



THE VAMONOS NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends and Family,

We hope this letter finds you all well and serving where God has placed you.



**Charlotte "Charlie" Beeler
With Mom and Dad, Josh and Meghan**

Before we get into the ministry update, we have to give you the most exciting news.

Valentine's Day brought us our 3rd great grand child! This time, a girl. Charlotte Beeler was born to Meghan and Josh in Brighton, Michigan. They will be calling her "Charlie", and we can't wait to see her in person when we go to Michigan in May. On a slightly different note, it's pretty hard for us to accept the fact that our son has 3 grand children!!

We had a great time with the group from Anna, Illinois in mid February. There were 25 who came. They were here for a week, working at the camp and pastor Desiderio's Church. They were a real blessing. Many of the buildings at the camp were built back in the 90s, and have seen a lot of wear. Last year, the group from Anna came down and replaced the roof on the first dormitory. This year, they replaced the roof on the second dorm, which was built back in 2000. They removed and replaced all of the plywood sheeting, then covered it with new felt paper and shingles. What a blessing, as we could never have afforded to do it on our own. They also worked on the roof of Olga's porch which needed new support posts. At Desiderio's church, they installed ceiling fans in the upstairs fellowship hall and painted the entire room. They held a VBS for children after school, and there were about 50 kids each day learning about Jesus Christ. They held a Bible lesson every morning before leaving to go to work. Then had a sharing time in the evening talking about their day. It is so interesting to have 25 people working in the same area and having so many different happenings throughout the day. During one of



The Anna roofers

the evening sessions, they asked us to tell our story. We so enjoy doing that, as we re-live how God changed our lives and what he did through us.

Several teens from their youth group came and, for many of them, this was their first time. What a blessing to hear how God was working in their hearts. They were held up for two hours at the bridge as they tried to get into Mexico. They had brought many things for the people and for the VBS in a closed trailer. The big thing the border guards were questioning were rocks with Bible verses on them that the group was going to use to help the children remember their Bible verses. They had over 200 rocks so the border guards thought for sure they must be bringing drugs. They all prayed as they were questioned and finally given the OK. Who knows? Maybe some of the guards are remembering the verses, as well!

One of their adults had come to the camp between Christmas and New Years, and she met our old friend, Pastor Isidro Garrido, who was collecting clothes for the poor in mountain communities in the southern part of Mexico. She spoke to the church and they brought about 12 suitcases full of clothes for him to take. Isidro came to the camp one evening and was so surprised at all the clothes that he asked if he could pick them up during the week, as he had a small car. He sang and played his accordion for us all. He is a wonderful man and the group was so happy they were able to help. It was great to hear a lot of



Folks from Anna repair the roof on Olga Berman's porch.



They also found time during their busy week to paint the outside of Pastor Desiderio's house and conduct a daily Bible school for over 50 children a day.

the old hymns being sung in both Spanish and English, and several of the folks said that worship experience was one of the highlights of their trip.

It is always great to have this group here with us. During all of the time of unfounded fear of violence by the American churches, First Presbyterian Church of Anna, Illinois is one of the few that has been consistent in its



Pastor Isidro (at the left) sits with his new friends. In this picture there are people from Mexico, Indiana, Illinois and Washington. What a blessing to have them all there!

support of our ministry, the camp facility and the people of Mexico. Words cannot express how much we appreciate them.

The day we came home from the camp, Jan's sister and husband came for a visit. We had a great time. They celebrated our actual 50th anniversary with us. We had fun touring all around San Antonio and the surrounding area. We have come to be great tour guides. We were very happy to have them, as Jan's sister spends many days with their mom who lives in a nursing home. She is 97 years old with a lot of dementia problems, and will probably be going to a hospice center soon. She does not want to eat and falls a lot. Please pray Jan will be able to see her again when we go to visit family in April. She knows and loves the Lord so we are comforted by that.

