

Spring 2022

NATIONAL FARM WORKER MINISTRY NEWS & VIEWS

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Message from the Executive Director

January started with NFWM's first in-person board meeting since before the pandemic. We connected with the roots of the farm worker movement, with Dolores Huerta in Bakersfield and then at La Paz, the compound where the UFW operates.



Clayton Sinyai at the CIW March

Our first leader, Chris Hartmire, worked there, side by side with Cesar Chavez and so many others who shared a dream of farm worker justice. We continue that dream today. You can read more about the board meeting as one of NFWM's newer members offered her reflections on our time together.

2022 is turning out to be a year of mobilizations. Under the pandemic, there were very few opportunities to gather in person. Several creative alternatives were developed, such as caravans, social distancing protests, and a myriad of virtual efforts to show solidarity with farm workers. Already this year, the CIW has held a march in Palm Beach, home of Wendy's Board Chairman, Nelson Peltz. In addition, the UFW held 13 protests on Cesar Chavez' birthday in various cities in CA. LUPE held a caravan in San Juan, TX. Familias Unidas sponsored a gathering to support a union vote at a tulip bulb operation in WA. All of these were opportunities for NFWM and other allies to show support.

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Coming soon are opportunities to mobilize in the northeast in support of Migrant Justice's Milk with Dignity program and in Washington with Familias Unidas to celebrate the victory in the tulip fields with the workers and let them know there is a commitment to stand with them in their ongoing efforts. On June 18th, many of us will be in Washington, DC, to join the Poor People's Campaign, which will feature the specific voices of farm workers. More about that will come out on social media.

There will be ongoing efforts to support farm worker efforts as they arise, particularly in relation to farm worker campaigns. Last year's push to get BAT/Reynolds to guarantee tobacco farm worker rights in their supply chain garnered faith leader signatures which procured a meeting with Reynolds executives and ongoing negotiations with FLOC. We'll be involved in this. To continue our concerns for farm workers and the environment from Harvest of Justice in 2020, we submitted comments to OSHA's proposed heat stress rules, which we will monitor going forward. Efforts over the years to seek overtime pay for farm workers on the federal level have not been successful. What has been successful are some state efforts, so we celebrate with PCUN that OR finally did this and will be working on other efforts in other states as opportunities arise. It is a similar situation for immigration. Farm workers NEED immigration reform. We're monitoring that too, so we can be good partners in ending the fear and exploitation this unresolved issue brings. And, as always, we continue to promote food certification programs and boycotts that benefit farm workers, using our power as consumers to increase demand for these products.

There is more to do, and we need you to be part of it. Show up where you can. We especially need regional support to connect in farm worker areas as well as other areas where this work is expanding. Let's put our bodies, our names, our influence, our engagements, our voices, and our purchases in places that benefit farm workers as much as we can. And bring a friend. Farm workers deserve our support. They feed us.

Julie Taylor, Executive Director of NFWM

Navajo Blessing

God is before us.
God is behind us.
God is above us.
God is below us.
God's words shall come from
our mouths
For we are God's essence, a
sign of God's love.
All is finished in justice.
All is finished in justice.
All is finished in justice.
All is finished in justice.

Solidarity Forever

Solidarity forever
Solidarity forever
Solidarity forever
Long live our union
In the vineyards of wrath they
fight for their liberty
All the workers now want to
live in peace
And that is why companions
we need to unite
With solidarity
Come, let's proceed,
farmworkers
To fight for our rights
With our spirits held high and
with faith in unity
Because the strength of the
poor like the waves of the sea
Will inundate injustice

See more worship resources
at nfwf.org/resource-center

What You Can Do To Support Farm Workers

As eaters, we can work to make sure the food we buy isn't exploiting farm workers by purchasing agricultural products from a food certification program or from farms under a union/association contract.

NFWM currently partners with four food certification programs. Each organization is independent of NFWM and of each other, but all serve a similar purpose: to bring together growers, farm workers, packers, distributors, retailers, and consumers to transform agriculture at various levels and improve the lives and working conditions of farm workers.



