

PASTOR REFLECTS ON PIA ACTION

By Rev. James Keck

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On January 22nd, the Congregational Church of San Mateo hosted an action meeting about the lack of affordable housing in our city. This meeting, like all PIA-sponsored actions, was dramatic and inspirational, giving the people of our community a stronger voice, and challenging elected leaders to respond to our concerns. These public actions are crucial, and I am proud that the Congregational Church took part in this event.

As pastor, however, what I most value about our involvement with PIA is not the hour and a half of a climactic, exciting public forum. It is the months of work by our Local Organizing Committee leading up to an event that makes PIA such an important part of our church's ministry. During this time of preparation I watch members of my congregation become edified, empowered and inspired through this work, and this gives me great satisfaction as a minister.



Edification, empowerment and inspiration is the wonderful sequence that takes place. Through the weeks of "one on ones," strategy sessions and research, members of my church learn a great deal that empowers their work for justice; and then they reach a level of inspiration rarely attained in church. Suddenly, their faith becomes "real," and they understand that the Gospel is not merely a book but a way of life.

Slowly but surely, it is even happening to me.