



News & Views

FALL 2025

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Message from the Executive Director

As I write this, the seasons are changing, and the natural world around me is showing the signs of transition from summer to fall. Some of us live in parts of the country where seasonal changes are less visible, and others live where it is obvious that the earth is moving from season to season. And so it is with organizations and movements.



Julie sharing a reflection at the 2018 CIW fast outside Wendy's CEO office in NYC.

For the last 10 years, I have been honored to serve as the leader of the National Farm Worker Ministry. It has been a privilege to work alongside our farm worker partners across the country — visiting labor camps, attending meetings, and hearing the people who pick our food share their stories, while showing that people of faith and conscience stand with them. One farm worker told me, with deep emotion, that he was grateful not to be “abandoned.” His words have haunted my dreams ever since and fueled my days to bring allies, supporters, and the public into awareness of, and solidarity with, farm workers.

Things change, and now, as I write this, there is a search committee looking for a new executive director to lead the National Farm Worker Ministry. It is time for new leadership to help us accomplish our mission.

It is time for another season in my own life. These transitions are always challenging, so I am working with the Board of Directors to create the best possible transition from one leader to another.

There's no set timeline yet for my last day or the new person's first, but I'll continue supporting the initial onboarding through early next year — so don't count me out yet. Together with the board, we're working for the best future for this ministry, which farm workers helped start in 1971. Our work remains to stand with the people who feed us, and we will.

If you have any questions about the transition, please reach out to me, and I can connect you with Board President Nate Hosler or any member of the Executive Committee or Board. We're working together as the seasons for NFWM change.

Grace and peace,
Julie Taylor

National Farm Worker Ministry in Action!

Solidarity in the Summer: NFWM Board Meets in New York

In late July, NFWM's Board of Directors gathered at the historic **Center at Mariandale**, home of the **Dominican Sisters of Hope** in Ossining, New York.



NFWM Board at Rural & Migrant Ministry



Rev. Richard Witt of RMM sharing words of wisdom with NFWM's board members



NFWM Board President Moderating Panel with RMM & Worker Justice Center of NY

The gathering was hosted by **Rural & Migrant Ministry (RMM)**, a long-standing faith-based organization that accompanies farm working and rural families across New York through leadership development, legal advocacy, and organizing for systemic change. Executive Director **Rev. Richard Witt** graciously welcomed our board and shared words of encouragement, reminding us that faith, justice, and hope grow strongest when communities walk together.

At our Board Meeting, NFWM hosted a panel moderated by Board President Rev. Dr. Nathan Hosler, featuring voices from Rural & Migrant Ministry (RMM) and the Worker Justice Center of New York. The conversation highlighted recent victories, like the 2019 Farm Laborers Fair Labor Practices Act, and the ongoing challenges facing farm workers across the state. We also heard from **Alianza Agrícola**, a New York dairy worker organization, whose members shared powerful stories of resilience and organizing for dignity in their industry.

Back at Mariandale, the board focused on strengthening strategy, reviewing finances, and ensuring NFWM remains ready to show up wherever farm workers call for solidarity. We left grateful—for partners who walk with us, for a board that gives generously of its time and wisdom, and for supporters who make it possible to keep amplifying farm worker voices.

National Farm Worker Ministry in Action Continues

Farm Worker-Led Advocacy in New York

During our time in New York, NFWM Board members had the opportunity to meet with **Alianza Agrícola**, the only worker-led, worker-founded dairy worker organization in the state. These courageous dairy workers shared their experiences of isolation, organizing, and resilience—reminding us why NFWM exists: to accompany farm worker organizing groups and amplify their voices for justice.

Founded in 2016 by dairy workers in Western and Central New York, Alianza Agrícola has built collective power through leadership development, policy advocacy, and community organizing. Their efforts have already shaped major statewide victories, including the **2019 Driver's License Access and Privacy Act** and the **Farm Laborers Fair Labor Practices Act**, which secured collective bargaining rights, a weekly day of rest, and overtime pay for farm workers.

Today, Alianza Agrícola continues supporting dairy workers in accessing healthcare, transportation, and other essential services while organizing for long-term immigration reform. NFWM looks forward to accompanying them in this ongoing work for New York's dairy industry.



Alianza Agrícola Preparing for Panel Discussion



NFWM Board Member, Dick Notter, speaking with NY Dairy Worker



NFWM Stands for Milk with Dignity with Migrant Justice



Sister Tess continues to stand up for farm worker justice

Milk with Dignity Summer Tour & Beyond!

