

# MHCH Housing Justice Forum -- September 22, 2020

## ADVOCACY 101

**How to help end  
homelessness  
and transform our city**



# Happy Birthday, Rev. James Lawson!



*On a motion by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, the LA County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to proclaim September 22 as “Rev. James M. Lawson, Jr. Day.” Rev. Lawson turned 93 years old and has not lost his prophetic fire. During his eulogy of Congressman John Lewis, Rev. Lawson lifted up the importance of advocacy as well as affordable housing:*

***“We would not be in the struggle we are today in housing if President Reagan hadn’t cut that billions of dollars for housing, where local churches and local nonprofits could build affordable housing in their own communities, being sustained and financed by loans from the federal government.*”**

*We passed Medicare. We passed anti-poverty programs, civil rights bill '64, '65, voting rights bills — a whole array. John Lewis must be understood as one of the leaders of the greatest advance of Congress and the White House on behalf of we the people of the U.S.A.”*

MLK's PPC Sacramento Presents, the 7th Annual

## Poor People's Campaign

For Socio-Economic Justice in Sacramento, 2018

**Feb. 24<sup>th</sup> Saturday**

Continuing the Legacy of Dr. King towards Equality & Social Justice:  
For Jobs & A Living Wage, Fair Democracy  
Ending Police Brutality & Mass Incarceration  
More Schools - Not Prisons, Rent Control  
Fair Housing, Protecting our Environment  
Immigrants Rights, DACA, Healthcare for ALL  
Homeless Bill of Rights, End Gentrification...

**12:00pm - 3:00pm**  
Fruitridge Collaborative Center  
4625 44th Street, Sacramento  
Speakers - Live Music - Feast

**10:30am MARCH from**  
**OAK PARK COMMUNITY CENTER**  
3425 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR BLVD

Keynote Speaker: Rev Pinkney  
Of Benton Harbor, Michigan  
Freedom Fighter

More Info: Cathleen@markmerin.com  
(916)801-4672 Free All Age Event

# Why advocacy matters

**Affordable/permanent supportive housing never gets built without advocacy.**

***No law requires affordable housing to be built.***

**In fact, state Article 34 requires that affordable housing must go through a public process to be approved.**





# 6 Elements of Faith-Rooted Advocacy: Redemption of the City

**1. Build a team** —Advocacy is all about building trust and relationships. That's why teams are so important. "We are better together." People on a team bring different gifts and help and support each other. Jesus had a team of twelve that grew into a powerful movement.

I facilitate one of 7 MHCH teams. Ours focuses on affordable and supportive housing. It's a joy to get to know and work with amazing and dedicated people like Bert, Sonja, Areta, Shawn, Rick, Amara, Ferne, Teresa, and many more over the past several years. I love how we support and appreciate each other. We also partner with wonderful organizations like Union Station and Everyone In. It feels as if we are part of a Beloved Community.



# 6 Elements of Faith-Rooted Advocacy: Redemption of the City

**2. Prioritize** – Decide on whether or not it is time to launch a campaign and how we want to proceed. Is the timing right? Is the cause winnable? What are our first steps?

- Is it something that has come up on the City Council's agenda? For example, a city-owned site that has been proposed for affordable housing.
- Is it something we feel is important that needs to be agendized? For example, urging the city to let church build affordable housing on their land.



# 6 Elements of Faith-Rooted Advocacy: Redemption of the City

**3. Research/Action/Reflection.** Determine the need and the facts, research how this policy was implemented in other cities, learn where decision makers stand. Create talking points that can help our team of advocates stay on message. Research leads to action and then reflection on what works and what needs improvement.

**4. Build consensus.** All decisions and talking points by MHCH are created by consensus. That's how strong teams and movements are built. See Acts 15, Council of Jerusalem.





# 6 Elements of Faith-Rooted Advocacy: Redemption of the City

**For every campaign, we develop “talking points,” arguments that we all agree upon and use when we meet with or write to elected officials. We personalize our talking points by expressing them in our own language or by referencing our own experience, but it is important that we stay on message when we advocate as a team or as part of a campaign.**

**Talking Points for building affordable/supportive housings at Heritage Square South.** You will receive an email on the Friday before City Council decides to put Heritage Square South or Motel Conversion on the agenda. **Please contact us to let us know which of these talking point you’d like to speak about.** Feel free to briefly share your story and speak from your heart or religious tradition about the importance of housing our homeless neighbors. Remember that you will have only 3 minutes, max.

