



A Publication of  
Homestead Presbytery

# The Homesteader

February 14, 2012 Issue



*Celebrating The Ministry of Homestead Presbytery Congregations*

## Mother & Daughter Team Do Coffee in Nicaragua

Ramona & Gina Meester were honored & blessed to participate in the 2012 Fair Trade Delegation to Nicaragua which was sponsored by the Presbyterian Hunger Program of the PC(USA) and Equal Exchange.



While in Nicaragua they learned about the history & culture of Nicaragua and Fair Trade while visiting the Tierra Nueva Coffee Cooperative, the Women's Pottery Cooperative of Ducuale Grande, Zona Franca Masili (a fair trade sewing cooperative), & Esperanza en Acción (a small non-profit organization that serves artisan groups in Nicaragua helping them to improve their small businesses by offering trainings and capacity building workshops, assistance in calculation of a fair wage and connections to local and international fair trade organizations). Of course,

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## Palmyra's Good News By Rev. Sara Dingman-Lavigne

Palmyra is growing in membership, financial and human resources, and spiritual maturity. I attribute this to Palmyra's good systemic health and its resilience.

I also attribute this growth to the *adaptive learning* that the congregation and I have engaged in since I became its Stated Supply in April 2009. At that time, Palmyra moved from having a pastor next door in the manse to having a stated supply pastor who lives an hour away and is in the local community generally just twice a week. (The church has no office, internet or phone line; I do all administration and worship prep from my home in Omaha.)

While many small, rural churches in mainline denominations are struggling, Palmyra is steadily growing. I also attribute this growth to the way in which in Palmyra has chosen to *frame change*.

Palmyra has chosen to frame changes, in society and church, in a positive light and with a spirit of adventure. The church has demonstrated great flexibility, a willingness to adapt, and a healthy degree of self-empowerment. The

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picking coffee and the home stay were highlights of the trip. They look forward to sharing many photos & stories with you. (You may contact them at [rmeester@windstream.net](mailto:rmeester@windstream.net) to schedule a program.) They are grateful to Homestead Presbytery's Clergy Family Committee for its scholarship support.

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people are open-hearted, open-minded and welcoming of visitors. They also have a clear understanding that for ministry to succeed in their particular environment, much of it must be carried out by the laity.

I share all this as a message of hope: Even small, rural churches that are open to new understandings of being a "21st century church" can thrive.

Churches that are open to considering new models of ministry, particularly in the area of re-shaping their partnerships with ordained clergy, can thrive.

In Christ,  
Sara Dingman-Lavigne

God loves You!! Happy Valentine's Day!

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**Next Stated Meeting** of Homestead Presbytery is Saturday, February 18, 2010 at 10 AM at Lincoln Heritage Presbyterian Church. The Educational hour features Diana Barber. She will be talking about congregational Bylaw adjustments based on the New Form of Government. [The Docket and Online Registration are now online](#)

And...2011 receipts exceeded 2011 disbursements by \$13,674. Palmyra has no debt, and now \$40,000 in the bank! The building is in fine shape as well.

In 2012, I will be working with Palmyra to continue growing in the area of mission ~ both financial and hands-on mission to the community and world. While Palmyra is certainly a "revitalized" church, I believe that true *transformation* will take place when the church can better identify, claim and fulfill God's purposes for Palmyra, which is to be a tangible blessing to the world.