

# Beth-El

## Farmworker Ministry, Inc.

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### ***Farm to Table to Farm***

One of my spiritual practices involves daily readings from the Revised Common Lectionary (yes, there is even an app for that). Recent passages have focused on the laws given to Moses. These last few days I have been struck by this particular verse from Leviticus:

*"When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the LORD your God."* [Lev 23:22]

From the beginning, God has offered instruction for the care of the poor and disenfranchised. In lay terms, God says there is plenty to go around. Don't horde the manna, if you do, it will rot before you have a chance to eat it. Whatever you have gathered is sufficient, leave something for the next soul who passes by.

One of the mission's newest initiatives involves preparing a meal for the workers in the fields. In essence resources that may have been picked by that particular farmworker are returned transformed into a hearty warm meal. I affectionately call this endeavor: "*Farm to Table to Farm*".

Someone recently commented that this seemed like a large (and possibly) fool hearty undertaking. Afterall, what is one meal when a family may barely have enough food for the



week? Yet, in our eyes, it is one small way we show thanks to the community whose labor provides the harvest for our own table. “Thank-you”, I imagine, is a phrase hardly heard out in the fields.



*Thank-you*, for the hours spent in the sun, back bent hard, feet and hands swollen and rough.

*Thank-you*, for the miles you travel in search of work, or the days of worry seeking shelter for your family.

*Thank-you*, that no matter how weary you may be, you still strive to prepare a family meal, or help the young ones' with their homework. Thousands of thanks rarely offered to the farmworker in the fields,

making these brief interludes of breaking bread together all the more precious.

Coming to the farm also levels the playing field, allowing both worker and volunteer a brief moment to see the humanity in each other's eyes. We'll meet the woman who waits expectantly for the opening of our dental clinic, or the parent eager to send her child to summer camp. *Farm to Table to Farm* is one of many new initiatives the mission has undertaken in recent years. It is an initiative I hope we will be able to continue again this fall when the farmworkers return for another year. But like all of our initiatives, they cannot continue without your financial support.

In the next few months the mission will once again be filled with the sounds of children as the mission's summer programming begins. We will gather school supplies and backpacks and give thanks for the opening of our long awaited dental clinic. There will be numerous mission teams arriving to help sort and distribute resources. There will be financial assistance offered to farmworkers undergoing a medical or other family emergency. Children will depart for a week



at Cedarkirk, and 7 students will continue their college education with the help of a Beth-El scholarship. All of these opportunities are carried out because of your financial contributions. Yet, presently financially giving is down by 10% compared to this time last year. This is especially troubling as we enter the summer months (traditionally the leanest time of year). God's Word instructs us to care for the poor and disenfranchised. God also promises to

provide. So, as the people of God, I am asking you to please prayerfully consider an additional donation to help carry us through these months and help Beth-El continue these important ministries to farmworkers and our neighbors in need.

Dios le bendiga



**Rev. Kathleen Dain**  
**Executive Director**

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**Christ Church of Long Boat Key, FL along with Beth-El Volunteers served a lunch to 70 farmworkers at Diehl Farms in Wimauma. If you are interested in volunteering for a future luncheon, please contact Javier at 813-633-1548 ext. 228.**

# ***Greetings from the worshipping community Nuevo Camino at Beth-el!***



*I am the vine, you are the branches.  
John 15:5. (NRSV)*

This scripture is part of the assigned reading for the last Sunday of the month of April, it is also present on the main doors to the sanctuary, the pulpit and the Lord's table. We will continue studying Jesus' words in John 15: 1-14 about our relationship to him, his great love for us and his call for us to be united in love, faith, service and fellowship.

Last month was full of activity. We gathered for a sunrise Easter worship service, an Easter Passion/Resurrection play, games, food and donated Easter Baskets! Our small community dedicated countless hours of work and planning to organize this special day. In the month of April we welcomed new visitors to worship. We also celebrated the 95th birthday of a community member and I was commissioned as the pastor of Nuevo Camino at Beth-El. I would like to take time to thank all who donated Easter baskets, and those who participated in the birthday celebration and my commissioning service and reception.

As we look ahead to May and beyond, worshipers at Nuevo Camino continue supporting one another as they gather in prayer, organize meals and offer support for a member of the community and her family as she underwent open heart surgery in April. The community is planning for Mother's day, registering youth for summer camp at Cedarkirk and vacation Bible school.

Please hold us in prayer as we move to Summer programming, search for a music director and continue to live into God's call for the community of faith.

Peace,

Rev. Tamara Leonard Lara  
Pastor, Nuevo Camino at Beth-El



Pastor Tamara Leonard -Lara Commissioning Day on April 22nd, 2018.

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April was Volunteer Appreciation Month, but we love our volunteers 365 days a year!

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# Making "Step Up for Success" a Success

Over the course of our lifetimes, there is a good chance that most of us have needed guidance in one way or another. This may be especially true when dealing with education, employment, and career building. Learning to navigate the system can sometimes be very complicated and may be a determining factor as to whether someone succeeds or not. At Beth-El we feel that education is an important part of people's lives. However, we also know that sometimes obtaining an education can come with many obstacles difficult to overcome, especially if one is trying to do it on their own and lack the experience. For this reason, we are looking for mentors.