**Talking Point #1:** We want to commend Mr. Gordo and the Ed Tech Committee for recommending “mixed use” for Heritage Square South—affordable housing and commercial use. Ed Tech’s approval of Model C is a step in the right direction, but we want to be sure that “housing” means “permanent supportive housing” (PSH) and not market rate housing. Market rate housing would require that the City forfeit \$2.3 million to HUD and the state, and lose a golden opportunity to build PSH on a site ideal for housing homeless seniors. There is county, state and federal funding for PSH, not so much for affordable housing. Your constituents have made it very clear that we want permanent supportive housing on this site.

**Talking Point #2:** Many of us have practical concerns about Model C. It calls for 15-20 K of retail space with underground parking. Is this realistic? The cost of underground parking is approximately \$30,000 or more per car. This would add considerable cost to retail rental. Is there a market for upscale retail development on this corner? The site of Blaze Pizza was vacant for 4 years. Rents on a site with underground parking would be much higher than one with surface parking. There would need to be a feasibility study to determine if Model C is economically viable. That would delay development of homeless housing that we urgently need now.

**Talking Point #3:** We feel that Model A is more realistic. It calls for 69 units of affordable housing and 15-30 spaces for surface parking and a modest amount of.

## 6 Elements of Faith-Rooted Advocacy: Redemption of the City

5. **Meet one-on-one** with elected officials, commissioners or anyone who is a decision maker to find out what interests them. Secure their support—especially before elections or a vote.



Tornek was persuaded to waive \$20,000 impact fee for ADUS.

6. **Bring crowds to the public meetings** and do media campaigns: Bring pastors, church members, the stories of the poor and middle-class that must be told. Their pain and hope are part of the redemptive story of the city.





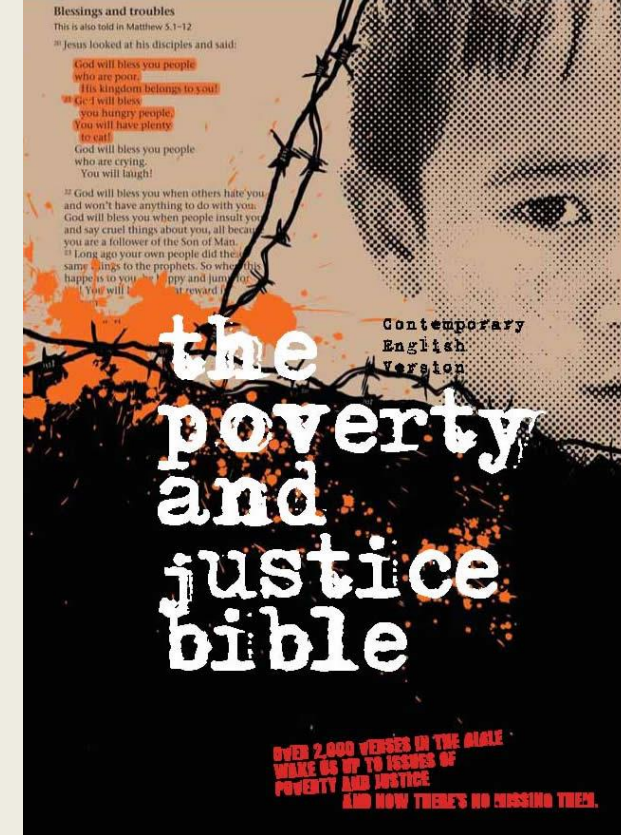
Eternal Vigilance  
is the Price of  
Justice



# The obligation of the privileged to speak out:

**“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.” Proverbs 31:8-9 (NIV)**

**“Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and oppressed.”  
Psalm 82:3 (NIV)**



## Listening to the marginalized:

**Parable of the Persistent Widow and Unjust Judge.  
Luke 18:1-8**

**Advocates with “lived experience.”**



# Applying the 6 elements in practice: Prioritize, find a winnable issue



Heritage Square North

In January 2018 Councilmember John Kennedy raised the issue of using vacant, city-owned land at Heritage Square South for affordable housing. This was a bold move since Heritage Square North, a project housing low-income seniors, was very contentious and took many years of advocacy and several failed attempts before this project came to fruition.

