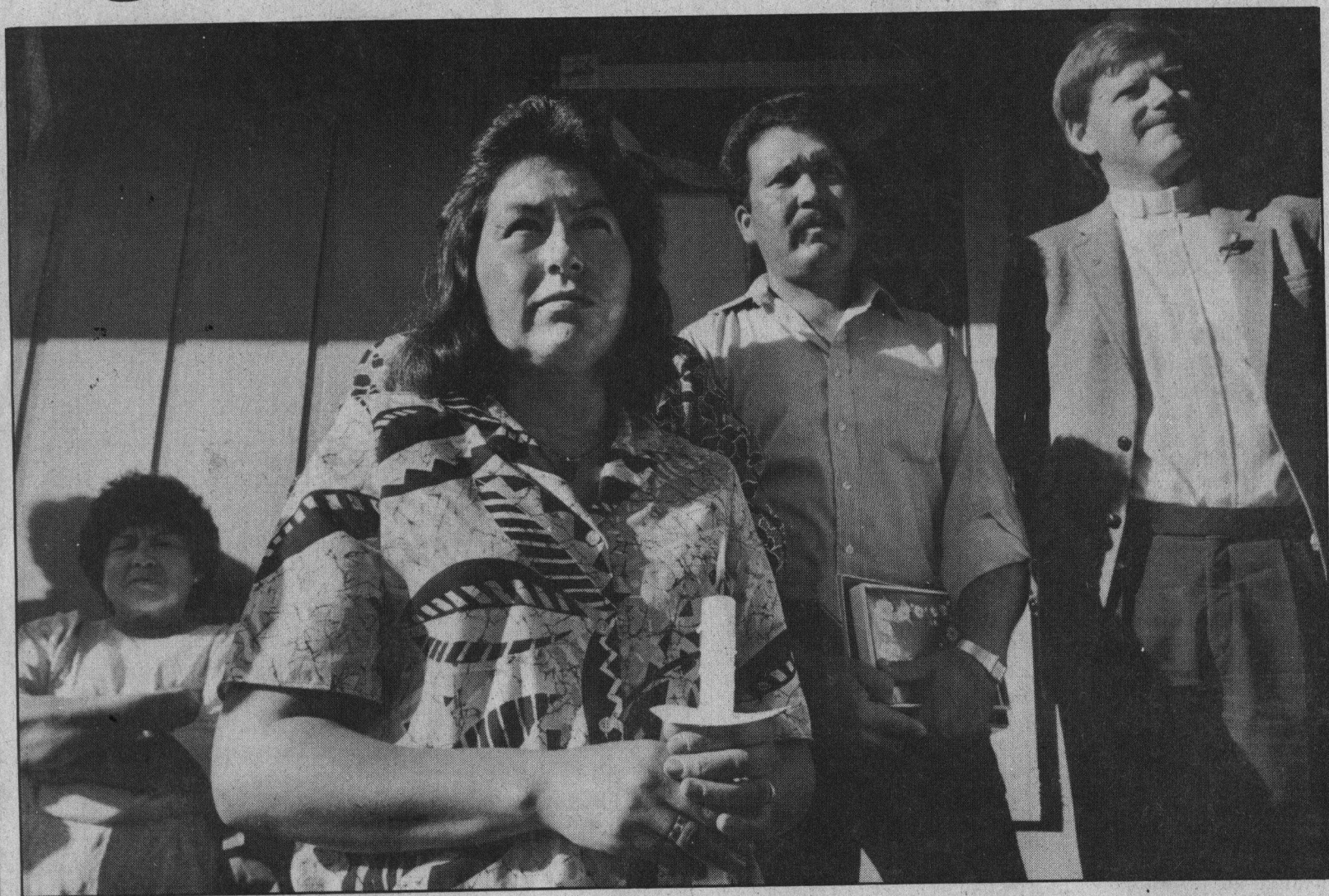


# 'Light a candle'

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Kurt Ellison

Eva Zuniga, left, Maria Rocha and her husband, Daniel, and the Rev. John Ridenour pray.

## Quake anniversary begins with hope

By CHELA ZABIN  
STAFF WRITER

About 50 people began their day in Watsonville this morning at the East Fifth Street home of Daniel and Maria Rocha.

The group had come for a blessing of the Rochas' house, which one year ago was destroyed by the Oct. 17 earthquake. The house has been demolished, and a new, prefabricated house built by crews from Watsonville Area Interfaith Disaster Relief.

Although a couple of people confessed to feeling a little nervous on the anniversary of the earthquake, the mood was upbeat.

Rudy Gonzalez, who helped build the Rochas' new house, said he woke up thinking about the earthquake.

"I did. I really did," he said, "I think everyone will take a moment or so (at 5:04 p.m.), stop for a moment to think about the earthquake. I think everyone in the city of Watsonville will do that. And then we'll just on about our business."

Gonzalez said he was plan-

ning to go to the events planned for this afternoon at Callaghan Park and the Plaza.

"I'm feeling really emotional today," said a tearful Eva Zuniga, whose house was rebuilt by WAIDR five months ago. "We don't have anything, but our house is complete. I believe in miracles; for me this is a miracle."

"There's a spirit of remembrance," Mayor Todd McFarren said about the mood in the city today. At the same time, he said, people are feeling that "there's something to hope for, that there is a future."

"People are saying, 'It was a disaster, but gosh, we've come a long way,'" McFarren said.

McFarren's day started at 6:30 this morning with a television interview. Looking over his itinerary for the day, McFarren noted that something was going on almost every hour until after dusk.

"We are very happy this morning," Maria Rocha said in an interview in her new kitchen.

She said the family of six lost early everything in the earth-

quake and has been staying nearby with her sister-in-law while waiting for the house to be completed.

The Rochas turned to WAIDR for help because grants received from FEMA and the American Red Cross didn't come close to what was needed. A prefabricated house was located by the TECHO housing program and constructed by WAIDR crews. The crews added two bedrooms to the three-bedroom house to give the Rochas more privacy.

Barbara Pascoe, the chairwoman of WAIDR, thanked the people, groups and agencies that have worked on housing reconstruction, including the Mennonite Disaster Service, the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, Salud Para La Gente, the city of Watsonville, JobLink and Supervisor Sherry Mehl. Representatives of the groups, McFarren and Watsonville City Councilmen Parr Eves and Oscar Rios spoke briefly.

Describing the sights and sounds of the earthquake, Rios said, "I think these moments will always be in our minds, but

this moment here shows us that there can be recovery. Watsonville has been an example that we can rebuild, that we can recover."

After the speechifying, the Rev. Antonio Sanchez of St. Patrick's Catholic Church and the Rev. John Ridenour of the Lutheran Community Church led a short service, with Ridenour holding a candle and reading from Matthew:

*"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before people, that they may see your good works."*

Ridenour passed the candle to Maria Rocha, and the Rochas were presented with keys to their new house and a Bible.

After the service, some guests went inside for *pan dulces*. Elected officials moved on to the next event. Other people, who had stopped by for the early-morning ceremony, left for work.