

Courageous Love and Immigration Justice Immersion June 27 – July 1, 2025, Tijuana, Mexico

Registration is open until May 19! Use the links below.



Learning about realities for migrants in 2023 Praying at the border wall during worship

Join an immersive delegation experience for Presbyterians from across Southern California to learn about the current realities at the U.S.-Mexico border, and especially in Tijuana, Mexico.

Our trip facilitators will be from [Via International](#) (Via), which led our virtual border trips in 2021 and in-person border trip in 2023. Rooted in the Southern California/Baja California region and founded in 1975, Via is a non-profit organization with extensive relationships of trust across Mexico. Our group will spend time in Tijuana meeting with local communities, migrants, staff at migrant shelters, immigrant legal service providers, deportees, and others. Through our facilitated conversations with recent migrants who are finding their way to new lives as well as experts in the fields of migration and social justice we will learn about the current realities at the border. You can preview the [draft itinerary](#) now.

This trip is open to teenagers (with adult chaperone) on up. All participants are required to have a passport that is valid through Jan. 1, 2026. Participants will meet up in San Diego in the late morning of June 27 and walk across the border together. People can be dropped off right at the border crossing, but some walking is involved to get through passport control, customs, and to the street in Tijuana. We will return to the U.S. before lunch on July 1. Our lodging will be secure housing in Tijuana that Via manages. All rooms are shared and have a private bathroom.

The Presbytery leaders for this trip are applying for grants from the Synod JPIC Committee and each of the presbyteries, so that scholarships can be given for this 5-day study trip to those who need them. Please see the [Finances and Payment form](#) for more information and to complete your registration. The trip registration cost covers lodging, meals, transportation, and all programming in Tijuana. Carpooling to San Diego is encouraged. Transportation to San Diego and parking at the border are not covered by the registration cost.

Have questions? See the FAQ below and/or contact Wendy Gist at gist.wendy@gmail.com.

Click on the link directly below to start the registration process.

[Synod of Southern California and Hawaii - Via International Trip Registration](#)

Frequently Asked Questions:

Do I need a passport?

YES! And it must be valid for a minimum of six months after the trip.

What will we be eating?

Tijuana has so many people from so many places that you can experience food from many cultures. Usually, the program supports local women who prepare homemade meals for the participants and, since they come from all over Mexico, the dishes can be a diverse offering of the many regions of Mexico. There will be efforts to accommodate dietary restrictions. If you have food restrictions or allergies, please let Wendy Gist know.

What will our accommodations be like?

Our accommodation will be shared rooms with private baths in secure housing managed by Via International.

What can we expect at the beginning of our time in Tijuana?

Our group will be transported via bus/van to our accommodation after one meeting. Once we are checked in lunch and an orientation will be provided. The orientation will include an introduction to Mexico and Tijuana specifically, including facts, local customs and culture, safety, rules and expectations. Participants will also learn about the critical issues facing communities, including health and nutrition, access to education, and, of course, migration. The orientation will provide an overview of activities for the week and background on the projects, people, and places we will be visiting and working with.

What is expected of me?

Participants should be adaptable and flexible, willing to work as part of a team, and respectful of local traditions, culture, and customs. Spanish language ability is useful, but not necessary.

What Via International initiatives are based in Mexico?

[Via Migrante](#) offers paths to human dignity in migrant communities in Baja California. [Via Baja](#) offers paths of self-reliance through micro-credit. [Comunidad de Luz](#), a new migrant shelter for women and children in Tijuana, is a collaborative effort offering up to 100 women and children a safe haven with critical services. We will be introduced to these initiatives through visits, conversations, and activities.

Who will be accompanying us in Mexico?

Staff members of Via International along with community promoters they work with will be our guides. A community promoter may also stay with us at our place of lodging.

Where will we leave our vehicles in San Diego?

Wendy Gist is still looking at options. There are large pay parking lots right near where we will walk across the San Ysidro border crossing. In 2023 many in our group left vehicles in a church parking lot and took Lyft/Uber to the border crossing. Some may want to ride the trolley to the San Ysidro border crossing from somewhere else in the San Diego area. This may not be a one solution for all situation since some of the group may have friends or relatives in the San Diego area where they can leave a vehicle and others may take the train. However, options will be provided closer to the trip.