Kennedy asked the Housing Dept. to make a recommendation and they recommended housing homeless seniors on this site because of a huge need. Kennedy held a community meeting in February, did a survey, and 80% were supportive of affordable housing on this site.

We felt this cause was winnable because we had support of the City Councilmember and the community, but we knew it wouldn't be easy.





# Building a Team through vigils and meetings

- We held prayer vigils on the site and began to hold public meetings.
- Using consensus decision-making, we built a committed team, solicited letters from churches, met with neighbors and businesses to obtain signatures for a petition.
- Partnering with the Tenants Union, we gathered over 1000 letters and contact info for people to invite to city council meetings.







**We find prayer to be an essential component of faith-rooted advocacy. However, we are open to people of all faiths, and also to people of conscience who do not practice a particular religion.**

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# "House the Homeless"

Isaiah 58:7

## At Heritage Square South



To get public attention, we slept overnight with our homeless neighbors, which opened our eyes to what it feels like to live on the street.





# We went to the City Council meetings and won a victory beyond our expectations in December 2018

Because we knew the chair of Ed Tech opposed us and other members did not, we had 47 supporters show up at an Ed Tech Meeting. We were so persuasive that chair of Ed Tech eventually joined in a unanimous decision recommending supportive housing on this site. In December 2018, over 60 supporters packed the City Council chambers and no one opposed us. The Council not only voted unanimously for supportive housing at Heritage Square South, the Mayor surprised everyone by recommending that the vacant, city-owned YWCA next to City Hall be used to house those experiencing homelessness. This was a Holy Spirit moment and the beginning a new campaign!





When you speak truth to power with compassion, commitment and careful research, good leaders listen!





**Our leaders have listened!** During the past two years the Homeless Housing Committee (now known as ASHA) successfully advocated not only for 69 units of supportive housing (PHS) at Heritage Square South but also for 65 units of PHS at the Salvation Army Hope Center. We have also convinced the City Council to call for affordable and supportive housing on city-owned land at the Pasadena Civic Center, despite some initial opposition.

The Civic Center project will be coming up in October and we are doing our utmost to mobilize the public to convince the Council to approve a project like the one shown here that will include 94 units of affordable housing, 10-30% for those experiencing homelessness.



Proposed affordable housing site at the Civic Center includes 10-30% of units for those experiencing homelessness

# Other MHCH initiatives to end homelessness through affordable/supportive housing

- **Motel conversion** to permanent supportive housing. State policy called Project Room Key.
- Homelessness prevention by building more affordable units through **inclusionary zoning**. Inclusionary zoning means that developers must set aside a percentage of their units as affordable. In the case of Pasadena, that means a 20% set aside. This policy has produced 579 units of affordable housing at no cost to the city as well as funding for permanent supportive housing. These units are permanently affordable.
- **Community Land Trust**, whereby people own their affordable homes but not the land. The land is owned by a trust. This also insures permanent affordability.
- **Encouraging accessory dwelling units** (“granny flats”) for Section 8 voucher holders
- Emergency shelter such as **Safe Parking**, where people who live in their vehicles have a safe place to park and case managers to help them become permanently housed.

Successful  
Advocacy

here in Pasadena



- Participated in crafting Pasadena's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance in 2001 which as of July 2020 has produced 577 affordable units and put over \$26 million into the city's affordable housing trust fund. In 2019 we were able to increase the set aside of affordable unit from 15% to 20% and ended all trade-downs.
- Successfully advocated for 134 permanent supportive housing units and anticipate up to 94 more this year at the Civic Center.
- Worked close with our partners to see a 54% decrease in Homelessness since 2011 when the count was over 1,000.
- Successfully advocated to have a Pasadena Housing Department.
- Helped make ADUs (Accessory Dwelling Units) easier to build throughout the city with years of advocacy and research and the local and state level.
- Helped to improve and strengthen Pasadena's "Housing Element"—a required document for all California cities to demonstrate a plan for providing sufficient housing in a city for all income levels.
- Strengthened Pasadena's Tenant Protection Ordinance, which prior to our advocacy was more of an ordinance to protect landlords.
- Successfully advocated for nine Habitat Homes under the Colorado Street Bridge, which was formerly an army base.