On March 29, NFWM hosted a free webinar in collaboration with the Farmworker Association of Florida (FWAF). The webinar addressed how FWAF is working towards farm workers having access to safe, healthy, and culturally appropriate food. It also covered the four food certification programs and how consumers can support farm worker union contracts and farm worker led campaigns.

In short, the webinar focused on how consumers can make a positive difference in the lives of farm workers through what they do and don't buy. **Watch "What You Can Do to Support Farm Workers Webinar" on NFWM's YouTube channel today!**



Harvest of Justice 2022

CHILD LABOR IN AGRICULTURE

COMING THIS FALL TO [NFWM.ORG](https://www.nfwm.org)

NFWM Winter Board Meeting Report

By Giovana Oaxaca, representative of the ELCA

The Nuestra Señora Reina de La Paz, also known as La Paz, is a sprawling estate in Keene, CA, dedicated to César Chávez' work and legacy in the farm worker organizing movement. He founded the United Farm Workers of America (UFW) alongside Dolores Huerta, drawing national attention to the inhumane working conditions farm workers suffered. The work of these and other early organizers changed the course of history. Nestled between tumbling ridges and outcrops of boulders, the final resting place of Chávez' looks and feels like a sanctuary, a place blessed by it's natural beauty and silence.



It was here that NFWM held part of their January 2022 board meeting. It was my first in-person board meeting, as previous meetings were held virtually. The meeting officially began at Mills Creek Christian Church with organization reports, with some intermission for presentations from the Agricultural Justice Project and intern Ian Goymer on "Racism and Farm Workers".



"Racism is in the water we drink," said the inimitable Dolores Huerta when she joined us later that evening. At 91, Dolores shows no signs of slowing down. She talked animatedly about the Dolores Huerta Peace and Justice Cultural Center campaign to serve as a hub for local community organizing and empowerment in Bakersfield. She plucked anecdotes of the first days of the UFW to share with us. To close the evening, she led us in a "Si Se Puede" chant.

The following day at La Paz, I reflected on the hard climb farmworkers continue to endure to secure human treatment and basic rights. Still, most farm workers lack protections,

such as workers' compensation, paid leave, health insurance, and disability insurance. The COVID-19 pandemic brought some of these disparities into sharp relief. Farm workers were and are uniquely susceptible to COVID-19. Hearing from Alianza Nacional De Campesinas, it was clear that access to most kinds of health care and justice is a systemic issue.

God's love is present in all these places, in the sum and individual parts of these collective efforts to bring forth justice for farm workers. Besides La Paz, we can find God's presence in the mundane too – it can look like examining our relationship to the food chain in our day to day, and then taking action through advocacy. Advocacy calls us to take concrete steps to guarantee broader protections for farm workers at the state, local, and national level and to pass an immigration reform that maintains family unity. Towards these goals, I'm glad I could join my first in-person board meeting. I feel energized and spiritually replenished to lead in equipping advocates for the work ahead.



Nan Freeman Memorial Dedication



On April 2nd, New College of Florida hosted a tribute to their late alumna, Nan Freeman, through the dedication of two murals in her memory. Nan Freeman was a social justice advocate who lost her life 50 years ago while supporting the farm worker movement. At 3:15 a.m. on Jan. 25, 1972, Nan Freeman, 18, was picketing with striking farm workers at the Talisman Sugar Plant near Belle Glade, Florida. She was passing out leaflets to drivers when a truck carrying 70,000 pounds of sugar cane drove into the entrance. The truck and trailer were not properly aligned, and the trailer cut too sharply, knocking Nan into the guard rail, killing her. Nan is considered the first martyr of La Causa in the farm worker movement.

