



# The Chaplain's CHRONICLES

## LET'S "DO LIFE" TOGETHER

As "newbies" in our CRM chaplain ministry at Winter Ranch RV Resort in Alamo, TX, we were trained to "do life" with the residents of our park in order to get to know them and to build relationships with them. In this way, we can better minister to them if we know them and they know us personally. This is where the challenge comes in! They're never in their tiny homes or RVs! They're out and about walking, biking, swimming, playing different ball games or card games or any number of activities! We have to RUN to catch up with them! So, we go where they go and do what they do in order to build that relationship. Fortunately, they do slow down to eat so that we can visit while

*We have to  
RUN to  
catch up  
with them!*

we eat. We're also making things while we visit, such as, wooden bowls and cutting boards as well as stained glass doves and feathers. We never knew ministry could be like this! "Doing life" with our fellow residents and neighbors has been a delightful surprise and has really benefitted God's work here in the park – IF we can just keep up with them! They tell us that they just so appreciate our living here with them and participating with them in their different activities.

It's such a joy seeing them open up about the sermons and Bible studies and what's going on in their lives as we "do life" together. That's part of what a CRM chaplain's ministry is all about.



## IN REMEMBRANCE

We often speak of our military or law enforcement who die in the line of duty. Well, we also have Christian Chaplains who die in the line of duty while on location where God has placed them to serve Him and to serve others. We'd like to honor these chaplains who recently died on location because of covid and heart issues. Let us keep their families in our prayers:



**Bob Morlan**  
CRM Chaplain  
Apache Junction, AZ



**Dale Chamberlin**  
CRM Chaplain  
Harlingen, TX

Ron Ebb will serve as the new Chaplain in Apache Junction, and Dean Switzer is currently serving as the Chaplain in Harlingen.



# perspectives

by Robert N. Ruesch

## • Ride on! •

NOTE: Although this devotion is from the writer's experience in Arizona, it is relevant to all the excellent biking paths in the Rio Grande Valley.

It is early, and the sun is up, the Arizona temperature is down, so the bicycle ride begins.

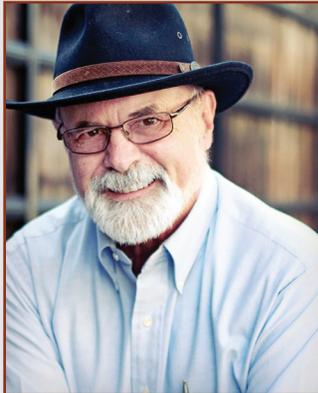
Morning time in the Arizona desert is a time of thundering quiet awaking as if a sleeping sand giant yawns, stretches, and wakes up. Perhaps spring is when God colors the pallet of the desert sand with every imaginable pigment available in His world of many colors. There is bottle brush, with its striking red flower, cactus' each unique, blooming at separate times in the spring with a statement of hue that individualizes each one. Some cacti are adorned in an orange/red while others capture pure white accented with yellow, others any shade you can imagine.

People think the desert is more flat than hilly. People need to think again. You peddle up coast down, peddle up again and coast time and time again.

Unseen birds call as you ride by hailing your intrusion into their specified territory.

Peddle on, push up the next hill, wind in your face, conversation at your side.... "Be still and KNOW that I AM God" slams into your consciousness like the opposite quiet of the movement of your bicycle as you peddle up yet another mound of a hill to a destination not yet in sight.

A coyote yelps in the distance, distributing the sound of the wind as it weaves its way through the saguaro cactus that stands as a silent sentinel guarding the serenity of the desert.



They hover tall, reaching to the sky, arms outstretched, holding countless secret stories of the passing of time. Saguaro cacti grow as slow as the minimal existence of rain, sometimes only a foot a year, yet they stand bravely tall a place for birds to land carefully, a landmark as each one is formed different, like people, fearfully and wonderfully created by the ultimate Creator.