# **spiritual elements of a faith-based Approach**

- Connect spiritually and emotionally with elected officials and with those who are opposed or on the fence about affordable housing. Find common/higher ground.**
- Seek to build the “beloved community.” Work on building relationships, not simply winning approval of policies.**
- Biblical basis for housing justice work. Jubilee economics. Speaking out for and with the marginalized.**
- Spiritual basis for housing justice. Wanting for others what we ourselves have. The antithesis of NIMYism.**

# Change Hearts and Minds Through Education

We seek to educate people who don't understand or are fearful of affordable/supportive housing.

They often put pressure on elected officials to thwart projects or enact laws that make it difficult or impossible to build affordable housing.

Advocates need to show the benefits of affordable/supportive housing using community forums and bus tours of actual supportive housing sites like Marv's Place.





# Turning our Talking Points into Effective Advocacy

**“Talking points” are essential for a well-organized and effective campaign. Everyone needs to stay on message.**

**Each person also needs to use his or her own voice and story in order to convey our message effectively.**

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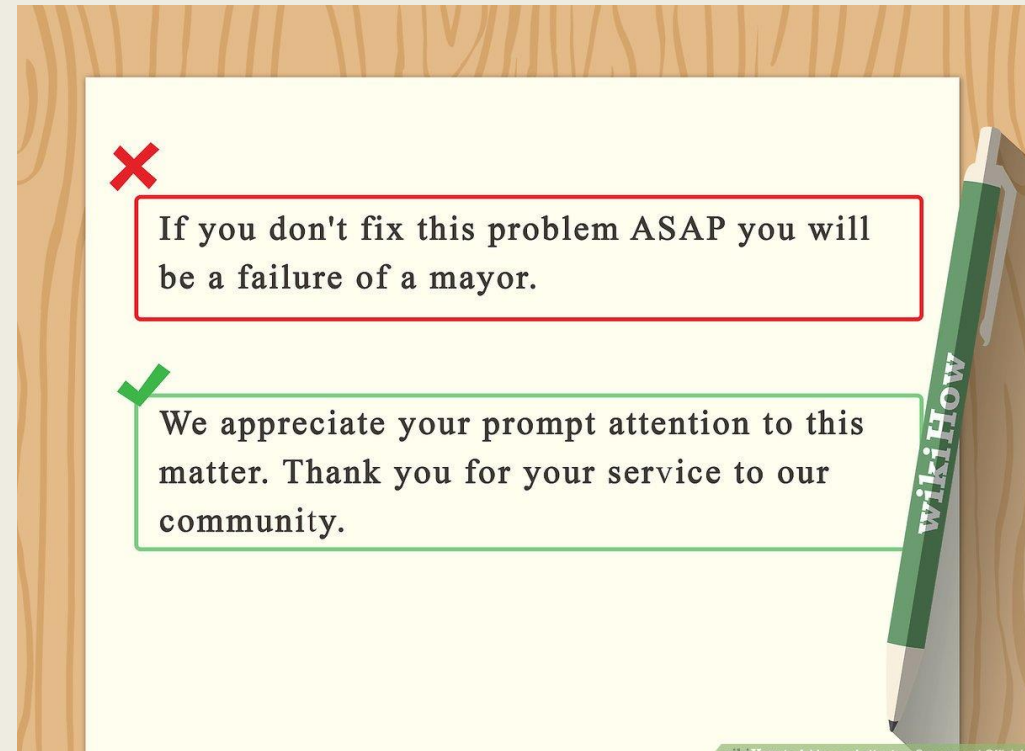
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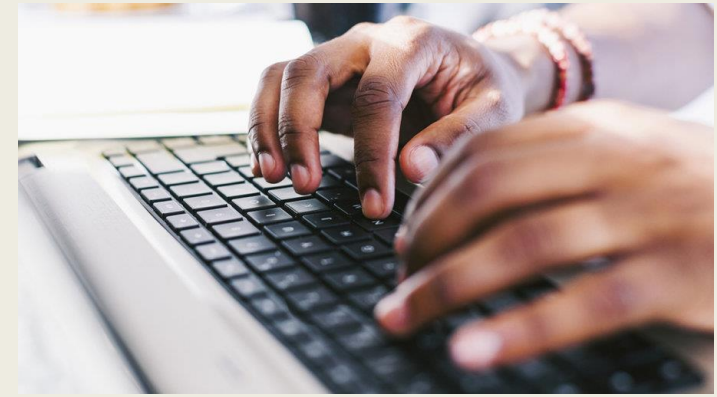
# Write a Letter to an elected official using MHCH talking points

