

**Missional Partnership Grant Application
SF Presbytery – Central Region**

12/6/19

Recent Immigrant, Refugee Ministry Integration and Support

Ephesians 2

[14] For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility,

[17] And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near;

[18] for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

[19] So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

[20] built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,

[21] in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord;

[22] in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

I Partnering Congregations

**Primera Iglesia Presbiteriana de Oakland and
St. John's Presbyterian Church, Berkeley**

Amount Requested: \$50,000

Primera Iglesia is uniquely situated as a community to serve and incorporate recent immigrants and refugees from Latin America. Primera and St. John's have a long standing relationship of cooperation addressing needs of immigrants and refugees. The need is tremendous, and the opportunity for church growth through offering of practical help and spiritual sustenance is significant.

II. The root cause or need our proposal is addressing

Recent immigrants arrive bringing a cultural and personal history which is both rich with meaning and often fraught with trauma. If life in their home was not difficult they would not have come. Sadly, reasons for coming are too often not just difficult but traumatic. In addition there is added the precarious migration and the financial burden of the trip and legal fees. Upon arrival immigrants seek opportunity for new

life, but they are also confronted with a strange and foreign, intentionally arduous and increasingly hostile immigration system and an exploitative labor market.

Quite often, this uprooting experience of immigration opens new arrivals to spiritual hunger for comfort, community, fresh commitment and deepening relationship with God. This project has real potential to enhance the vital ministry and grow the congregation as we address material, logistical and spiritual needs for recent arrivals in the neighborhood.

We envision seven parts to this three year mission plan.

Community Organizing and Coordination: six hr/wk at \$20/hr \$6,240/ year for three years **\$18,720**

Irma Hernandez, the administrator for Primera Iglesia, already receives significant number of requests for aid from recent arrivals. With the funds she and the church would be able to help more freely. She helps with orientation to the community, referrals to legal and social services, making connections and short term or emergency aid. She would also be the point person for contact for other opportunities we plan to offer with this project.

We also would like **\$2,000** for Continuing Education funds for Irma to enhance her ability to help people.

2 **\$5,000** for short term emergency aid. Immigrants frequently arrive with little more than the clothes on their back. Food, clothing, transportation, and shelters are frequent needs to be addressed.

3. **\$2,000** Help for the Helpers. Church members are often willing to help with transportation, court appearances, etc., yet are often financially limited themselves. This money would go for reimbursement cost for aid given by church members who need it.

\$9200 to be used as appropriate and needed for point 4,5 and 6.

4. Community, grief and Integration Group. This group's primary purpose would be to address the spiritual needs of recent arrivals and welcome them into and inform them about the Christian theology, pastoral care and community of Primera Iglesia.

In our work and experience it has become quite evident that there is both spiritual hunger and a high incidence of trauma and grief among recent arrivals. Stories of exploitation, extreme poverty, extortion, murder and rape are common.

While we envision this whole proposal encompassing three years, this community church group is a one year pilot project. This is the centerpiece, which has potential to develop into a model for church ministry with immigrant populations across the nation. Pastor Pablo Morataya has been speaking for years about the need to address issues of grief and trauma in a cultural context without affinity to the psychotherapy model.

The plan is to invite both individuals and families that will meet twice a month for one year. The group begins altogether, perhaps with snacks and singing and a short teaching and prayer. Then the large group would split into (likely) men's, women's, youth and children's small groups. In these small groups, issues involving life in country of origin, life here, family and work relationships would have an opportunity to be shared and addressed. As trust is gained and stories shared, evolving grief and need for grace and support will become a part of the make up of the group. We envision these groups becoming gateways into the larger church life.

Pastor Max Lynn from St. John's will work with Pastor Pablo on training a small group of leaders in Pastoral Care, grief and group work, and Family Systems Theory and tools.

The money would be used primarily for food and perhaps any curriculum for leaders or the group.

5. Food Events and Cultural Celebrations \$400 X 2/yr.

Food is a very significant aspect of Latin American Culture. Thanksgiving, Christmas, Summer Cultural Gatherings would invite the community into the life of Primera and make friends and connections for immigrants new life here. It is a way of making connections to the past and new connections for the current and future life.

