

FALL 2020

NATIONAL FARM WORKER MINISTRY NEWS & VIEWS

In this issue:

**P.1: FROM THE EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR**

P.2: FLOC'S NEW CAMPAIGN

**P.3: NFWM'S STATEMENT ON
BLACK LIVES MATTER**

P.3: WELCOME MFSA!

**P.4-6: NFWM SUMMER 2020
BOARD MEETING REFLECTIONS**

P.7: NFWM UPDATES

**P.8: NEW ONLINE GIVING
PORTAL**



National
Farm Worker
MINISTRY

Message from the Executive Director

How does the Ministry stand with farm workers during a global pandemic? What does it mean to do advocacy and education in the face of the coronavirus? Covid-19 has pushed NFWM to re-examine how we accompany and support farm workers when travel is restricted and physical distancing is required, even as the needs of farm workers are changing as well. Our member organizations are also being pushed to re-examine how they do their work. We at NFWM have focused our efforts on electronic organizing via email, social media, and our website. This has driven some wise decision-making while also keeping our staff safe, but it is not enough for the impact we know is needed. Folks who utilize electronic channels for social justice work are able to stay connected this way and while we are grateful, we recognize that's not everyone.

In 2021, NFWM will celebrate our 50th year of incorporation. The move from migrant ministries with labor camp visits to an organization dedicated to advocacy and participation in farm worker campaigns was the impetus for the decision 50 years ago. Since that time, we have connected faith organizations and called on them to support farm workers – financially, spiritually, and physically. As citizens, consumers, and persons of conscience who seek justice with farm workers, our mission to educate, equip and mobilize to support the farm worker movement has never been more clear – or more essential.

As we head into 2021, we will need your help in all the ways you can to support us and stand with us and with farm workers. It will take creativity. It will take intentionality. It will take commitment. Your prayers, your support as we boycott, as we petition, as we make calls and send emails and letters are all needed, even if those efforts look a bit different. We cannot let the pandemic stop us from delivering results for farm workers in their efforts. It is our legacy as NFWM to bring our faith to the farm worker movement. And we are excited to start the next 50 years, harvesting justice together. Si Se Puede! Yes we can!

**JOIN WITH
FLOC TO STOP
CORRUPT H2A
LABOR
CONTRACTORS!**

**SIGN HERE!
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/
3MVT8R1](https://bit.ly/3MVT8R1)**



FLOC's New Campaign: Stop Corrupt H2A Labor Contractors!

FLOC has been busy launching a new campaign against corrupt H2A labor contractors. The U.S. Department of Labor and corporate giants like Reynolds America have allowed for the growth of exploitative H2A labor contractors that commit human rights abuses with impunity in the agricultural supply chain. In recent years, H2A Labor Contractors have grown exponentially from small players with a few dozen workers to huge operations with thousands of workers working for dozens of farms. In 2020 alone, FLOC members lost over 700 jobs because growers are subcontracting labor out to unscrupulous labor contractors.

What is so Bad About H2A Labor Contractors (H2ALC)?

H2ALCs are almost always out of compliance with laws and provide some of the most abusive working conditions in the agricultural industry. These contractors are also given the power of the federal government to control access to work visas and regularly threaten workers with deportation, punishing economic circumstances, and violence to keep workers from speaking out. H2ALCs convince growers that they can provide a workforce at significantly lower costs and little or no legal liability. These tremendous financial and legal benefits can easily be seen as a safe and profitable way forward for growers. In the end, however, union jobs are lost, workers are exploited, and protections in an already dangerous and notorious industry are rolled back. **Join us and sign the petition calling on the Department of Labor to end the practice of supporting abusive H2A labor contractors.**

NFWM's Statement on Black Lives Matter

The National Farm Worker Ministry (NFWM) calls on people of faith and conscience to be in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, a movement to dismantle white supremacy, end violence against Black lives and, center Black voices as we work together toward justice. Together with NFWM's member organizations and farm worker partners, we join in the call to justice with and for the communities who are subject to government-sanctioned violence, intimidation, and economic exploitation.

NFWM is a faith-based organization that stands with farm workers to struggle against unjust labor conditions in U.S. agriculture. NFWM remains committed to ending violent and exploitative economic systems that especially target communities of color. Farm workers long have suffered racially based economic exploitation along with physical, emotional, and spiritual harm. Today, the multi-billion dollar agribusiness system depends on 2 to 2 ½ million farm workers—mostly Latinx, Black and Indigenous people—who produce our food. Always essential but only recently recognized as such, farm workers long have suffered from low wages, dangerous environmental health conditions, sexual violence, and ongoing intimidation – including family separation, ICE raids and detentions.