**An effective letter identifies who you are, thanks the City Council or City Council member for something they've done you appreciate, and then makes an "ask"—a specific request regarding a pending ordinance or legislation that is on the agenda.**





# Elements of an effective letter



**Find a MHCH talking point that you resonate with.**

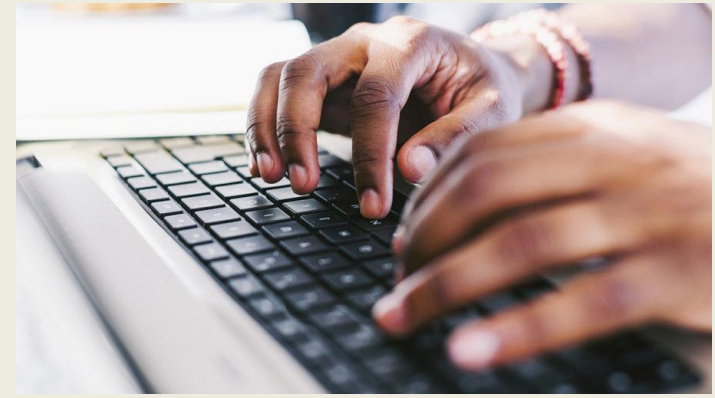
**Identify who you are, and why you are concerned.**

**Thank officials for what they have done well.**

**Dear Mayor and City Council members,**

**As a homeowner who has lived in Pasadena for eight years, I feel fortunate to have a home in this beautiful city, but I am concerned about renters who are at risk of being evicted because they have lost their job or income because of the Covid 10 virus, or have to stay home to take care of their kids. I want to thank you for protecting tenants from eviction in the past and for the current ordinance that would protect tenants from eviction during this emergency.**

# Elements of an effective letter



**Be clear about what you are asking for, and present your reasons.**

**While I support this ordinance, I feel that it could be strengthened if tenants had a year to pay back rents that they were unable to pay because of this emergency. We don't know how long this state of emergency will last and people will be out of work. We do know that those who are low and very low-income working in the service sector are going to suffer the most. They will have a hard time repaying rent and need extra time to do so. Please craft your ordinance to meet the needs of the most vulnerable.**

**Respectfully yours,**



# How to contact your City Council Member

1) If you don't know what district you're in or the name of your city council member, you can find out by going to <https://www.cityofpasadena.net/find-my-district/>

2) MHCH will usually send you information and talking points regarding pertinent ordinances that are under consideration by City Council. But if you want to find out for yourself, go to [http://ww2.cityofpasadena.net/councilagendas/council\\_agenda.asp](http://ww2.cityofpasadena.net/councilagendas/council_agenda.asp)

Look for the date of the city council meeting and click on agenda. If you see something you want to comment on, look for and download documents and staff reports to give clarity before you write.

# Contact them directly via email:

- [ttornek@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:ttornek@cityofpasadena.net)
- [thampton@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:thampton@cityofpasadena.net),
- [mmcaustin@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:mmcaustin@cityofpasadena.net),
- [gmasuda@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:gmasuda@cityofpasadena.net)
- [smadison@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:smadison@cityofpasadena.net)
- [vgordo@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:vgordo@cityofpasadena.net)
- [awilson@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:awilson@cityofpasadena.net)



# **How to send 200-word public comment in Pasadena during pandemic**

**Pasadena, like most cities, have had to develop new procedures for public comment during the pandemic because “social distancing” rules limit the number of people who can attend Council meetings and speak during public comment.**

**Members of the public may submit comments of any length up to two hours prior to the start of the meeting, at the following email address: [publiccomment@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:publiccomment@cityofpasadena.net).**