NFWM's presence reached into the Northeast this summer, as our farm worker partner, **Migrant Justice**, ran its **Milk with Dignity Tour**, calling on grocery retailers to respect dairy workers' rights. The tour traveled through New York and Massachusetts, where NFWM supporters joined rallies for fair wages, safe housing, and humane treatment.

At the final stop, **Sister Marie "Tess" Browne**, former NFWM Board member and lifelong advocate for farm worker justice, joined the picket line—sharing words of encouragement and standing with workers demanding change. The crowd closed with a spirited chant: "¡A mí me gusta leche justa!"—Spanish for "We like our milk with justice."

The work didn't stop there. On October 1, NFWM joined **Migrant Justice's Day of Action**, adding our voices to more than 250 calls to grocery retailers demanding Milk with Dignity and fair treatment for dairy workers. Together, we'll keep standing for worker dignity alongside Migrant Justice.

National Farm Worker Ministry in Action Continues

Too Hot To Work: Farm Workers & Heat Stress

In August, NFWM hosted a powerful webinar on heat stress protections—a critical issue, as farm workers are 35 times more likely than the general population to die from heat-related illness. The discussion underscored ongoing gaps in current protections and the urgent need for stronger federal and state safeguards as temperatures rise.

The event featured national leaders in the fight for worker safety, including Elizabeth Rodriguez (NFWM), Alexis Guild (Farmworker Justice), Ernesto Archila (Public Citizen), and Jeannie Economos (Farmworker Association of Florida). Together, they explored policy, advocacy, and community-based approaches to ensure every farm worker has the right to safe working conditions.

Want to learn more?

Scan the QR code to watch the replay and explore additional NFWM resources supporting farm worker advocacy and climate justice.



Webinar replay available at nfwm.org or scan code below:



SCAN HERE



NFWM Director of Farm Worker Advocacy, Elizabeth Rodriguez with Jim Harrington & Yessie Bustos

Honoring Farm Worker History in South Texas

NFWM joined La Unión del Pueblo Entero (LUPE), Student Action with Farmworkers (SAF), and civil rights legend **Jim Harrington** in South Texas to honor farm workers and faith leaders who organized, advocated, and shaped policy for those laboring in the fields. Director of Farm Worker Advocacy Elizabeth Rodriguez uplifted past and present leaders while reaffirming NFWM's enduring commitment to walk alongside worker-led campaigns.

Standing with the UFW in Washington, D.C.

Earlier this fall, NFWM joined the **United Farm Workers** (UFW) in Washington, D.C., for an evening of solidarity with farm worker leaders, congressional members, and allies.

Executive Director Julie Taylor, Director of Farm Worker Advocacy Elizabeth Rodriguez, Communications Lead Debilee Flores, and board members Hector Rodriguez and Camille Henderson-Edwards represented NFWM, which was honored for decades of partnership and commitment to farm worker justice.



NFWM Delegation with UFW President, Teresa Romero

National Farm Worker Ministry in Action Continues



NFWM Board Member Rev. Connie Yost joined faith advocates on Capitol Hill for UU Hill Day, urging congressional offices to support compassionate immigration reform and justice for farm workers.



NFWM Board Member Felix Garza spent time with New York dairy workers during our farm worker engagement day, listening and learning from their experiences.



NFWM supporters Roger and Marilyn Yockey continue delivering store manager letters to their local Safeway in Yakima, WA—standing with mushroom workers in the ongoing Windmill Farms boycott.



Rev. Joy Warren, NFWM Board Member, represented the Ministry at Nashville's Tennessee Night of Welcome, joined by Communications Lead Debilee Flores in connecting with faith partners supporting immigrant communities.

Take Action With National Farm Worker Ministry

Standing in solidarity means showing up—in your congregation, your community, and online. Visit nfwm.org/take-action to find ways you can advocate alongside farm workers, from supporting current campaigns to hosting educational events.

Each action, large or small, helps amplify the voices of farm worker leaders and strengthens the movement for justice. Share your photos and stories with us at farmlworkeradvocacy@nfwm.org so we can highlight your efforts and inspire others to get involved.



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It's Time to Harvest Housing Justice Together

NFWM Focus on Farm Worker Housing

Across the U.S., far too many farm workers live in housing that is unsafe, overcrowded, and unaffordable. Families who put food on our tables often spend more than half their income on rent while facing hazards like pesticide drift, inadequate sanitation, and housing deliberately hidden from public view.

