



Meridian Street

a united methodist church for all

“DID YOU KNOW” FROM MSUMC’S HOUSING JUSTICE TASK FORCE

Housing Is Increasingly Out Of Reach For Many Hoosiers:

- Indiana’s 2022 state housing wage is \$16.97/hour. This means a full time worker needs to earn \$16.97 an hour to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment (\$882/month, paying 30% of their income in rent).

A worker at **minimum wage** would need to work 94 hours per week to afford a modest two bedroom apartment.

- 31% of Indiana households rent their home (794,477 households).
- Nationwide, rents have increased 18% (between 1st quarter of 2021 and 1st quarter of 2022).
- Hoosier renters earn less income than their neighbors in other Midwest states.
- The eviction moratorium has ended. Currently 110,000 children are homeless in Indiana affecting their ability to learn.
- By law, Indiana renters **MUST** pay their rent, no matter how deplorable their living conditions. Our state is one of a very few that gives tenants **NO** ability to escrow rent payments to facilitate repairs to their home.

Turn over for more information on Meridian Street UMC’s Housing Justice Task Force ➔



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MERIDIAN STREET UMC'S HOUSING JUSTICE TASK FORCE:

MSUMC's Housing Justice Task Force grew out of a book study group focusing on *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, by Mathew Desmond.

After study and much discussion, the group is currently focused on court watching of eviction and related proceedings, in addition to exploring opportunities for influencing the legislative process regarding fair housing.

The work of the task force, with input from IU law professor Fran Quigley, plus Andrew Bradley and Hale Crumley from Prosperity Indiana, has resulted in the formation of a Court Watch Tool Kit that can be accessed by others in the community interested in court watching.

Members of MSUMC's HJTF are: **Carolyn Kingen, Dick D'Alton, Sally Dyer, Elaine Martin and Cheryl Shore.**

What is court watching? Gill and Hynes (2021) define court watching this way: "Courtwatching involves grassroots efforts to observe the day-to-day work of decision making in justice systems, usually undertaken by activists as a way to scrutinise and challenge the power of legal professionals such as judges."

Since December 2021, Meridian Street UMC courtwatchers have been to five of the nine township courts in Marion County to observe eviction hearings.

"There are attorneys, landlords and tenants in the courtroom, but no one who is there to see and understand what happens. The presence of court watchers can have an influence on the outcome of eviction cases." — Fran Quigley, Indiana University Law Professor

Turn over for "Did You Know"... ➔