

**EMBARGOED UNTIL THURSDAY JANUARY 18 at 6:30pm EST**

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[Photos - Oscar and family](#) photo credit: Betsy Blake

## Father Takes Sanctuary in Greensboro Church

*Community rallies to support fifth NC sanctuary-seeker*

**GREENSBORO, NC** (January 18, 2018) Today, Oscar Canales took sanctuary at the Congregational United Church of Christ in Greensboro, NC. The father of four took sanctuary after being ordered to leave the country by January 18, 2018. Oscar – along with his family, supporters, and members of the congregation – will be **holding a press conference to announce his presence in sanctuary on Friday January 19 at 10:30 am**. The event will take place at the church, located at 400 West Radiance Drive in Greensboro.

"It will be really hard on my mom and my brother and sister without my dad around," said Oscar's 17-year-old daughter Shirley Canales. "We're really hoping he'll be able to come home soon to tuck them in at night again."

Oscar came to Greensboro from El Salvador as a young man in 2005. He started working in restaurants, where he met his wife. They now have three children. In 2012, Oscar started his own roofing company, employing several U.S. citizens. He has been attending routine check ins with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) since 2013, until October of last year when ICE reinstated his order of deportation. "My daughters get upset when I tell them I might have to leave," said Oscar. I don't want them to be upset. I just want to keep being near them, and to keep my obligations to my clients and my employees."

Oscar is the fifth person currently in sanctuary in North Carolina, and is part of the state's growing sanctuary movement. His supporters are calling on Rep. Ted Budd to advocate on his behalf. "We stand with Oscar and all those who seek sanctuary from unjust immigration policies that tear apart our communities," said Andrew Willis Garcés, an organizer with the American Friends Service Committee. "We're calling on Representative Budd and all our elected officials to take immediate action for Oscar, and work to change these policies so people do not need to take sanctuary in order to keep their families together."

This is the second time that the Congregational United Church of Christ in Greensboro has taken someone into sanctuary, and the congregation remains deeply committed to standing with those facing persecution based on their immigration status. "Following Jesus means welcoming all, especially those who are targeted and treated unjustly," said Rev. Julie Peeples,

Senior Pastor at Congregational Church. "Keeping families together is our way of loving our neighbor and living our faith."

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*The American Friends Service Committee is a Quaker organization that promotes lasting peace with justice, as a practical expression of faith in action. Drawing on continuing spiritual insights and working with people of many backgrounds, we nurture the seeds of change and respect for human life that transform social systems.*