6. Six Immigration Workshops – 2/yr

People come with very little knowledge of the US Immigration systems and its requirements. What are the steps, costs, needs? Where can they find help? Which rumors or latest news stories are true? What rights do immigrants have? What should they do if ICE comes to their door or work? These workshops will address these questions. Primera Iglesia and St John's will work with other local organizations to bring knowledgeable leaders and helpful programs.

7. **\$14,880 Legal and Life Needs Fund.** Over recent years, St. John's has developed a fund which is used to gift and loan money for immigration court and settlement needs. It has been very successful in making significant difference in the successful immigration and settlement process. Legal fees are expensive but often people just need a start. Usually, recent immigrants come with the debt of the coyote fee and virtually no cash. They need an initial kick to get the immigration court process going. Since the amount we are requesting is so small, we will likely try to offer zero interest loans to be paid back to the fund. But we will leave open the option of gifts. Other possible loans or gifts would be for down payment for living space. Also, when one of our refugee friends had his work tools stolen from his truck and was threatened with the inability to work, we replaced his tools. This has been an extremely successful ministry for St. John's, and Primera is uniquely situated to make use of a similar fund.

A small committee of both St. John's and Primera members will provide oversight and approval for use of these Immigration Legal Fees and significant Life Need Fund. This is a small amount of money so it might disappear quickly, depending on what

needs arise. But we envision the possibility for this to be seed money with multiple contributors creating an ongoing endowment fund to be administered by Primera as leadership develops the procedure, accounting and feel for it.

III Excitement and Involvement:

St. John's and Primera Iglesia have been in relationship and involved in Sanctuary Movement and work with recent immigrants for years. We have common friends and relationship with refugees and members and often share in joint events large and small. We have both have significant success and experienced leaders. This project will empower Primera Iglesia to become even more known in the community as a place of Christ like compassion where one can come and not only be helped, but become a part of the Body of Christ. This is already a vital ministry that has great potential for growth.

The Community, grief, integration group is a truly innovative vision which could have broad and long term significance for the larger church and non-profit organizations working with immigrant communities.

Situating a legal, life need fund within the Primera Iglesia community is expanding and transferring a successful ministry into the community where it is most needed. It is probable that this fund will also be augmented by the fund at St. John's if and when needed. This is a small amount of money used for very expensive things, and it may be depleted quickly. It may not be. The fund at St. John's has rebounded and with such powerful stories of help, it has excited other donors to contribute. Everyone who we have loaned to has already paid or is paying us back. Money that has already helped people is now helping someone else.

In addition, both Sessions are excited to meet together to affirm this ministry, and St. John's will enjoy going down to share in the food, cultural events, and worship exchange.

IV Who is Accountable

Grant Vision Team:

The Reverend Dr. Pablo Morataya, [REDACTED] morataya52@yahoo.com
Irma Hernandez (Elder/ Administrator at Primera), irmahernandez777@yahoo.com
Fred Goff (Elder, Co-Chair St. John's Mission and Justice Commission)
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The Reverend Dr. Max Lynn
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We envision the Session of Primera Iglesia Presbiteriana de Oakland as having primary administrative oversight and delegating different aspects of the project. Leaving room for practical changes as needed, oversight of the administrator, the Group and the cultural events would run out of Session sub committees as

appropriate. The short term help and help for helpers money may be directed out of Deacons with both Pablo and Irma having quick, discretionary use up to a certain amount, and Deacon approval for over that amount.

The Legal, Life Needs Fund will be administered by a committee formed with people from both churches. It would be the goal of this piece that if the fund is not depleted completely and takes a life of its own, that with experience, Primera leadership would take over long term administration. On the other hand, perhaps St. John's stays involved and we get other churches on board too. While further contributors may be sought, being able to move quick to address needs is very important, so a small quickly available oversight committee should retain authority. A track record of successful help will provide trust for further input.

The Joint Church oversight committee will meet three times a year to review the overall project progress.

Date of Session Approval:

Primera Iglesia Session approval	12/7/19
St. John's Session approval	12/9/19