NFWM continues our 50-year commitment to struggle for racial and economic justice with and for our farm worker partners. It is out of this history that we stand in solidarity with Black Lives Matter.

The Board of Directors and
Staff of the National Farm Worker Ministry
June 2020

Welcome to our newest member, MFSA!

Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA) is a national progressive social justice nonprofit organization that mobilizes clergy and laity within The United Methodist Church to take action on issues of peace, poverty and people's rights within the church, the nation and the world.

Working primarily through the ministries of the United Methodist Church, MFSA supports and augments peace and justice ministries at the local, conference, and national levels. As an independent organization, MFSA calls the church to expand its understanding of the radical call of the Gospel to be the inclusive, justice-seeking, risk-taking Body of Christ.

Learn more here:
www.mfsaweb.org



NFWM Summer 2020 Board Meeting Goes Virtual

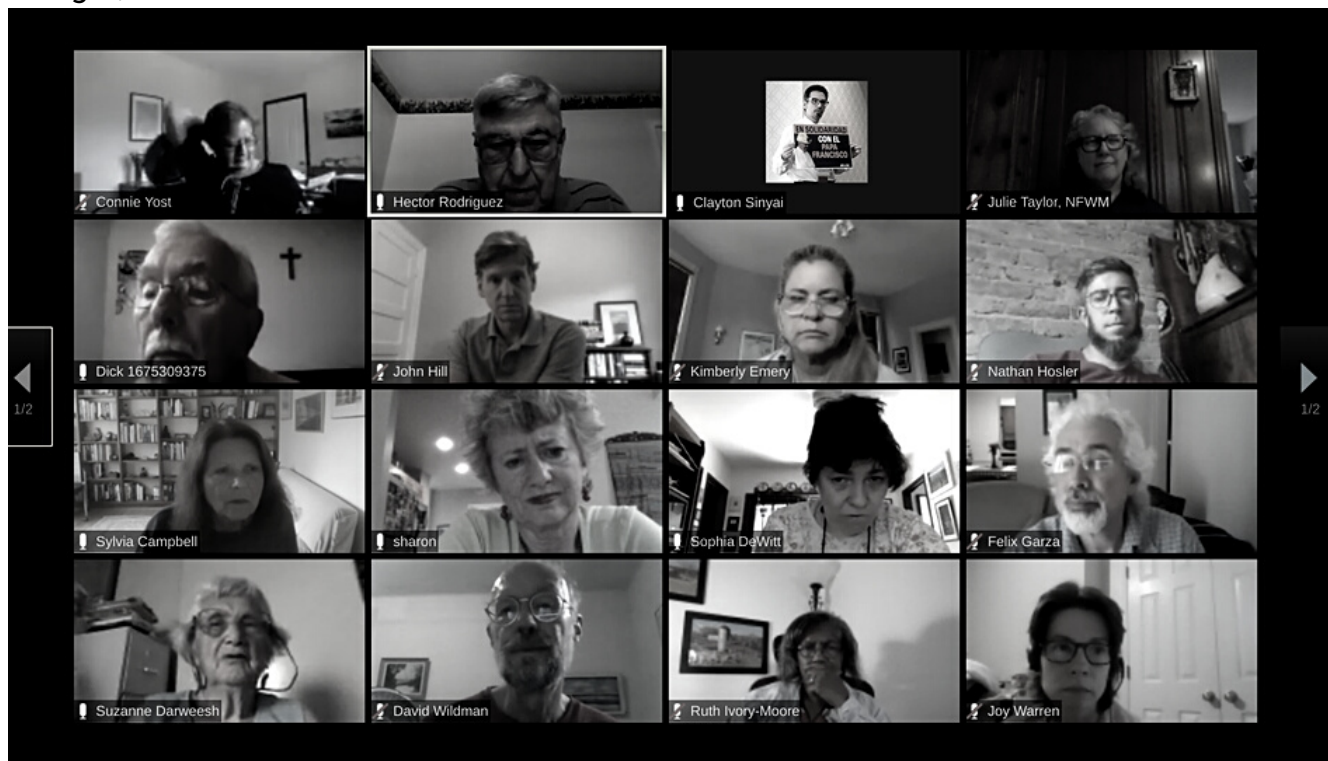
A Reflection from Kimberly Emery, BVM Representative

As we continue to navigate a global pandemic, the Board of the National Farm Worker Ministry (NFWM) held its summer meeting via Zoom. While a highlight of most NFWM board meetings is some type of direct action in support of our farm worker brothers and sisters, those actions are currently on hold. Nevertheless, the NFWM continues to educate about, advocate for and mobilize around farm worker demands for higher wages,

overtime pay and safe working conditions.