**Please be aware that, while these comments will be provided to the members of the body and will become part of the meeting record, they will not be read aloud. Any comment submitted in this fashion will be forwarded to the legislative body prior to the start of the meeting.**

**During the meeting, members of the public may submit up to 200 words regarding items on the agenda. If you wish your comments to be read aloud during the meeting, please indicate so on the form. If you submit more than one form, only the first one received will be read aloud. The City reserves the right to summarize comments if necessary for the orderly and timely flow of the meeting. All comments in their entirety will become part of the meeting record and will be forwarded to the legislative body.**

# How to Write an Effective Letter To the Editor using MHCH talking points



**An effective letter identifies who you are and connects with a specific article published in the paper.**

**Give facts as well as your feelings.**

**Reference the City Council if you want their attention.**

**Observe the word count: usually 150 words.**

**If you write a “Guest Opinion,” the limit is around 800 words.**

**Dear Editor,**

Thanks for your well-balanced article on the Ramada Inn motel conversion (10/21/18). While converting old motels to homeless housing is excellent policy, it looks like this particular project may not move forward because of community opposition. Such projects can't be rushed and community input is needed at the onset. Ironically, the residents of Northwest Pasadena made it abundantly clear at a community meeting in March that we want a homeless housing project in our neighborhood--80% of those surveyed said they want city-owned land at Heritage Square South to be used for homeless senior housing. Over 400 neighbors and church members sent letters of support. But the City Council is dragging its heels and missing opportunities to get funding. We are urging them to approve and move forward with housing homeless seniors at Heritage Square South



# More examples of letters and op eds

In response to editorial “Rent Control Would Worsen the Housing Crisis” (Tues, April 18, 2007):

Dear Editor: Your editorial opposing rent control says it doesn't work whereas studies by Peter Dreiser show beneficial effects on low and moderate income renters in gentrifying and highly desirable areas. Your claim that fewer regulations on developers would drive down prices and make housing affordable is pure fantasy. Even when regulations are lessened, developers continue to build mainly lucrative deluxe units. With rents in our state rising exorbitantly, in some case, by as much as \$500 monthly, we need rent control. Over half the So Cal renters are “cost burdened” and pay more than 30% of their income on rent. Rent control protects such renters from predatory landlords. But it's not a panacea. We also need to subsidize the development of affordable housing and provide housing vouchers to low income renters. Housing is not a commodity, it's a human need and a right, like the right to food, education and medical care.

- <https://www.pasadenanow.com/main/guest-opinion-rick-cole-opposition-to-new-housing-raises-uncomfortable-echoes-of-objections-to-desegregating-pasadenas-public-schools/>
- <https://www.pasadenanow.com/main/guest-opinion-dr-jill-shook-churches-have-made-affordable-housing-happen-lets-continue-that-tradition/>
- <https://www.pasadenanow.com/main/house-pasadenas-homeless-seniors-interfaith-vigil-during-ramadan-and-the-poor-peoples-campaign-calls-on-pasadenas-elected-officials-to-take-action/>
- <https://www.pasadenanow.com/main/guest-opinion-jill-shook-preventing-another-housing-debacle/>

