

One of the areas where St. John's Church members want to make a positive impact on our community is economic justice. This goal led to the formation of an "Affordable Housing Team" to support improvement in Austin's affordable housing situation. The Team had a great experience during 2022, working together and in conjunction with Central Texas Interfaith (CTI). Here are some highlights:

1. Church members volunteered at the "Restore." It's like working at Home Depot, except the store is operated by Habitat for Humanity and all the profits support Habitat for Humanity's mission of building affordable housing.
2. Church members supported Foundation Communities (FC) by providing the parking for FCs' enormous fall fundraiser lunch and filling a table at the lunch. FC is one of the most successful non-profits in Austin in the area of building communities to house deserving homeless, disabled and low income Austinites. We learned a lot about FCs' operations and hope to support FC more this year.
3. Through participation in Central Texas Interfaith, church members helped push the Austin City Council to call a bond election to provide capital to build more affordable housing for deserving people. In no small part due to CTI advocacy, the bond election in November was successful and resulted in authorization of \$350 million in capital for affordable housing.
4. Several Affordable Housing Team members participated in CTI training to become more effective organizers for economic justice. Though not strictly related to affordable housing, St. John's also supported CTI's successful advocacy to substantially increase the minimum wage for city employees and to oppose the corporate give away to NXP corporation of property taxes needed for the success of our local schools. In this respect we are especially proud of our Rector, Madre Minerva, who provided key public policy testimony to help convince public officials like the City Council and AISD Board of Directors to vote CTI's way. She was even interviewed by John Stewart, former host of The Daily Show, to explain the flaws in cutting school taxes at the behest of large, already hugely profitable corporations.

Participants in the Affordable Housing Team initiatives included: Sue Burek, Madre Minerva, Mike Davis, Paula Foy, Ronda Hall, Wayne Harry, Steve Kriechbaum, Philip Riley, Rosalinda Rodríguez, Oscar Rojas, CTI organizers Monique Vasquez and Catherine Wicker, Henry Welles, and John Williams.

There was a lot of positive energy behind this work last year and we hope to build on it this year, God willing!

John Williams.