NFWM Board member, Dr. Sam Trickey, attended the memorial dedication on behalf of NFWM and gave the following marks, which have been edited for length: Today, most communities of faith in the US are far from where farm workers labor. That remoteness is a near perfect cloak of invisibility. It hides economic exploitation, racial discrimination, sexual abuse, child labor – a whole host of abuses. Nearly every faith tradition has urgent calls for establishing justice and dignity for those who are oppressed. Our task as Farm Worker Ministry is to stimulate and support those communities of faith to act upon those urgent calls.

As Dolores Huerta recently said at NFWM's winter board meeting, "there's much work to be done" in the farm worker movement. Somehow, Nan Freeman knew that truth. Nan's all-too-brief history is almost uncanny to Dolores. Nan had written about justice for the poor and oppressed in high school. She saw the need to make visible, to accompany, to advocate for those who are exploited almost invisibly. So, like a young Dolores Huerta, Nan Freeman set out to do the work of justice, the work of faithfulness. She went to Belle Glade, not to be famous or memorialized, but because "there was work to be done." That was the work of accompaniment and advocacy, of being present for and with farm workers.

Sadly, Nan Freeman did not get to fulfill the immense potential that we can see she had. One has the sense that there was a talent, a commitment, a calling in her that resembles Dolores Huerta's. Important though it is to honor Nan Freeman's memory and grieve her premature loss, it is not enough. It is not what she would have wanted. There's still "work to be done." There's activism still to be practiced. Therefore, as you look at the murals, remember Nan. Then take inspiration from her commitment, her activism, her energy, her faithfulness to prophetic tradition. As the murals show, she went to accompany the workers. She would have us do no less. **She would remind us that there's work to be done.**



NFWM Updates

Thank you, Ian Goymer and Cathy McGaughey!



Ian Goymer was NFWM's 2021-2022 Duke Divinity intern. This fall, he will be entering his third of a four year MDiv/MSW dual-degree program. His hope is to become a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and pursue a career in counseling.

During his time at NFWM, Ian researched member organizations and our Harvest of Justice topic for 2023. He also wrote and presented for our board meeting, worked with SAF to plan and help with National Farmworker Awareness Week, and worked with the Core Values and Mission Statement Committee. Plus, Ian participated in farm labor camp visits.



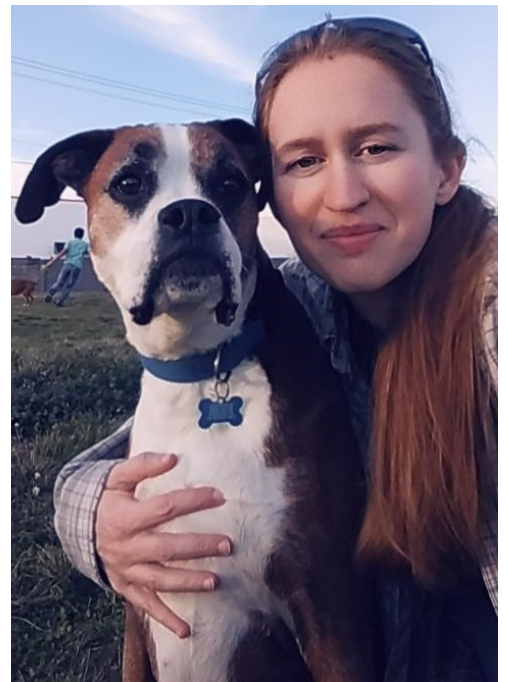
Cathy McGaughey, NFWM's bookkeeper for the last four and a half years, concluded her service with NFWM on March 5th. Cathy always kept us laughing with stories about her three dogs and six cats, the incredibly long conversations she had with online services, the weather in the Western part of NC, and her colorful hair. She has been faithful to keep our financial records and we are grateful to her for her good work.

Cathy is Operations Specialist for the Alliance of Baptists, and we wish her well in her ongoing career there.