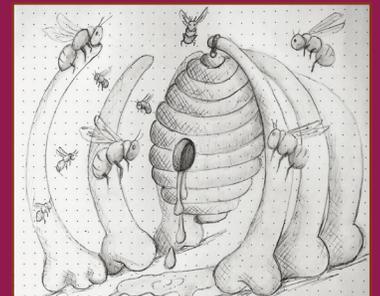
A cottontail rabbit holds its pose, hoping you, the coyote, or other natural enemies don't notice him, then you peddle too close, and it is a race, the rabbit wins, finding safe refuge under a fallen cactus.

The temperature starts to increase as the "burn" in your legs that match the Arizona heat, yet you peddle on and on, knowing your destination is closer than just a few minutes ago.

Your destination is down the road, but the goal of seeing God's creative wonder of an awaking planet is the true and direct journey as His beauty pierces your heart and memory with how much He loves you to give you all this beauty where there is minimal water and maximal sunlight. This is His quiet time with you and yours with Him. You are peddling toward eternity, and He is waiting, waiting for you to come closer in your walk, your ride, your life. •



*Sheila Freeland, one of the Chaplain's wives creates drawings from scripture to share with others so they may dig into God's Word and find the scripture that it is depicting. Can you guess where these are found in scripture? Answers will be on the bottom of last page.*



## JOYFULLY HELPING CHILDREN IN NEED

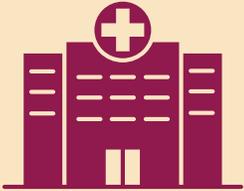
November and December was a busy time for us at Winter Ranch RV Resort in Alamo, Texas. We were busy as little Christmas elves buying and gathering toys, colors, coloring books, markers, puzzle books, notebooks and pens, dolls and balls, big toys and little toys, clothes and toiletries – all for the children at the ARISE Ministries here in Alamo. We stuffed 300 big stockings and several boxes and took them to the local ministry center – happy to bring some Christmas joy to those who have so little here in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas.

# Amazing ACCOMPLISHMENTS

BY THE CHRISTIAN RESORT MINISTRY CHAPLAINS *IN JUST 4 MONTHS*

**58**

hospital visits



**149**

home visits



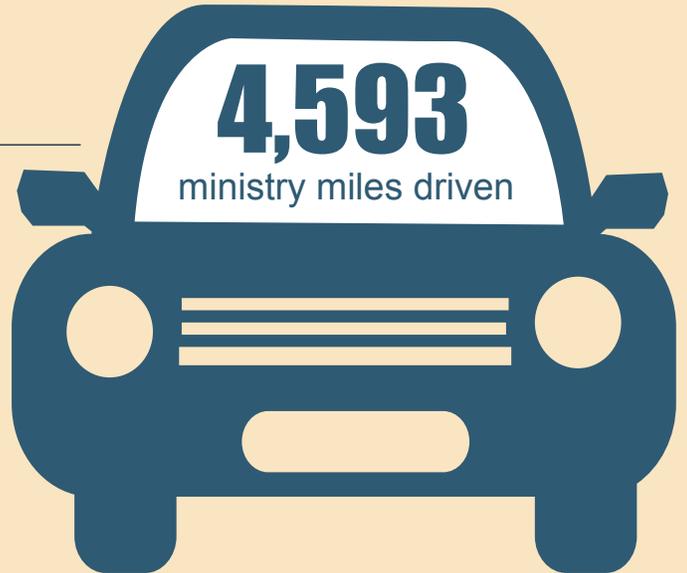
**548**

porch/patio visits



**4,593**

ministry miles driven



**196**

worship services held

**280**

online worship services

**9,589**

people attended the services & heard The Gospel



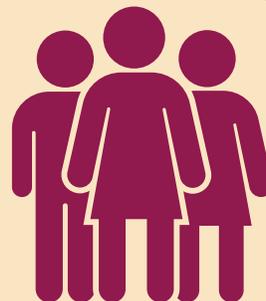
**155**

bible studies

**31+**

states & 2 Canadian provinces represented by the residents of the parks

**1,360**



people attended to study their bible

# SLEEPING MATS FOR THE HOMELESS

At Fig Tree Resort in Harlingen Texas we have a wonderful group of volunteers of men and woman that get together for a couple of hours every Monday to create sleeping mats from donated bags for the homeless in Rio Grande Valley. These mats have two purposes...to help make life a little better for those less fortunate and to keep plastic from reaching the landfill.

