



October 14, 2019

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ:

For the past year, our southern border has been impacted by events of dehumanizing proportions. Our United Methodist churches along the border have joined a host of NGOs and other agencies to respond to the ever-changing influx of immigrants and asylum seekers.

To that end, the New Mexico Conference has begun to develop a conference-wide strategy to proactively engage our congregations in a permanent support to the communities located along the US-Mexico border and within our conference boundaries. Three steps have been made to begin building our strategy: First, a group of clergy and lay from the New Mexico Conference, led by Rev. Dr. Douglas Mills and resourced by our Provost Rev. Dr. Randall Partin, has been meeting for the past few months to become more knowledgeable and supportive of the efforts happening in the southern end of our conference.

Second, I am pleased to announce that, as part of that strategy, we have created the conference staff position of Director of Border and Missional Ministries. The Rev. Nicole Crouch, a Provisional Deacon from the Western Pennsylvania Conference, has received a full-time appointment to fill that position. Nicole has been in ministry with the El Paso District as the Director of Missional Ministries for the last year and half and will continue to do so giving her main attention to the Conference's needs.

Third, I am organizing the Immigration Summit event in El Paso on November 21-23. Attending will be Bishops and Heads of General Agencies, the United Methodist Immigration Task Force, members of the New Mexico and Northwest Texas Cabinets, as well as leaders from our conference. Rev. Dr. Eddie Rivera, El Paso District Superintendent, supported by a local team, is in charge of the preparations for this event.

In all, we hope to build a permanent witness of compassion and justice in the borderland connected to every congregation throughout the New Mexico Conference.

Bishop W. Earl Bledsoe
Resident Bishop