We will be going to the camp at the end of March, visiting pastors and planning some work for several Mexican churches. There is a couple coming with us from Brighton, Michigan who

have been long time supporters, but, have never had the opportunity to see the camp or meet any of the people we work with. We are looking forward to showing them around! We hope, as always, to get more American churches to come and help, and it always helps to have folks come from the north for a visit so they can return and tell folks that they felt perfectly safe while they were here. Please pray more will come. It is always hard when we see so many pastors and churches needing help, and then we come home to so much. We just had two church groups postpone their trips (one in March and one in April) until later this year, as more and more people dropped out as the dates got closer.

There is one other area in which we need a lot of prayer and guidance. Many of you have supported our "Feed My Sheep" program for many years. This program provided breakfast for Reynosa children at several churches each day before they went to school. We never wanted to have to stop the program at any church we supported because we ran out of funds, so, rather than starting in more and more places, we opted to maintain extra money in the Feed My Sheep account to sustain existing programs if funding slowed down. However, things have changed in Reynosa. The government has begun providing food for the children in the schools and communities. The government sends 3 pesos per child fed to the school (or other location it has established) and the parents are required to pay 3 pesos per child. The pastors, therefore, not wanting to be in competition with the government, and cutting their income by giving food away for free, have opted to either suspend, or not start, the feeding program. The question for us becomes, "What should we do with the money that is left in the account?" This is money that has been designated specifically for the children of Reynosa, and we have always pledged that it would be used for nothing else. We are, right now, in discussions about what replacement program we can begin to responsibly utilize these funds. Some have suggested school scholarships. But, this also has its problems. We can't fund all the children. How are recipients selected? Who does the selection? Do we offend the parents of children who are NOT selected? There is also a church that we have worked with for a long time that wants to build a sports complex on the church property to provide activities for the local children. It would be a combination basketball and soccer field. We just aren't sure if that would be a proper usage. Since we are sure that breakfast programs will not be restarted, our desire now would be to have those of you who currently support the program continue giving, and we will re-direct the money into our "Ministries for Children" fund. We will then use it on an ongoing basis as we see needs arise, as all the churches continually have needs in their Sunday School and summer programs. If you have thoughts on this matter, feel free to contact us by phone or email, but, more importantly, please be in prayer for us as we attempt to responsibly address this issue.

Again, thank you for all of your continues support, and we hope you all have a great Easter season as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Thank you, Lord

Again, we are happy to report that Sylvia is feeling great and getting back to normal after all of her cancer treatments. God is good.

Suzanne Wilkinson's continued recovery process. At last report, she was doing better, but still had a lot of pain. The doctors said that was normal for the first six months.

Still no evidence of Mexican violence for the American groups. As more people return to work here, they are slowly discovering that the danger of violence against innocent people in Reynosa is actually less than the problems in most American cities. Not one group that has come has had any kind of difficulty.

We had asked you to pray for the sale of our camp truck. Well, there was another ministry in Reynosa in need of a vehicle, so we made it available to them. We needed to realize some cash out of it, but, reduced the price significantly as part of our support of their work.

We were really touched and blessed by our kids taking us on the anniversary cruise. Many people have asked us what our favorite part was, and our answer is always the same.... just being able to spend that time with our kids.

Please Pray with us

We had asked you to pray for one of our friends who is contemplating coming down to work with Vamonos on a permanent basis. As of this writing, there is no further progress on this issue, so we ask you to continue praying for guidance in the area.

Please keep us in your prayers at the end of this month as we travel to see family and meet with many of our long time supporters. We will be in South Carolina, Michigan and Indiana, and be gone for about three weeks.

Please continue to keep Sylvia in your prayers as she continues to get stronger.

Please continue to pray for Suzanne Wilkinson's full recovery.

Please keep Jan's sister, Phyllis in your prayers as she shoulders the bulk of the responsibility in the ongoing care of their mother in Indiana.

Dios le bendiga

George and Jan