A particular highlight of my time with NFWM, and of my career itself, was the honor of hearing your stories and involvement over the 50 years of NFWM, and even longer than that in the movement as we built the online history project."**

While she will be missed at the Ministry, we wish Emily the best in her new work. She will remain part of farm worker advocacy and will continue to be part of the NFWM family as well.

## Goodbye to Tomo Waters

Tomo Waters was NFWM's 2021 Summer Duke Divinity intern. In her second year at Duke, she hopes to pursue a vocation as a deacon to serve immigrant communities and/or people in prisons, potentially within a legal profession.

During her time at NFWM Tomo organized a restaurant fundraiser, researched our Harvest of Justice topic for 2022, updated our digital agricultural timeline, wrote and presented for our board meeting, and participated in a protest put on by SAF and TTF. NFWM staff and board members are incredibly grateful for her contributions and enjoyed getting to know and work with her this past summer.



SAF Boycott Vuse Protest at Circle K  
Fayetteville, NC July 3, 2021

## Welcome Ian Goymer



A warm welcome to Ian Goymer, NFWM's Duke Divinity Intern for the 2021-2022 school year! He is in his second year at Duke, enrolled in the Masters of Divinity program. He was born and raised in Birmingham, Alabama.

Ian attended a small liberal arts college called Birmingham-Southern College, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies. He is a certified candidate for ministry in the United Methodist Church and is discerning whether he will become an ordained Deacon. He has recently been feeling called toward social work and is looking forward to learning a great deal about social advocacy and public outreach during his time with NFWM!



## ¡Presente! Sr. Pearl McGivney, SL

Sister Pearl McGivney, SL passed away Oct 11, 2020. She was elected president of the Loretto Community in 2013 and served until 2018. Her passion to work with farm workers began in 1968 when she saw a documentary film, "Harvest of Shame." Sister Pearl joined the UFW staff in 1972, where she and Mary Jean Friel shared a room and became life-long friends. She worked with Mary Jean, Cesar Chavez, and many others in the farm worker movement throughout her life where she experienced a powerful sense of what she believed to be her calling as a "contemplative in action."



## National Farm Worker Ministry

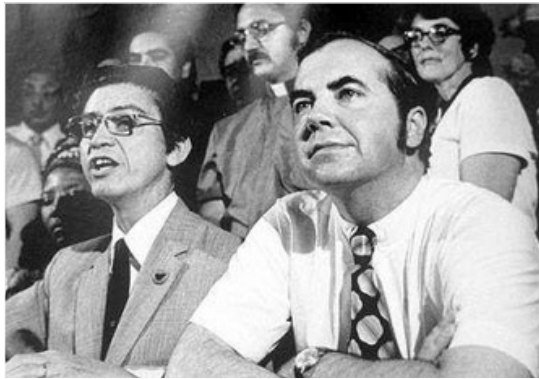
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## 50 years ago...



In January 1971, The NCCC (National Council of Churches) and CWU (Church Women United, Inc.) sponsored a consultation in Atlanta that was attended by Cesar Chavez. They planned for a February meeting in New York City, opening themselves from previously being an all-Protestant migrant ministry to invite Roman Catholic groups.

In November 1971, an executive committee of the following signed papers to incorporate as the National Farm Worker Ministry:

**Rev. Leo Nieto**, Section of Home Fields, Natl. Div. Board of Missions, The United Methodist Church

**Rev. A. Garnett Day, Jr.**, Dept. of Church and Society, Div. of Homeland Ministries, The Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ)

**Rev. Ralph Smeltzer**, World Ministries Commission, Church of the Brethren

**Rev. Kenneth Dahlstrom**, California Migrant Ministry, California Church Council

NFWM was officially incorporated in the state of CA in April of 1972. They were the first officers.

# NFWM

112 Cox St., Ste 208

PO Box 10645

Raleigh, NC 27605

919-807-8707

[nfwm@nfwm.org](mailto:nfwm@nfwm.org)

[www.nfwm.org](http://www.nfwm.org)

Staff Team:

Meagan Fisher

Cathy McGaughey

Julie Taylor