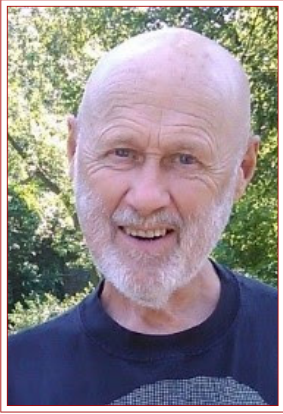
Welcome Rose Green-Flores

Rose Green-Flores grew up on a dairy farm nestled in the hollows of rural Missouri. While working with a variety of nonprofits, she has gained experience in public relations, marketing, program management, teaching, member engagement and development. Rose served as PR Specialist at Lake Regional Health System in the Lake of the Ozarks before joining National Farm Worker Ministry in December.

Rose became a vocal advocate for labor and human rights in 2003 after reading an article on modern-day slavery. She is committed to the empowerment of farm workers and also works towards improving conditions for garment workers during her free time. Rose loves relaxing outdoors with her husband and two boxer babies, Pancho and Quixote. She also enjoys reading, fashion and watching her favorite TV shows.



NFWM Remembers



¡Presente! John Mulaski

John Mulaski passed away on Nov. 9, 2021 surrounded by loved ones. John was a member of the board of what was then called the Oregon Farm Worker Ministry in the 1990's and early 2000's. He actively encouraged the UU congregation of Salem to take up the cause of farm worker justice at local, regional and national levels. We honor John as a part of the vital history of Oregon Farm Worker Ministry, now called Farm Worker Ministry Northwest. He will be deeply missed.



¡Presente! Joyce Stearns Harmon

Joyce Harmons passed away Dec. 11, 2021. As a young woman, Joyce joined a group of delegates from the General Synod of the UCC in St. Louis, who responded to a call from Cesar Chavez to help give presence and stand as witnesses to the plight of grape workers on the picket line, who were experiencing violence and intimidation. She was part of a delegation who traveled to the Coachella Valley, Calif. and went into the vineyards with the farm workers. Joyce continued to support the plight of farm workers throughout her life.



¡Presente! Mike Clements

Mike Clements passed away on Jan. 2 2022. He was an important member of the Orange County Interfaith Committee to Aid Farm Workers. Mike and his wife, Enedina, held deep passions for issues of justice ranging from farm workers to immigration to homelessness and more. He always rallied people to attend fundraisers for the United Farm Workers and the National Farm Workers Ministry, often filling two tables with his friends. His organizing talents were amazing and unequalled.



Remembering Santiago Rafael Cruz

Fifteen years ago, on April 9, 2007, Santiago Rafael Cruz was bound with rope and beaten to death in the offices of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, where he worked as an organizer. There can be no doubt that this assassination was a blatant act of intimidation meant to stop the union from aiding farm laborers. FLOC members and support honor Santiago's sacrifices for justice in the agricultural industry by continuing the fight he gave his life for and pressuring the Mexican government to bring the assassins to justice.

National Farm Worker Ministry

PO Box 10645

112 Cox St., Ste 208

Raleigh, NC 27605

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Our 50 for 50 Fundraiser was a Success!

NFWM held a year-long fundraiser in 2021 trying to raise \$50,000 in celebration of NFWM's 50th anniversary.

Member organizations and Individual Board Members rose to the challenge given to them at the summer board meeting raising 60% of our goal. Individual Donors and Supporting Organizations generously gave the other 40% and helped us reach \$50,000 by the end of the year.

As part of this fundraising effort, we asked for donations specifically in honor and memory of some of NFWM's historic and current figures. 87 people gave donations honoring and remembering 42 individuals connected to NFWM. We are grateful for all the ways people joined us in celebration of NFWM's historical and continual effort to support and be in solidarity with farm workers. We wouldn't have been able to reach our goal without the willingness and determination of so many of you. The work is far from done, and the Board will address how NFWM will utilize the funds from the 50 for 50 challenge to best support farm worker efforts moving forward.



NFWM

112 Cox St., Ste 208

PO Box 10645

Raleigh, NC 27605

919-302-9581

nfwm@nfwm.org

www.nfwm.org

Staff Team:

Meagan Fisher

Rose Green-Flores

Julie Taylor

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