The focus of this year's "Harvest of Justice" season was the effect of climate change on farm workers. Materials included information on the effects of heat stress, pesticide exposure and global migration. 2021 marks the 50th Anniversary of the incorporation of NFWM and planning for a year of celebration is underway.

Over the course of our two-day meeting, we learned more about the advocacy efforts by our partner organizations. For example, Madeline Sharrow and Marita Canedo, organizers with Migrant Justice, a Vermont-based, dairy farm worker organization spoke about their success in implementing the "Milk with Dignity" program, which is modeled on the worker-driven socially-responsible Fair Food Program



A few of the NFWM Board of Directors

developed by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers. Baldemar Velasquez, President and Founder of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), an Ohio-based farm worker union told us about FLOC's organizing of farm workers in the ongoing boycott against Reynold's e-cigarette brand, VUSE, and how that work is being impacted by the pandemic.

Rosalinda Guillen, a farm worker and rural justice leader who serves as the Exec. Director of Community to Community in Washington State, updated us on efforts to keep farm workers safe from COVID 19. Latinos account for 43% of the COVID cases in WA despite being only 13% of the population. Jennifer Brown, Board President of Rural & Migrant Ministry, an inter-faith organization in rural New York which supports migrant farm workers, shared the highlights of the Farm Laborers Fair Labor Standards Act, which went into effect in NY in January and includes protections such as overtime pay, workers compensation, and collective bargaining rights.

“

LISTEN!

**THE WAGES OF
THE LABORERS
WHO MOWED
YOUR FIELDS,
WHICH YOU KEPT
BACK BY FRAUD,
CRY OUT,**

**AND THE CRIES OF
THE HARVESTERS
HAVE REACHED
THE EARS OF THE
LORD OF HOSTS.**

JAMES 5:4

A highlight of the weekend was a panel discussion on "Women in Farm Worker Organizing."

Moderated by board vice president Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea (Christian Church, Disciples of Christ), the board heard from panelists **Reyna Lopez**, Executive Director of Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN), **Teresa Romero**, President of United Farm Workers Union (UFW), and **Mily Trevino-Saucedo**, Executive Director and co-founder of Alianza Nacional de Campesinas about the particular challenges facing women organizers.

Check out the full discussion:

<https://vimeo.com/456586089>

Teresa Romero, Mily Trevino-Saucedo, and Reyna Lopez.



The Milk with Dignity Program

The Milk with Dignity Program was created by Migrant Justice, a nonprofit, farm worker-driven human rights organization based in Burlington, Vermont. Migrant Justice educates workers as to their rights and mechanisms for redress under the Program. These educational efforts, together with the Program's complaint process, empower workers to serve as round-the-clock, frontline defenders of their own human rights. Migrant Justice also coordinates a working group of participating farmers and farm workers to provide feedback on the implementation of the program, negotiates with prospective Participating Buyers, and manages relations with existing Participating Buyers.

The Program brings together farm workers, farmers, buyers and consumers to secure dignified working conditions in dairy supply chains. The Program enlists the resources of food industry leaders to provide a premium for milk to participating farmers who agree to work towards compliance with the labor standards in the Milk with Dignity Code of Conduct. The premium helps offset farms' costs of compliance with the Code and rewards farms that comply.

The Meeting was Virtual, the Business was Real.

The summer 2020 NFWM Board Meeting marked a first: a completely virtual meeting.

Like so many other organizations, the presence of COVID and related travel restrictions prevented any "usual" in-person meeting.

The NFWM staff and Executive Committee planned well ahead to ensure that all necessary NFWM business could be conducted as well as provide online spaces for farm worker partners, small group discussions, and even some fellowship. Business portions of the meeting functioned as usual, with board president Fr. Hector Rodriguez presiding.

Despite a few technical hiccups, the work continues!

The board heard from:

- Madeline Sharrow & Marita Canedo, Organizers with The Milk With Dignity Program of Migrant Justice,
- Baldemar Velasquez, President of Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC),
- Melinda Wiggins, Executive Director of Student Action with Farmworkers (SAF),
- Rosalinda Guillen, Executive Director of Community to Community (C2C),
- Jennifer Rodgers Brown, Board President Rural and Migrant Ministries, NY,
- and more!



Photo Courtesy of Milk With Dignity

NFWM Updates

Welcome, Kaitlyn Burton and Welcome Back, Jonathan Milliken!

We are proud to welcome them as the Duke Divinity School Interns for 2020-21! Kaitlyn is new to NFWM and Jonathan served as the DDS Intern in Summer 2020.

