

# Invitation Ministry Report

## Arizona Mission Center

In my youth and young Priesthood days, the spirit of converting people to the RLDS Church was paramount in everything we did. Somehow, we needed to convince people that their faith journey was somewhat flawed and the "we" had the correct pathway. Thankfully, that has been changing over the last 40 years. Frankly, many of us were uncomfortable with that message and a new energy of "invitation" has emerged over the last decade. It is that spirit of Invitation that I am writing this report.

During 2025, we continued to build on the momentum of the past several years.

Mary and Chad Jendrey continue to focus their ministry into "I-Help" and homeless ministry. With Chandler as a Host Congregation, we are sponsoring several overnight stays per month, with meals provided and mana bags produced. I-Help is an organization that assists the "working homeless" and provides these people in getting re-established. Mary and Chad are assisted by Diana and Dick Hansen, Diana and Mike Piedmonte, Megan Austin and many others throughout the Mission Center. We can not thank Chandler enough for their facility and willingness to provide shelter for these individuals. Mary and Chad will continue to visit each of our congregations in the coming year to ask for specific donations and create additional mana bags.

In the spirit of Invitation, we continued our traditional weekend retreats of Eggapalooza and Creepy Campground. Eggapalooza was led by Bren Williams and Creepy Campground was led by Chrissie Uhrlich. Both did an incredible job in leading these weekends! Kevin Harper was instrumental in creating space for each retreat and is our Whispering Pines liaison. Our Steering Committee for both retreats including those already mentioned and, Paul Williams, Robyn Harper, Mary and Chad Jendrey, Amber Pope, Haley Austin, Kristi Terauchi, Caitlyn Rywant and Galen Worthington. In our most recent Creepy Campground retreat, we had 90 participants with close to 40% being under the age of 18 and close to 25% of the adults were non-members or rarely attenders on Sunday mornings. Among the spooky activities, we included Trunk or Treat, a Costume contest, a chili cookoff competition and a Halloween themed Carnival/Hayride/Hike. Both weekend events were incredible successes. In 2026, we are again planning these weekend events and addition we are looking into the possibility of an Earth Day event in April. It will not be designed as a work weekend but instead a concentration on a "pollinator garden" with native plants. We will also be clearing out some brush for "firewise" protection around our Campgrounds. These three weekends are now on our Mission Center calendar.

In 2025, the Invitation Team started working closer with our Youth Team. We will continue to work together in the coming year. This past year we also hosted Travis Rees, our Western Field Young Adult leader. He was able to meet with five Arizona young adults and began creating a framework for future outreach into this area of need. Young adults are our adults

between the ages of 18-35. In this age group, we have identified a few subcategories. In addition, we are looking into bringing back "urban picnics" and I will continue to work on some outreach ideas through the lens of invitation. All ideas are welcome and please contact me with your ideas. Thank you to our Mission Center members who continue these paths of invitation through time, talent, energy and contributions.

Kyle Harper  
Arizona Mission Center