

Fall 2023

NATIONAL FARM WORKER MINISTRY NEWS & VIEWS

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Message from the Executive Director

As I complete my eighth year with the National Farm Worker Ministry, I am struck by how much things have changed. One thing that has changed is the increasing influence of social media.

Marketing techniques utilize psychology, sociology, and physiology in the service of amassing more and more profit for businesses. This reality has been touted as entrepreneurship and human ingenuity. Still, the bottom line pushes our society into easy deflections, creating multiple distractions that prevent us from knowing what goes into our products and a reliance on comfort and convenience to prevent most of us from recognizing the tragedy of human exploitation behind the scenes.

Another thing that has changed is the growing divide in our country over partisan politics, which pits marginalized persons against one another while labeling ethnic minorities as the problem. The same partisanship pushes people to abdicate from respectful dialogue, choosing to see those with differing views as enemies, as idiots, as not deserving of respect. Knowledgeable debate is absent in favor of soundbites and yelling matches with false claims that go uncontested, while the complexity of issues is reduced to simple comments rather than complex realities impacted by many points of intersection.



NFWM's Board at the Hannaford Rally in July

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How can helpful, reasonable compromise occur if opposing sides cannot listen to each other and operate in a way that allows for possible change that could benefit all sides?

The other thing that has changed so much in the last eight years is the influence of a global pandemic. Besides the terrible death and illness that COVID-19 brought, its ongoing mark on how we work, gather, and live together in this world is immense. The requirement for essential, predominantly low-income workers to continue to work during the pandemic demonstrated the economic inequities of our society; options for where and how to work were very limited and, certainly, in the beginning, workers went unprotected. And the needed prohibition of gathering in social groups during the pandemic has led to ongoing challenges for many to return to their traditional meetings, continuing to participate in ways that are virtual and without much personal interaction.

That is not to say all that has happened has been bad, nor is it to say that these are the only things that have changed; they're just what I've noticed and seen impacting farm worker organizing. NFWM did not have a full-time Director of Communications eight years ago, but we do now. During the pandemic, it was a necessity. As an organization, we utilize marketing research to promote our own social justice cause. Similarly, remote working has enabled NFWM to benefit from unique skills in other places as part of our staff leadership team. This is an advantage. And we consistently seek to counter the misinformation and messages that partisan politics makes about the marginalized and ethnic minorities of this country, specifically farm workers. That is a big part of our role in today's farm worker advocacy.

As I move into my ninth year, NFWM must continue to bring a clarion voice to the realities of farm workers in our nation. We'll be doing this through our Harvest of Justice resources, specifically, the videos that our farm worker partners help us make. To be clear, NFWM does NOT speak FOR farm workers, but we have the opportunity to speak about our solidarity WITH farm workers, to feature them telling their own stories in their own words, to share their own efforts in the struggle for justice, something we have been doing since the farm worker movement began. Sí se puede, yes we can!

NFWM Bids Farewell To Longtime Board Member

NFWM recognizes the service of Andrew Kang Bartlett, Director of the Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP). Andrew came to NFWM about 20 years ago when he assumed his role in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Over the years, Andrew has led his denomination in securing farm worker support and endorsement for farm worker campaigns like the Wendy's Boycott. Additionally, he has participated in attending many farm worker mobilizations and has faithfully included farm worker issues in the PHP's Week of Food Action in which we are grateful partners. On the board of directors, Andrew has urged NFWM to support racial justice work, specifically leading a small group in adding a racial justice value on our website. While Andrew is still working with PHP, he has designated someone else to replace him on our board. Much appreciation for all Andrew has contributed to the Ministry over the years. We look forward to staying in touch.



Andrew Kang Bartlett (Bottom Center)
at the Jan. 2020 Board Meeting

Harvest of Justice 2023 Resources Available Online

From slavery to sharecropping to exclusions in labor laws, our food system is rooted in racism. Today, our nation's farm workers continue to face challenges and risks connected to this legacy. Harvest of Justice (HOJ) 2023, which focuses on the way racism impacts farm workers, is now available for supporters to share with their communities. The goal of the educational program is to raise consciousness and encourage NFWM supporters to take action alongside farm workers.



Follow the 6-week program or modify as needed:

- Introduction to Racism in Agriculture
- Racist Roots of Agriculture
- Environmental Racism
- Modern Day Slavery
- Support Farmers of Color
- Farm Workers Lead the Way

Resources include two bilingual videos, informative flyers in English and Spanish, presentation slides, and a social media toolkit. If you need help planning a HOJ event or would like someone from NFWM to speak at your event, contact us at communications@nfwm.org. Explore all our resources at nfwm.org/harvestofjustice.



