
Good News From the Border: "Just Watch"

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January 8, 2024

8 de enero 2024

Frontera de Cristo

**Cultivating Relationships
and Understanding
Across Borders**



**We bid farewell to Sam and Cynthia Pendergrast
as they head back to New York State after a year
volunteering on the border.**

Dear friends,

"I am grateful to God to be in this Casa de Vida (House of Life)." "God saved my life here."
"Laura has opened the door over and over to me and so many others and helped us get
on the road to recovery."

Together with our children and a delegation from First Presbyterian Church of Sheridan,
Wyoming, we spent New Year's evening with our partners at CATPSIC drug and alcohol
recovery center. Laura, the director, invited us to come and share in the 21st anniversary
celebration of her sobriety.

During dinner, we were able to talk with Ernesto, whom we have known for over 15 years.
For the first four of those years, he was in and out of the center, falling back into his
addiction to heroin multiple times. There were times when he looked as close to death as
anyone I have ever known. Twelve years ago, after the last time he entered the center
with his addiction, he told us "never to give up because God still does miracles."

Twenty-one years, 11 years, five years, three years, six months, two weeks, one day without consuming. What a joy to celebrate with CATPSIC and to hear their gratitude to God, to Laura, and their desire to follow her example to continue their sobriety and to help open the door for others.

May God help us open doors so that others may experience healing and wholeness; peace and joy; hope and love in this new year.

Peace,

Miriam Maldonado Escobar and Mark Adams

[PC\(USA\) Mission Co-workers serving with Frontera de Cristo](#)

Jocabed Gallegos Viesca Ordained As Minister of Word and Sacrament

"I thank God for His call to my life; the road has been long with ups and downs, but God's hand has always been there and His voice calling me continues to resound within my heart and resonate in my life." -Joca Gallegos

ROSARIO JOCABED GALLEGOS VIESCA ("Joca") has served as Mexico Coordinator for Frontera de Cristo since 2014. In her role, Joca coordinates and supports FDC's programs and personnel in Agua Prieta, facilitates delegations, leads worship activities, and provides pastoral care to FDC staff and the community on both sides of the border.

On December 17, 2023, Joca completed a 21-year journey when she was ordained *Minister of Word and Sacrament* in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and joined the ministerial staff of the First Presbyterian Church in Douglas, AZ. In October 2023, FDC volunteer Mary Goodwin talked with Joca about what her ordination means to her, what she sees going on in FDC's ministry and the "DouglPrieta" community at this time, and where she sees hope for the future.



Rev. Joca
Gallegos
FDC Coordinator

[Read Mary's interview with Joca](#)

[Lea la entrevista en español](#)



Rev. Mark Adams gives the
"Charge to the Newly Ordained"



Rev. Joca Gallegos offers the benediction at
the close of the ordination service

[See more photos from Joca's ordination](#)

More than 25 years of Cross-Border Advocacy and Solidarity on the Douglas-Agua Prieta Border

*A National Public Radio/Arizona Public Media interview with
Mark Adams and Miriam Maldonado Escobar, broadcast December 27, 2023*

"Just watch what the community of Douglas does," was Mark's response to the impending release by Border Patrol of asylum seekers who feared returning home. It has been a blessing to see the community respond by welcoming more than 4,000 men, women, and children from dozens of countries who are seeking refuge from extreme poverty and/or violence. A local Catholic Church provides the main leadership for the team of more than 50 volunteers, coordinating with city and county officials, as well as with Casa Alitas in Tucson, to help people be united with their sponsors throughout the US to await their court date. If you'd like to join in supporting the amazing work that the Douglas community is doing, you can donate via the [Amazon Gift List](#). We are changing and updating the gift list daily, so check there for current needs. And be assured that ALL donations are being put to immediate use!

MARK ADAMS AND MIRIAM MALDONADO ESCOBAR have lived on the border and worked with migrants for more than 25 years. The bi-cultural couple both speak Spanish and English with ease, and switch back and forth throughout a conversation. This interview we did in Spanish for a Spanish-language segment of Arizona Illustrated, which will be out in the coming months.



Mark and Miriam are a part of the Douglas-Agua Prieta cross-border community. In September, Border Patrol let the community know they were going to start releasing migrants on the streets of Douglas due to large numbers of people crossing the border. They were looking for assistance from the local faith community.

[Read or listen to the interview](#)

On Giving Each Child a Chance

by Cynthia Pendergrast, FDC Volunteer

ON MORNING EDITION, DECEMBER 23, 2023, Scott Simon's monologue included these lines as he responded to Santa's request of what he wanted: "Give each child a chance to be happy, healthy, and to play." Santa responded, "Why don't we all work on that?"



With those words in my head, I think back on my year with the Children's Enrichment Ministry and how this program works to give each child a chance.

Sam & Cynthia Pendergrast

Some of the children don't know how to read—children of 8, 10, 12 years of age. The teachers recognize this as an immense hurdle for the children and try to find ways to help them. Our teachers' meeting in September focused on this theme, and materials are now available to the teachers to help them in this important work.

One day I asked one of the teachers what opportunities exist here for a child who grows up and can't read. [Continue reading Cynthia's article](#)

Sam and Cynthia Pendergrast came to Agua Prieta from Rome, New York, in January 2023, to serve for one year as volunteers with Frontera de Cristo and our partners. Cynthia served with the Children's Enrichment Ministry team, providing a safe and welcoming space for

children at risk of dropping out of school, and helping them cultivate their academic abilities, social skills, and spiritual life. Sam served at the Migrant Resource Center, welcoming persons expelled from the US into Mexico; at CATPSIC, accompanying people who are in recovery from addictions; and by helping to facilitate delegations from churches, universities, seminaries, and high schools. This week during an [Epiphany celebration, we bid farewell](#) to Cynthia and Sam as they head back to New York. They will be missed!

Read other articles in Sam & Cynthia's weblog "[A Year on the Border](#)."

Take Action—If you'd like to volunteer with Frontera de Cristo, please contact Mark Adams at mark@fronteradecristo.org or fill out and submit our Volunteer Application which can be downloaded from our website: fronteradecristo.org/get-involved/

Coming Soon: Café Justo 20th Anniversary Photo Book



ORDER THE NEW CAFÉ JUSTO [20th anniversary photo book](#) now. Just \$20, shipping included. See how your coffee grows from seed to cup and how this amazing coffee co-op grew from just a few coffee farming families to the wide-reaching co-op that ships delicious organic coffee all across this country today. Anticipated publication date: Winter 2024.

Love Mercy, Do Justice, Order Coffee



FRONTERA DE CRISTO AND CAFÉ JUSTO CREATED the "Love Mercy, Do Justice" initiative to provide coffee for migrant shelters across the southern border. Thousands of women and men each week are greeted with a cup of coffee, a meal, and vital medical attention when they are repatriated into Mexico. You can help support this effort with a donation to [Love Mercy, Do Justice](#).

The **Immaculate Conception Shelter** is the newest partner with the *Love Mercy, Do Justice* ministry. It opened in September 2023 to receive persons seeking asylum who are released in Douglas by Border Patrol. *Love Mercy, Do Justice* has donated delicious freshly roasted Café Justo to help welcome to more than 4,000 guests who have found a safe and loving place on their journey. Frontera de Cristo provides the welcoming team each Friday.



In the mean time, why not [order some coffee for yourself today](#)? You will enjoy delicious 100% organic coffee cultivated, roasted, and shipped by the Café Justo cooperative. To order by mail instead of online, just download [this form](#).

A Week in the Borderlands



Watch our new 2023 video by Steve Zeoli
[See the whole Café Justo video list](#)

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