In their own words:

Kaitlyn: I am a second year M.Div student at Duke Divinity School. I was born and raised in Brownwood, Texas and attended Howard Payne University with a degree in Practical Theology and minors in Music and Biblical Languages. I met my husband, Marshal, at a Bible study, got married last summer and moved to Durham. Since my last year of college, I have reflected on creation care and what it means to be good stewards of the earth and loving neighbors. I am very excited to experience working for a non-profit and cannot wait to continue growing, learning, and reflecting theologically during my internship.



Kaitlyn Burton

Jonathan: I am a second year M.Div student at Duke Divinity School. I am passionate about scripture, particularly the Old Testament. I am also passionate about justice for marginalized peoples. I hope to either study and teach the Old Testament or to work in the field of social work. My heart will continue to be for marginalized communities, and I hope that my career will center around fighting for their rights as well as the Old Testament.

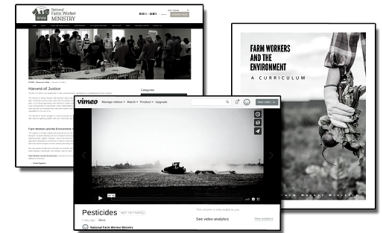
Outside of my vocational/ educational interests, I also love dogs and hope to soon have one of my own (as opposed to having to go see my family in Montana to get a dog fix). I am thrilled to be back as a part of the National Farm Worker Ministry this year and look forward to all the work I will be able to continue and things I will be able to learn!

**To reach Kaitlyn or Jonathan,
email: ddsintern@nfwm.org.**



Jonathan Milliken

Harvest of Justice 2020: THANK YOU!



Thank you for joining with us in observing the 2020 Harvest of Justice season.

Hundreds of people across the U.S. have watched, read, downloaded, liked, and shared these resources with their church groups, friends, and others. We urge people of faith and conscience to continue to hear the call and stand with farm workers to challenge oppressive systems in order to bring healing to individuals, communities, and the earth.

The resources are great for use any time of the year, so continue to download and share!

www.nfwm.org

National Farm Worker Ministry

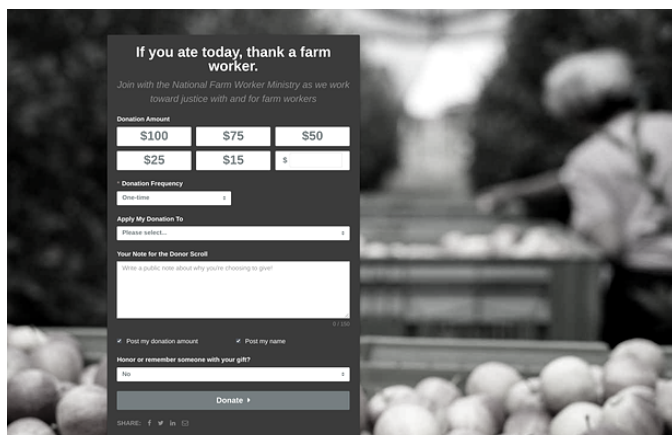
PO Box 10645

112 Cox St., Ste 208

Raleigh, NC 27605

Return Service Requested

A New Online Giving Portal!



Thanks to our NEW online giving portal, supporting farm workers is easier than EVER!

Be sure to check it out and make a one-time, monthly, quarterly, or annual gift today!

<https://nfwm.networkforgood.com/>

or go to

www.nfwm.org

and click on "Donate"

Thank you for your support!

NFWM

112 Cox St., Ste 208

PO Box 10645

Raleigh, NC 27605

919-807-8707

nfwm@nfwm.org

www.nfwm.org

Staff:

Kate Hamman

Cathy McGaughey

Emily Miller

Julie Taylor

OVERAGE

Op-Eds: The Power of the Pen

A powerful way to convey concern to a public audience is by writing an Op-Ed, or Letter to the Editor, of a newspaper, magazine, or online publication.

Try writing one today! A possible topic: one of the major concerns farm worker advocates have for our current times is the possibility that through legislation, regulation or failure to monitor, farm worker wages will be reduced to offset the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic. No legislation passed so far has provided particular relief for farm workers, and, in fact, excludes them from receiving any financial assistance if they lack documentation. Much of the information about rights and services is provided exclusively in English, making this information inaccessible to most farm workers who speak/read only Spanish. NFWM intends to monitor this in the coming weeks and months.

See a list of
published op-eds at
<http://nfwm.org/news/coronavirus-the-latest/>

“

NO SOMOS
TRACTORES,
SOMOS PERSONAS.

WE'RE NOT
TRACTORS,
WE'RE PERSONS.

