

September 7, 2018

Friends -

We are happy to tell you that Oscar slept at his home last night! His time in Sanctuary with us has ended!

We told you two weeks ago that Oscar's deportation order was cancelled. And we told you that there were some things pending and his lawyer wanted to be sure of Oscar's status. What we did not tell you was how much was actually going on behind the scenes (some of which we did not understand), and we did not want to put Oscar in jeopardy.

We met with Oscar and his lawyer yesterday afternoon. The ruling in Oscar's case, based on the Pereira case from the Supreme Court, did seem to indicate that Oscar should be free. However, last Thursday the Bureau of Immigration Appeals (they supervise the immigration judges) ruled that the Pereira case did not apply to Oscar, or to the hundreds or by now thousands of cases that were recently filed. That decision will be appealed, and the appeal will probably be heard at the Circuit Court level, and perhaps eventually to the Supreme Court. All this will take time.

So, while Oscar does not have a deportation order, he still has a case. ICE is too busy to deal with a person without a deportation order, and so Oscar will probably fall off their radar, especially because his case is part of the above process. This means the church will not make a big announcement or a press conference, per Oscar's lawyer's advice. It is not a secret, you can talk about it with family and friends, but there will be no big to-do. We will, however, plan a party for Oscar and Noemi, Karen and George, when Shirley returns to Greensboro, perhaps in a couple weeks, probably on a weekend. And we will have a time when we can evaluate and process our Sanctuary Program.

This is a victory for Oscar, made possible because our church offered him Sanctuary. Sanctuary volunteers and people of CUCC, we did good! With prayer and celebration, we will continue to walk with him and his family through this time. But remember that Oscar is in limbo, like hundreds of thousands of immigrants. They are fine, productive, God-fearing, family-loving people, most of whom want to be American citizens. Their limbo is the result of our national leaders who are unable and unwilling to come up with solutions in our broken immigration system. So pray for our leaders, pray for the other people and churches involved with Sanctuary (we know of just one other person in Sanctuary whose case is similar to Oscar's, and whose deportation order was canceled), pray for the immigrants in our nation, and pray for Oscar and his family, that life for them will quickly return to normal.

Julie and Paul