

ECONOMIC, HEALTH, AND GENDER

What does the Bible say?

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**)

Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness and his upper rooms by injustice; who makes his neighbors work for nothing, and does not give them their wages. (**Jeremiah 22:13**)

You shall not withhold the wages of poor and needy laborers, whether other Israelites or aliens who reside in your land. (**Deuteronomy 24:14**)

Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice? Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers...Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? (**Isaiah 58:3,6**)

What does the United Methodist Church say?

We urge farmers, large and small, to engage in sustainable practices that preserve the integrity of the food chain, ensure that farmworkers and other laborers are justly compensated, and protect the natural environment (**The Economic Community, Economic Justice, B. Farming and Agricultural Production**).

We believe in the dignity of work, not merely as a means of subsistence, but as a way for individuals to contribute to the flourishing of their families and contribute to the common good. This affirmation of the dignity of work leads us to support the right to safe and secure working conditions, free from health and safety hazards. We also endorse the establishment and enforcement of policies that guarantee workers fair and equitable compensation, sometimes referred to as a living wage (**The Economic Community, Economic Justice, C. The Dignity of Work**).

When asked what farm workers expected from churches, Cesar Chavez responded, "We wanted the church to be present with us, beside us, willing to sacrifice for justice, ready to be Christ among us." Farm workers call on us to stand in solidarity with them to change unjust conditions and scripture calls us to respond (**2020/2024 Book of Resolutions, #2200, Rights of Farm Workers in the US**).

The United Methodist Church urges annual conferences, especially where farm workers live and work, to use personal and institutional resources to encourage recognition of farm workers' rights to a voice in the agricultural industry, including representation and good faith bargaining (**2020/2024 Book of Resolutions, #2200, Rights of Farm Workers in the US**).



FARMWORKER JUSTICE IN THE UNITED STATES



CHURCH & SOCIETY

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Living FAITH Seeking JUSTICE Pursuing PEACE

FARMWORKER JUSTICE IN THE UNITED STATES

What do the facts say?



- Agricultural workers are largely excluded from core labor laws that protect other workers such as the National Labor Relations Act and Fair Labor Standards Act. Many farm workers in the United States are undocumented immigrants and discouraged from challenging wage theft and oppressive working conditions for fear of deportation.
- The latest agricultural surveys estimate an average farm worker family earns a total of between \$25,000 and \$29,000 from both farm and non-farm labor. 20% live below the poverty line and less than half have health insurance.¹
- 70 percent of the world's child workers, some 80 million (5 to 14 year-olds), are employed in agriculture. Over 90 percent of hired farm workers do not have their generally lower-than-average work place rights enforced by labor inspectors, and fewer than 10 percent of the world's hired farm workers belong to unions.²
- Successful farm worker-led campaigns, such as the Fair Food Program, have increased farm worker wages and created legal recourse for workplace abuse, including sexual harassment.

¹ National Farm Worker Ministry, ² International Labor Organization

What do you say?



Take **ACTION** for justice...

- **Learn** more about the conditions of farm workers in your area and connect with others in your faith community and conference to increase awareness and support for farm worker-led efforts.
- **Support** companies that are partnering with farm worker organizations to increase wages and improve working conditions. Find out more at the Fair Food Program (fairfoodprogram.org) and the Equitable Food Initiative (equitablefood.org).
- **Advocate** alongside farm workers in a local campaign. Our partners at the National Farm Worker Ministry (nfwm.org) have update resources for campaigns with the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, the United Farm Workers and other farm-worker led organizations.

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