

# U.S./Mexico Border Immersion Experience

## Tour Leader: Rev. Joel Hortiales

Rev. Joel Hortiales, a General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) missionary (Advance #3022410), is assigned to the California-Pacific Conference, where he collaborates with various ministries and nonprofit organizations serving immigrants in San Diego, California, and Tijuana, Mexico. A core component of his ministry involves planning and leading meaningful border immersion experiences. He works in partnership with Susan Harriss, the Cal-Pac UMVIM (United Methodist Volunteers in Mission) Coordinator.

## Purpose of an Immersion Experience

This experience is designed to fully engage individuals or groups in the environment of asylum seekers. Rather than simply observing, participants are immersed in the context, fostering a deeper understanding and connection with those affected by migration.

## Sample Activities May Include:

- Crossing the U.S./Mexico border
- Visiting Friendship Park in Tijuana (directly encountering the border wall)
- Touring Centro 32 (a center supporting the psychological and educational needs of traumatized immigrants)
- Delivering donations to local programs
- Volunteering at a migrant shelter
- Assisting with the Mexican Methodist Church's feeding ministry (Comedor "Juan 6:35") in a low-income community
- Supporting educators aboard the "Baby Bus," which provides services to displaced children
- Interviewing asylum seekers to hear their stories
- Enjoying lunch at Café de La Flor in Tijuana

## Costs:

Participants are responsible for:

- Transportation to and from San Diego
- Lodging (can be self-arranged or coordinated through the program)
- Meals
- Donations to support the partner programs and ministries

The length of your immersion experience will vary based on the number and type of activities you choose to participate in.

## Next Steps:

1. Contact Rev. Joel Hortiales at [jhortiales@calpacumc.org](mailto:jhortiales@calpacumc.org) or via text at 323-572-4228.
2. Schedule your tour: Share your preferred dates and the activities you're interested in. Rev. Hortiales will respond with a proposed itinerary and more detailed cost information.
3. Ensure your passport is valid: You must have a current passport with at least six months remaining before expiration on your scheduled border crossing date. This is essential to re-enter the U.S. after your visit.



**California-Pacific Conference**

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