**BE AN AMBASSADOR FOR
NFWM AND RAISE
AWARENESS IN YOUR
COMMUNITY ABOUT ISSUES
AFFECTING FARM
WORKERS!**

**LEARN MORE AT
[NFWM.ORG/
RESOURCE-CENTER](https://nfwm.org/resource-center)**

NFWM Summer Board Meeting Report

By Rev. Joy Warren, Treasurer/Board representative of the Cumberland Presbyterian denomination



Migrant Justice hosted our NFWM summer board for a day of education and action on July 28th in Burlington, Vermont. Although people may not think of Vermont when they think of major dairy producing states, dairy production is a major industry of the state. We learned about the challenges of dairy workers in small farm settings and the successful work getting Ben & Jerry's to join the Milk with Dignity campaign. The campaign is about 13 years old, growing out of meetings workers had to discuss strategies to improve conditions after the preventable death of a dairy worker.

Although there are around 1200-1500 migrant farm workers in Vermont, only a very small number of farms have twenty workers - the rest have three to five, and some only have one! Some farms with only 2-3 workers might have up to 1000 cows requiring daily milkings! Similar to other farm workers, many dairy workers have 60-80 hour a week schedules with no vacation. Because of the small number of workers per farm, OSHA has no jurisdiction. Due to the limited rights of workers in this context, Milk with Dignity provides workers much-needed protection beyond the scope of the law.

Migrant Justice helped us fill the necessary roles to perform a successful action in front of an area Hannaford Supermarket that afternoon. NFWM board members helped provide farm worker transportation, rallied, chanted, and shared tamales after the event. Standing with people who are advocating for themselves is at once both humbling and empowering. After marching, we gathered to hear about intolerable conditions first-hand from impacted dairy workers, and NFWM president Rev. Dr. Nathan Hosler provided a theological rationale for our involvement and solidarity. Clergy then accompanied dairy workers as we all marched over to the security guards in front of the Hannaford's, asked them to deliver our letters to management, and told them we came from all over the country to Burlington because we had not yet received a response from our previous letters!

The following day at our business meeting, Rev. Hosler invited us to reflect upon what we'd experienced in light of our core values. I chose "Si, se puede" as my value. My husband and I traveled with a dairy worker and her two-year-old child. The child sang and laughed in the car until she finally conked out asleep. At the march, she ran freely among the participants, arms outstretched, smiling and causing everyone who saw her to smile. She personified the cycle of joy and rest and joy needed to be what Migrant Justice calls "champions" of human rights. Watching her, I couldn't help but think "Yes, we can do this!" To find out how you can invite Hannaford to become a champion with Milk with Dignity, check out the NFWM website and social media.



THREE Ways To Support Farm Workers This Fall



1. Read the latest research: The UC Merced Community and Labor Center published a study earlier this year titled Farmworker Health in California- Health in a Time of Contagion, Drought, and Climate Change. Participants in the study included members represented by Alianza, Lideres Campesinas, Campesinas Unidas del Valle de San Joaquín, as well as the United Farm Workers of America. The compiled data accomplishes the task of highlighting the harmful effects of heat stress on vulnerable immigrant farm worker communities. The goal of the study is to inform the development of local, state, and federal health policies that would improve the lives of farm workers in California's communities and beyond. Read the results of the largest academic survey ever conducted on the health and well-being of CA farm workers here at bit.ly/466rutb.



2. Pick up the telephone: Legislation is the first step to provide farm workers protection from death due to heat stress. On July 26, 2023, Representatives Chu, Scott, Adams, and Grijalva introduced in the House of Representatives the "Asuncion Valdivia Heat Illness, Injury, and Fatality Prevention Act of 2023". The bill seeks to address safety and health concerns in relation to excessive heat exposure. Senators Brown (OH), Padilla (CA), and Cortez-Masto (NV) introduced the bill in the Senate. Excessive heat exposure results in heat-related illnesses ranging from symptoms such as heat cramps to more dire consequences, including organ damage, stroke, and even death. Use your voice in solidarity with farm workers and tell your senators to support the Asuncion Valdivia Act. Use the resources on our farm worker focused legislative web page to help you craft your own talking points when you contact your legislator. See more at nfwf.org/take-action/farm-worker-campaigns/.



3. Sign and share the petition: Farm workers and other outdoor workers desperately need a federal heat standard. The only real solution to save lives is federal action. OSHA can and must implement heat rules immediately. Join the UFW in urging OSHA to implement immediate heat standards by signing the petition TODAY. When you finish signing, please share the petition on your social networks far and wide; our farm workers are counting on you, hasta la victoria! To sign, please visit: <https://act.seiu.org/a/oshaemergencyheat>

Thank you, Meagan Fisher!



Meagan Fisher, our Director of Operations for the last 2.5 years, left NFWM on October 13 to take on a new challenge closer to her family in Indiana. In the time she has been with the Ministry, Meagan has improved our database, both operationally and by utilizing information to help us understand our outreach better. She has created systems to keep up with things that we do on a regular basis which are now easier and much more efficient. **Meagan says, “Thank you to the staff, board, and supporters who enabled me to enact these changes. The possibility of change depends on cooperation and an openness to try new things. My time with NFWM has been a wonderful learning experience, which I will carry with me into whatever comes next.”** Changing her position from Administrative Assistant to Director of Operations in 2022 was an acknowledgement of her helpful contributions to the mission of our organization.

Meagan and her little office dog Willow will be deeply missed at the Ministry, but we wish Meagan the absolute best in her next chapter.

