

OUR STORY For Your Story Collection

Bill and I were in the Southwest for two weeks in January to visit a son and wife in Albuquerque NM, a grandsons wedding in Palm Springs CA, and then visit church friends Richard & Kristina in Green Valley AZ. We also went to the church of Talitha Arnold, a Daily Devotion writer, in Santa Fe, and did not see her.

Our church in Somesville is well known for making and selling pies for about 7 weeks in the summer. Last summer our first pie sale was entirely blueberry pies, the proceeds from which went to a church we had heard about in Arizona that helped people at the border. Samaritans leave bottles of water along dessert trails, assist people crossing and give aid when possible. The church received over \$2000.00 from this one sale. We did not know at the time that it was the church of some summer friends who attend our church. The church that received the proceeds of pie sale is The Good Shepherd Church UCC, Sahuarito, near Green Valley.

Green Valley AZ is just south of Tucson, and fairly close to the border with Mexico. We were there in time for the Martin Luther King Jr. event, and had a tour. We met Minister Randy the next day. Our first night with them, Richard and Kristina told us of Randy's comment that he could "almost taste" the blueberry pies we had made and sold. I said that I'd make him one, (and one for us at the house). We delivered his pie to him at church one noon and then had more tour of the church, explanation of Spanish classes offered to the local Samaritans, and saw the food pantry building. Richard and Kristina were among those learning Spanish which would help them in communicating with people at the border. Some are also doing regular water drops along trails in the dessert and very rough terrain areas.

Another day we saw the US/Mexico border wall in Nogales where many people cross the border every day to work, or to shop. We saw Mexican food trailer trucks lined up in parking lots near the road ready for US trucks to unload the produce and take to US markets. We also went to Mission San Xavier del Bac in Tucson, a Benedictine monastery now assisting refugees.

On Food Pantry distribution day at the church, we saw many local people sitting and waiting, or talking with officials before having their turn to fill a shopping cart, which can be done 2x a month. A church or community volunteer guided each recipient around the food tables and then helped them put the food in their car. The people in charge were very helpful and caring. We were told that the adults of some local families had been deported, and that their children who were staying with friends, had their own account for food. Since this was in January, during the government shutdown, we were told there were also many Government workers who needed food, not just local people or refugees.

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