At Beth-El, I have always asked for volunteer help. I have asked for help with our hunger relief program, our distribution center, sorting clothes, etc. However, at this time, I am asking for help with our "Step Up for Success" program. In the *Step Up for Success* program, we want people to succeed; therefore, we would like to invite you to share your knowledge and experience with those who may be less experienced and less knowledgeable to help them with a wide range of goals and help them reach a level of potential they may not know they have. As a mentor, you can make this happen.

If you have a soft spot for seeing others succeed, consider yourself a natural teacher, are a real teacher, or would just like to share your knowledge in certain areas of expertise, this article is for you. With your help, we can work on increasing the chances of our community members reach their educational or other life goals. We can help people who would like to explore opportunities, but don't know where to start or who to talk to. If you think this is for you, **please contact me at 813-633-1548 x228**. I would really like to talk to you to make this part of the "Step Up for Success" program, a "Success".



Javier Izaguirre  
Operations Manager

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**Volunteers, Staff and members from the Beth-El Board helped serve delicious strawberry shortcake during the Sun City Center Chamber of Commerce Trade Show**





Summer is around the corner and with that our Back to School Program. Thanks to your donations, every summer, Beth-El distributes more than 500 backpacks filled with school supplies. Here is an idea of what you could donate!

### **Back to School Supplies Wish List**

Back Packs (Middle and High School size)  
Glue Sticks  
Binders (1",2",3")  
Washable markers  
Colored pencils  
Notebooks  
Highlighters  
Loose leaf paper  
College ruled paper  
Composition notebooks  
Scissors  
Pens (black, blue, red)  
Pencils  
Erasers of any type  
Hand sanitizers (pocket size)  
Index Cards  
Three hole dividers  
3 prong folders with pockets  
White board markers



Spending a week at summer camp can be a life changing experience for the child of a farmworker. Every year the mission sends 40 to 50 children and teens to Cedarkirk, but we need your support. The average cost per child is \$400.

**Won't you help sponsor a child to Cedarkirk this summer?**

# Sponsor a Child to Cedarkirk

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Accept my Donation to send a child to camp. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please use my donation where most needed. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to Beth-El Farmworker Ministry - PO Box 860 Wimauma FL 33598.

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Several times a year, students from the nursing program at State College of Florida volunteer at Beth-El as part of their course curriculum. This Spring the group helped collect information for our dental clinic as well as traveled to a local farm in Ruskin to serve a meal and distribute resources.

Gracias SCF!



## Beth-El Dental Clinic



Before long, Beth-El will open a free dental clinic for adults in our community without insurance. In preparation, we are collecting hygiene kits to offer our patients after their treatment. We are looking for packaged toothbrushes, toothpaste, and floss. To learn more how you can help, please call us at 813-633-1548.

Beth-El has a number of opportunities for volunteers who would like to share their professional skills to help improve the quality of life of our farm working families, including:

- **Mentors** - For career coaching and job interview training.
- **Teachers** - Bi-lingual who can help with basic skills (ESOL, GED).
- **Dentists/Hygenists** - to add to our volunteers for our clinic.
- **Translators** - to work with professional dental teams.
- **Counselors** - (bi-lingual) to help with needs assessments.

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## Immediate Needs

**Beth-El Farmworker Ministry has an immediate need for the following items:**

- **Lice shampoo**
- **Nail clippers**
- **Floss**
- **Wash clothes**
- **Deodorant**
- **Bar of soap**
- **Insect repellent**
- **Sun skin protection**
- **Tooth paste/tooth brush**
- **Towels**
- **Baseball style kids caps**



I would like to become more involved at Beth-El Mission as a Volunteer:

I would like to donate \$\_\_\_\_\_

- Lunch at the Farm (Sept-May)
- Food Pantry
- Lead VBS
- Organize a Workgroup
- Organize a Food Drive
- Organize a Clothing Drive
- Summer Camp Scholarships
- Back to School Program
- VBS Supplies
- College Scholarships
- Music Lessons for Youth
- Food Pantry
- Mission's Greatest Need

# Beth-El

*Farmworker Ministry, Inc.*



MAY 2018

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
28	29	01 Food Pantry Distribution Day	02 Groceries packing day	03 Groceries packing day	04 Mobile Food Pantry	05
06 Worship Service 11 am	07 Produce packing day!	08 Food Pantry Distribution Day	09 Worship Service 7 pm	10 Groceries packing day	11 Sorting & Packing for Farm Deliveries	12 Mission Smiles Dental Clinic
13 Worship Service 11 am	14 Rice & Beans packing day!	15 Food Pantry Distribution Day	16 Groceries packing day	17 Groceries packing day	18 Produce packing day!	19
20 Worship Service 11 am	21 Produce packing day!	22 Food Pantry Distribution Day	23 Worship Service 7 pm	24 Groceries packing day	25 Sorting & Packing for Farm Deliveries	26
27 Worship Service 11 am	28 Rice & Beans packing day!	29 Food Pantry Distribution Day	30 Groceries packing day	31 Groceries packing day		
01	02	03	04	05	06	07



***Many thanks to all our supporters!***

***Leave a Lasting Legacy***



Consider making Beth-El Farmworker Ministry part of your will or living trust. Your gift will help the farm working community for generations to come.

***Support Beth-El Mission with your online contribution today.***



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