



First Church Berkeley UCC

April 17, 2025

Dear Friends and Members of First Church Berkeley,

In this time of national turmoil, when people live in fear of being deported or sent to prison without due process, when civil rights, environmental, scientific, judicial, and safety net institutions are being gutted, and progress on equity and mitigating climate disaster reversed, we may feel overwhelmed.

The Justice & Service Ministry has been discussing how best to respond to this moment, how to facilitate the congregation's quest to answer Jesus' call to comfort our brothers and sisters suffering in this chaos. The Sunday offering plate in coming months will provide opportunities for the congregation to support immigrants, ease burdens for the homeless and hungry, and reduce environmental injustice.

The Easter Offering will be donated to [Las Casas](https://www.lascasasoakland.org), a nonprofit English as a Second Language program in East Oakland that serves a vulnerable population of very low-income immigrants, most of whom are from Central American and speak indigenous languages. With 4 part-time staff members and 60 volunteers, **Las Casas** teaches some 300 students who need English to secure jobs and navigate life in America including assessing health care and education. Its students are primarily working adults, and the vast majority make under \$30,000 a year, many under \$20,000 a year. You can learn more about **Las Casas** at <https://www.lascasasoakland.org>.

On Easter we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus and the promise of resurrection in our society and in our lives. One apt way to celebrate is to help others achieve new beginnings and new hope in their new land. You can give to **Las Casas** at Easter by donating online at <https://www.firstchurchberkeley.org/give/> (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; please write Easter Offering in the memo line, and mail to: First Church Berkeley, 2330 Durant Ave., Berkeley, CA 94704. All non-pledge offerings received on Easter Sunday, April 20, 2025, will be contributed to **Las Casas**.

Thank you for supporting and standing shoulder to shoulder with all God's children in these challenging times.

Blessings,

Barbara Grady, Co-chair, writing for your Ministry of Justice & Service - Stan Boghosian, John Brockett, Carolyn Cox, Katia Kiefaber, and Chuck Monroe