



First Church Berkeley UCC

March 22, 2024

Dear Friends and Members of First Church Berkeley UCC,

Just a short walk across Durant Avenue brings you to the doors of **East Bay Sanctuary Covenant (EBSC)**, the recipient for this year's Easter Offering selected by the Justice and Service Ministry. EBSC, founded in 1982, provides legal and social services, community organizing and education to refugees and asylum seekers. **Protect. Advocate. Transform.** are the words that guide EBSC's work that supports 10,000 people annually.

The following story about Franco, whose name has been changed here, has been provided by EBSC as one example of the critical work they do every day:

Franco is an unaccompanied minor from the Quiche Maya Indigenous community of Guatemala. He suffered extreme domestic violence in his country and fled to the U.S. He does not speak English or Spanish, and was not able to access any support because of the language barrier and trauma. Thankfully, another unaccompanied minor client referred Franco to EBSC. The EBSC attorney connected him to a trained caseworker to assess his needs, and within a matter of weeks, helped Franco to enroll in high school, apply for Medi-Cal, connect him to local food banks, and get him into a youth-focused wellness clinic. Once Franco started to feel more comfortable, he finally opened up to his EBSC attorney about several incidents of violence, which made him a strong candidate for asylum. While talking to Franco's brother, who is also his sponsor, EBSC realized that Franco could qualify for SIJS (special immigrant juvenile status). EBSC accepted his case and now both brothers are going to be able to adjust their status and continue living as a family here in the US.

To gain more information and insight about the mission and work of **East Bay Sanctuary Covenant**, I invite you to visit their website: <https://eastbaysanctuary.org>

We accept Jesus' call to serve him by serving others – the hungry, the unhoused, the refugee, the immigrant, the oppressed. As we celebrate Jesus' resurrection, let us generously support EBSC by donating online at www.onrealm.org (log in, click **Giving**, then the **blue +Give** button, then choose **Easter Offering** from the **Fund** dropdown menu). You may also write a check to First Church Berkeley UCC; please write Easter Offering in the memo line, and mail to: First Church Berkeley UCC, 2330 Durant Ave., Berkeley, CA 94704. All non-pledge offerings received Easter Sunday, March 31, 2024, will be contributed to this organization.

Thank you for your generous support!

Blessings,

Maureen Prochaska, Chair, writing for your Justice and Service Ministry

Stan Boghosian, Barbara Grady-Ayer, Doris Lynch, Chuck Monroe and Susan Shome

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