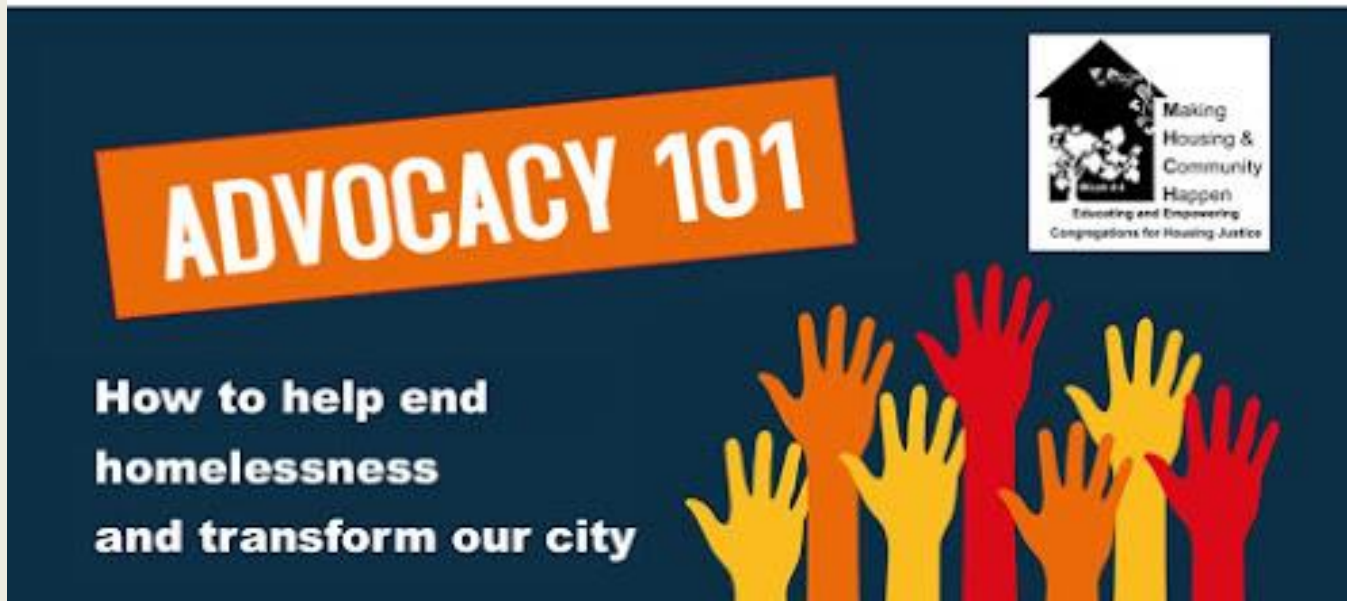
# Current Priorities for MHCH

- **Changing zoning so that churches can build affordable housing on their land.** Contact: [Jill@makinghousinghappen.com](mailto:Jill@makinghousinghappen.com). Presentations on Sat. mornings at 10 am.
- **Encouraging ADUs to be built for Section 8 and low-income renters.** [Jill@makinghousinghappen.com](mailto:Jill@makinghousinghappen.com)
- **Urging the City Council to build affordable/supportive housing on the Civic Center.** Contact: [Anthony@makinghousinghappen.org](mailto:Anthony@makinghousinghappen.org)

**See chat for more info....**







Help us to continue our work to help house our homeless and low-income neighbors.

Please consider making a donation to Making Housing & Community Happen:

Send check made out to "Social Good Fund" with "Making Housing and Community Happen" in memo line to:

MHCH c/o Jill Shook  
1628 N Garfield Ave  
Pasadena CA 91104

Donate online at:  
<https://www.makinghousinghappen.org/donate>

*Make a Difference!*  
**DONATE**



To learn more contact  
[Anthony@makinghousinghappen.org](mailto:Anthony@makinghousinghappen.org)

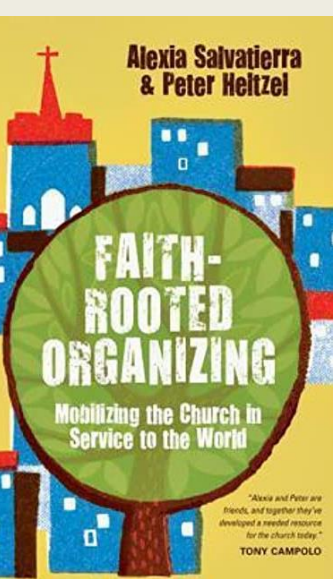
Our blog  
<https://makinghousinghappen.net/>

Our website:  
<https://www.makinghousinghappen.org/>

# Divine Purpose of Government

- <sup>1</sup> Give the king your justice, O God,  
and your righteousness to a king's son.  
<sup>2</sup> May he judge your people with righteousness,  
and your poor with justice.  
<sup>3</sup> May the mountains yield prosperity for the people,  
and the hills, in righteousness.  
<sup>4</sup> May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,  
give deliverance to the needy,  
and crush the oppressor.
- <sup>12</sup> For he delivers the needy when they call,  
the poor and those who have no helper.  
<sup>13</sup> He has pity on the weak and the needy,  
and saves the lives of the needy.  
<sup>14</sup> From oppression and violence he redeems their life;  
and precious is their blood in his sight. (Psalm 72)