Beginning in 2022 there are over half a million homeless any given night in the US. In Texas alone there are 25,848 who are sleeping in a temporary shelter, transitional housing, they are sleeping in a place that is not meant for habitation (like an abandoned building) or completely out in the elements with absolutely no shelter above their heads.

To make one mat it takes 500-700 plastic bags and roughly 100 hours of work. No need for everyone to know how to crochet because we have volun-

teers flattening the bags, cutting them into strips. Others take those strips and tie them together and roll them into balls of "plarn". The crocheters will then use their 10mm crochet hooks to make a 6-foot-by-3-foot mat. These mats are made of plastic so it allows for the recipient to keep blankets and sleeping bags dry and thus keeping them dry and warm. They can also be used as a blanket to help stay dry during the rain. Given that they are plastic they are easy to clean. For ease of transporting they crochet a strip onto the end of the mat so the mats can be rolled and tied.

As for the second purpose of the mats...Did you know it takes plastic 400 years to degrade! So that means the bottle you are drinking from will be here for the next 16 generations! There is such a global problem with overloaded landfills but we can all do our part... big or small. Did you know that half

of all plastic produced is designed to be used only once — and then thrown away? By creating these mats and using recycled plastic shopping bags we can give the bags a second job and thus keep more plastics out of the landfills. We have chosen to give our mats to the organization Loaves and Fishes and then they distribute to the ones in need. As of this season, we have created and donated a total of 13 mats. That's 9100 plastic bags that have been saved from going into the landfill!

We know these mats aren't going to fix the homeless situation or save the planet, but we do hope that it can make one persons night a bit more bearable and make the landfill a little less.

Mats on display before they were donated. (inset photos l-r) a roll of plarn, a volunteer crocheting, another volunteer showing the size of her mat



You want to talk embarrassing moments? My husband, Dennis Key, is Chaplain at Winter Ranch RV Resort in Alamo, TX. He has embarrassing moments every Sunday! Before he preaches, he warms the congregation up for the sermon with the corniest jokes ever!! They laugh their heads off and look at me while I sheepishly cringe in the choir! Nowhere to run; nowhere to hide. They love it so much, they are now giving him joke books to last till Jesus comes!

## A CHAPLAIN'S WIFE

What has been my experience as a new chaplain's wife? One of the most important roles is to encourage my husband. I help him with administrative duties. I make the weekly order of service. I started a prayer chain to help the congregation pray for one another. Because the congregation didn't know us, they rarely came to us for prayer or advice before. I help lead a Bible study. Participating in things is important. By building relationships outside the church, we found out the needs of the community. Some of the activities I have participated in are: sewing up the bottoms of stuffed animals for Toys for Tots. They are then taken to local hospitals and given to hurting children. I play cards with a group of ladies weekly. I participate in bowling, aquacise, and sometimes Bingo. The Lord has encouraged me to befriend some of the widows in the park and encourage them to get out and participate in activities. When people tell me things about their families, I try to stop and pray with them on the spot. I think the most important thing is to show God's love and acceptance to everyone we meet.



## THERE'S MUCH WORK TO BE DONE

What would you do if you were placed as a chaplain in an RV park that was very involved in missions? You'd get involved, right? Well, that's exactly what Chaplain Doug Hollums is doing with the church at Sunshine RV Park in Harlingen, Texas. They are helping support several Mexican missions, pastors, families, and students. School uniforms, computers, and internet services are such a blessing to the students who are trying to get an education. The families need help with medical expenses, construction projects, and household items. Chaplain Doug visits with the Mexican pastors and families to encourage them and to help meet those needs. Easter is around the corner, and Chaplain Doug has plans to return to Mexico and assist with a children's Easter program. There's MUCH work to be done on both sides of the Texas-Mexico border!



### ANSWERS TO DRAWING THE WORD

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

*1Ti 6:12*

And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, [there was] a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion.

*Jdg 14:8*



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