This fall, NFWM is focusing on housing justice — helping supporters understand the crisis and join efforts to create change.

3 Things You Might Not Know About Farm Worker Housing:

- Many farm workers are excluded from affordable housing programs due to immigration status or strict eligibility rules.
- More than half of farm worker housing is overcrowded and lacks basics such as safe drinking water, proper ventilation, or bathing facilities.
- Labor camps are often remote or hidden, cutting workers off from healthcare, schools, and transportation — and making oversight nearly impossible.



Farm Worker Housing Webinar



SCAN HERE

NFWM is responding by offering educational webinars, sharing tools and resources, and advocating for fair housing protections for H-2A workers and others. This work is part of our broader commitment to safe, dignified living conditions for everyone who labors in our food system.

Scan the QR code to watch last month's housing webinar, explore FAQs, and learn how to advocate for safe, dignified homes for those who feed us. Together, we can turn awareness into action and stand with farm workers for housing justice.



Farm worker housing across the U.S. ranges from crowded barracks to run-down motels and on-farm trailers, often lacking safety, stability, and access to essential services.

NFWM Organizational Updates: Members & Staff

Welcoming the Unitarian Universalist Association

We are honored to welcome the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) as the newest member organization of NFWM, officially joining us in July 2025. The UUA has a long and faithful history of working for equity and justice, calling its congregations to action on issues like economic dignity, immigrant rights, and racial equity.



By joining NFWM, the UUA deepens our shared commitment to stand alongside farm workers whose labor sustains our communities.

Their partnership strengthens the network of faith communities working for fair pay, safe working conditions, and respect for those who feed us all. We are deeply grateful for this new connection and for every congregation and supporter who helps build a wider movement of solidarity and hope.

Summer Intern Insights

This summer, we were joined by **Macie Heise-Nantze**, a Duke Divinity School student who brought fresh energy and thoughtful curiosity to NFWM's work. In June, Macie traveled to Washington, D.C., joining a North Carolina delegation for a Moral Monday protest with the Poor People's Campaign, standing with faith leaders for economic and racial justice.

In July, she supported our Summer Board Meeting in New York, helping with planning and reflection while connecting with partners at Rural & Migrant Ministry and the Worker Justice Center of New York.

She also dedicated significant time to researching farm worker heat stress protections, preparing resources and materials for our August webinar on this urgent issue.

Early in her internship, Macie shared a simple hope: "When I grow up, I want to be hospitable." That spirit shaped every part of her work with us — from listening deeply to farm worker stories to strengthening how we educate and mobilize supporters. We're grateful for her contributions and encouraged by future leaders like Macie, stepping into this movement for justice.



Macie with Board Member, Sylvia Cambell & Supporter, Sharon Stanley-Rea, at the Poor Peoples' Campaign in June

Strengthening Our Voice: New Communications Lead

We're pleased to introduce Debilee Flores as NFWM's new part-time Communications Lead. Based in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, Debilee joined the team in July and brings nearly 20 years of experience in communications strategy across the corporate and public benefit sectors.

Since joining, she has strengthened NFWM's messaging across platforms—building new social media tools, shaping our monthly eNews, updating the website, and contributing to strategic planning. She has also represented NFWM at events, including a United Farm Workers reception and the Tennessee Night of Welcome in Nashville, connecting with allies and highlighting the link between farm work, immigration, and justice.

National Farm Worker Ministry

PO Box 10645

112 Cox St., Ste 208

Raleigh, NC 27605

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The Farm Worker Movement Needs You

Every step we take alongside farm workers is possible because of you. Your prayers, advocacy, and generosity fuel the campaigns and connections that bring hope and justice to the fields.

If you're looking for a way to make that support steady and lasting, consider becoming a **Sustainer**. Monthly gifts provide us the stability to plan boldly, respond quickly when farm workers call for solidarity, and keep essential programs moving forward.

We also invite you to stay engaged and take action with us. Follow along on social media and through our eNews to receive updates, learn about opportunities to amplify farm worker voices, and strengthen the movement for justice. Together, we can keep showing up where farm workers lead.



NFWM

112 Cox St., Ste 208

PO Box 10645

Raleigh, NC 27605

www.nfwm.org

Staff Team:

Amanda Bell

Debielee Flores

Isabella Legra

Elizabeth Rodriguez

Julie Taylor

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