## Many thanks to Rev. Dr. Alexia Salvatierra for her powerful presentation!

Rev. Dr. Salvatierra is the author with Dr. Peter Heltzel of *Faith-Rooted Organizing: Mobilizing the Church in Service to the World* (Intervarsity Press) and the founder of the Faith-Rooted Organizing UnNetwork. She is a Lutheran Pastor with over 40 years of experience in community ministry, including church-based service and community development programs, congregational and community organizing, and legislative advocacy. She has been a national leader in the areas of working poverty and immigration for over 20 years. Alexia received her doctoral degree in Intercultural Studies from Fuller Seminary and currently serves as Assistant Professor of Integral Mission and Global Transformation at Fuller.



# Why faith and justice?



- Justice = just us – experience of unfair limitations (the stunted plant) and empathy with all those with this experience
- Hope that justice is possible – the empathy of the cross and the promise of the resurrection.
- Stewardship – using every tool we are given



# Faith-Rooted Organizing

Organizing as if God is real

Going deep into the Well

Examining Assumptions



# Mt. 10:18 – Wise as Serpents and Innocent as Doves

- Serpent Wisdom – Luke 18:1-8:
- And he told them a parable, to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. <sup>2</sup> He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor regarded man; <sup>3</sup> and there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Vindicate me against my adversary.’ <sup>4</sup> For a while he refused; but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor regard man, <sup>5</sup> yet because this widow bothers me, I will vindicate her, or she will wear me out by her continual coming.’” <sup>6</sup> And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge says. <sup>7</sup> And will not God vindicate his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? <sup>8</sup> I tell you, he will vindicate them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

# Strategies: Serpent Power

1. Force of law, Wealth, Influence, Numbers
2. Self-Interest and the Negotiation of Interests
3. Constituency, Connections and Case
4. Direct Communication
5. Indirect Communication
6. Escalation

# Serpent Power Strategy

- Power Map – who makes the decisions? What influences them?
- Self-Interest –what do they have to gain or lose by doing what you want?
  1. Who is their constituency?
  2. What connections matter to them? Who influences them?
  3. What do they think will benefit their constituency? What is a case that would matter to them?
- What is your ask?
- How could you communicate with them? (directly and indirectly)
- How would you escalate over time?



# Wise as Serpents: Innocent as Doves

- “The thirteenth rule: Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it and polarize it.” (Alinski)
- “Non-violent resistance is not for cowards. It is not a quiet, passive acceptance of evil. One is passive and non-violent physically, but very active spiritually, always seeking ways to persuade the opponent of advantages to the way of love, cooperation, and peace....The goal is not to defeat or humiliate the opponent but rather to win him or her over to understanding new ways to create cooperation and community.” (Gandhi)

# Dove Power

- Understanding Spiritual Power: Bishop Tutu, King David and Steve Burd
  - Frederick Douglas – power never cedes power without a struggle vs. the struggle in the soul
  - Becoming an ally of the Holy Spirit
  - Human beings not targets
  - Poor are rooted in their spiritual power
  
- Prayer
- Pastoral Support – Chaplaincy on the field of the battle for justice – en-couragement
- Prophetic Call:
  1. Re-member the Poor
  2. Dreams and Visions
  3. Exposing and Combatting Lies
  4. Reaching both sides of the Brain -- Symbols

# Dove Power Strategy

- Who has spiritual power in this situation? Who has spiritual impact on the decision-makers?
- What will be the role of prayer?
- How will you en-courage them?
- How will you bring the poor into the room?
- How will you cast a vision and find the common sacred ground?
- How will you expose the lies?
- How will you utilize the symbols and texts of faith in the process?
- How might your ask or escalation change?



# Micah 4:4

Everyone will sit  
under their own  
vine and under their  
own fig tree, and no  
one will make them  
afraid, for  
the LORD Almighty  
has spoken.



# Examples

- Living wage in San Diego
- Immigration: Ventura County Congressman, Central Washington Congressman, Orange County City Council
- Nursing Homes – Bonzai Trees
- Hotel Workers Healing Service, Bitter Herbs and Milk and Honey