

A roof over one's head is a pretty basic necessity, isn't it?

But for a growing number of Missoulians, that roof is in peril. The average cost of a home is \$305,000, up more than 40 percent in a decade. Not only are more people priced out of home ownership, but the share of Missoulians who rent, already at 50 percent, will continue to grow. Nearly half of these renters are spending more than 30 percent of their take-home pay on housing—the current standard for affordable housing. Unaffordable rents lead to too little of everything else because, as sociologist Matt Desmond put it, “The rent eats first.” When people have a safe and affordable place to live, many other problems (such as unemployment, ill health, and lack of food) are lessened.

That's why Holy Spirit, spearheaded by the Social Concerns Committee, is going to be advocating for affordable housing. We will be putting out more information in the coming months and plan to hold a forum in the fall, all with the purpose of enlisting your energy in this crucial ministry.

But we are not alone. Missoula Interfaith Collaborative (MIC) held sessions on affordable housing in the past year and made recommendations to the Missoula City Council, which has incorporated many of those suggestions in its housing plan. And the National Episcopal Church has passed resolutions urging parishes to support affordable housing.

Look for Missoula housing stories on paper houses in the pews in the coming weeks, and read about this key book on housing, *Evicted*, by Matthew Desmond, posted on the church website, [holyspiritmissoula.org](http://holyspiritmissoula.org). The summary is in three parts, covering the housing problem, the people's stories, and the solutions proposed. Links to the summaries will also be in upcoming issues of the *Spirited Times*, our e-newsletter.