Welcome, Payton Price!



Payton Price, a third-year Duke Divinity student, is part of the NFWM team as an intern. They grew up as a missionary kid in the Church of the Nazarene and is a licensed minister through the North Carolina Nazarene district. Growing up in a mix of places like France, Benin, and small-town Ohio led them to study a mix of psychology, intercultural studies, and theology. Payton’s interests have always centered around people—societal structures and who benefits from public life. Outside of work and school, they enjoy music and poetry, getting to know the city of Durham with their wife, Kate, and trying to not burn down the kitchen when cooking new recipes.

Payton started their internship with NFWM over the summer. So far, they have been working on communications projects, along with research on farm worker housing and immigration-related issues. They attended the board meeting in July. Payton is interested in helping NFWM expand its social media presence and faith resource offerings. We are excited to have Payton continue as part of our team as the academic-year intern.

Did you know? You can easily stay up-to-date on all the latest NFWM news and campaign updates by subscribing to our e-newsletter at nfwm.org/contact. Encourage your community to subscribe too!

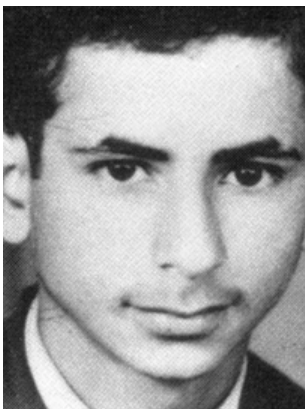
NFWM Remembers



¡Presente! Helen Maria Quirino

Helen Quirino passed away on May 2, 2023. Helen was committed to the farm worker struggle nationally and in the Pacific Northwest. She served in her local Roman Catholic parish, was a longtime member of Church Women United (CWU), and served as Board Secretary of Oregon Farm Worker Ministry (OFWM) from the 1990s until 2014 (when Oregon Farm Worker Ministry became Farm Worker Ministry Northwest). She represented CWU on the farm worker ministry board and attended several board meetings of the National Farm Worker Ministry over the years.

Honoring UFW Martyrs



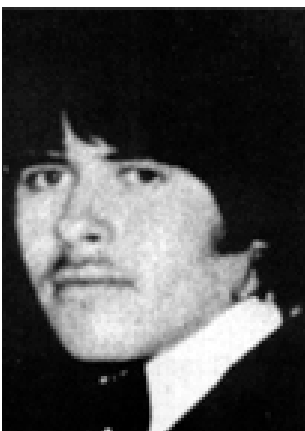
¡Presente! Nagi Daifallah

Nagi Daifallah is a UFW martyr and we honor him on the 50th anniversary of his killing. He was murdered for his leadership in the 1973 California grape strike with UFW on August 15, 1973. The Kern County Sheriff's Department Deputy Gilbert Cooper targeted Nagi, who tried to run away. Cooper ran after him and smashed Nagi in the head with a long five-cell metal flashlight, severing Nagi's spinal cord from his skull. Two sheriff's deputies dragged Nagi for 60 feet and dumped him in the gutter. Deputies arrested workers who attempted to help Nagi, and he died shortly thereafter. Nagi, who was from Yemen, was just 24. His murderer was never brought to justice.



¡Presente! Juan De La Cruz

Fifty years ago on August 17, 1973, nonviolent vineyard striker Juan De la Cruz, 60, was shot and killed on a United Farm Workers picket line near Arvin, Calif. by a strikebreaker firing from a passing pickup truck. Juan was walking the picket line with his wife, whom he shoved to the ground when shots were fired and ultimately saved her life. Juan was an early member of the UFW and is one of the five UFW martyrs. The union named its retirement fund the Juan De la Cruz Pension Plan in honor of this remarkable man.



¡Presente! Rene Lopez

Forty years ago on September 21, 1983, Rene Lopez, a worker at Sikkema Dairy near Fresno, was shot to death at point-blank range by company goons hired to harass the strikers who were attempting to bring in the UFW to represent them. Rene was the spokesperson for the workers and had previously tried to reason with the dairy owner. On the day of the election, Rene was shot in the face after being asked to talk with some goons in a car. Rene's killer began to aim his gun at the other strikers and one of those strikers said he heard Rene's last words after being shot, "No los mates!" ("Don't kill them!"). Even mortally wounded, Rene was still advocating for his fellow workers. He was only 21. The dairy owner never faced consequences for his role in hiring Rene's killers.

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Invest In The Work of NFWM!

This year your monetary support enabled us to do so much. We sent a staff member to join a

gathering of over 100 farm worker women in DC where they engaged in workshops, informational sessions with federal agencies, and meaningful conversations with Congress members. We sent a videographer around the country to interview farm workers and farm worker organizers about topics such as racism and immigration for our Harvest of Justice program. We attended and/or raised support for farm worker actions in FL, WA, DC, VT, TX, and CA. We put on quarterly webinars which have reached hundreds of people, and we promoted legislation, petitions, and publications our farm worker partners are organizing behind. We could not do this work without you. Please continue investing in NFWM as we expand support for farm workers in their fight for equity and justice. Give today at nfwm.org.



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