

VOLUNTEERS IN MINISTRY

Mike Eyer

The purpose of the United Methodist Volunteers in Ministry (UMVIM) committee is to promote mission activities in local congregations and to equip mission leaders to engage groups in safe, effective, and engaging mission trips and activities locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

The circumstances of 2020-2021 have had a significant impact on UMVIM activities in all theaters – local, regional, national, and international. In most years dozens of congregations in the Desert Southwest Conference have conducted and participated in mission trips – Disaster Response, Long Term Recovery, medical missions, construction, youth trips. Churches have been encouraged to continue in local ministry and service activities and to assist groups and facilities in need. Virtual mission experiences developed by dozens of ministries have informed, challenged, and encouraged participation through financial support, prayer, and encouragement.

As the restrictions of the COVID pandemic hopefully are lessened, churches, and individuals are eager to resume travel, service, and ministry in areas affected by fires, tornadoes, hurricanes, and floods and also to build houses and improve living circumstances. With the closure of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) West Depot in Salt Lake City, several conferences in the Western Jurisdiction are in the process of developing and supplying depots. Those depots will be asking for supplies – flood buckets, fire buckets, cleaning buckets, ash sifters – and encouraging local groups to fill that need. Mission trips will resume as well as team leader training opportunities. Virtual mission experiences will continue. Churches are invited to promote those trips and to celebrate them on the Conference's media resources.