



## Interfaith Coalition for Action, Reconciliation & Empowerment

<http://icarejax.org/>, <https://www.facebook.com/icarejax/>

**ICARE Nehemiah Assembly, 04/23/2018 @ 6:30 – 8:30 pm**

Abyssinia Missionary Baptist Church, 10325 Interstate Center Dr, Jacksonville, FL 32218



ICARE will address criminal justice issues with the Sheriff and State Attorney with more than 1750 people present.

### Our Mission and Vision

- ICARE is comprised of 38 congregations in Duval County that is now in its seventeenth year. Combined, our congregations represent more than 30,000 residents from a broad cross-section of the Jacksonville community. We are incorporated in Florida as a non-profit, 501 (c) (3) tax exempt and politically non-partisan organization.
- Our mission is to powerfully address citywide concerns related to issues of justice and fairness. We are a direct action organization not a direct service organization. We use our collective people power to press our elected officials and other city leaders on county-wide solutions to the problems that plague our community: crime, the low graduation rate, homelessness, jobs and other community concerns.
- Our vision is that as communities of faith who gather together at least 52 times a year, at least once a year we can all come together to do justice.

### How We Work

- Every fall ICARE conducts a grassroots listening process that involves hundreds of citizens talking to one another in small house meetings. In November, ICARE members come together at the Community Problems Assembly to vote democratically on what community justice issues we will address for the year.
- Next, trained committees of approximately 20 ICARE leaders research each problem to find winnable, evidence-based solutions.
- We then hold our annual Nehemiah Action Assembly in the spring, where we engage our elected and public officials to make commitments around the solutions to the problems.
- In addition to listening, research and implementation, ICARE follows-up and monitors outcomes.

**Our Issues – See <http://icarejax.org/category/issue/>**

*(Over for this year's Nehemiah Assembly issues)*

## Issues for the 2018 Nehemiah Assembly

### Jacksonville Re-entry Center

"The Jacksonville Reentry Center is the key to rebuilding lives for those who come out of the penal system and need help restarting. Its effectiveness is evident in the statistics – over 80% of those who get the services JREC provides do not re-offend. And the second statistic is dollars: it saves millions of dollars in rearresting, prosecuting, and jailing recidivists. But for me the most important part isn't a statistic, it is the lives that those statistics point to – lives that get a second chance to live up to the potential God has given them, and God knows we all need second chances. Doing justice means putting God's love into action so that someone who needs a second chance gets it."

*–Pastor Bruce Havens, former Co-President of ICARE and Pastor of Arlington UCC Church*

**Problem:** 33,000 people were released from incarceration into Duval County last year.

#### Findings:

- 1 in 3 ex-offenders will reoffend.
- \$18,064 per year to house an inmate in a Florida prison (FL DOC).
- The Jacksonville Re-Entry Center is a national model in serving ex-offenders. They provide wrap-around services to ex-offenders including clothing, I.D.s, food, mental health counseling, and other necessary services Only 1 in 5 of their clients reoffend. This center saved the city 4.5 million dollars last year.

#### Next Steps:

- At the 2016 Nehemiah Assembly, ICARE asked our Sheriff to prioritize this center by allocating more funds to its budget over the next few years. The Sheriff agreed to work with ICARE to identify funds at the state and federal level. He also agreed to do an audit of his reentry services to assess their effectiveness. We plan to hold him accountable to his commitment to increase funding.
- In 2017 the center did hire five new staff persons that allowed it to serve more people. They were especially focused on making sure that ex-offenders are receiving mental health services as soon as they needed them. However, in our last meetings with the Sheriff we found that the increased funding has been lost. He alerted us that over \$600,000 in grants were given back to the state due to mismanagement of funds. This is unacceptable. That is why we plan to challenge our Sheriff at the 2018 Action to prioritize this important program by restoring the funding that was lost.

### Policing

"God has called upon us to care for the least, the last and the lost."

*–Pastor James Wiggins, Former Co-President of ICARE*

**Problem:** ICARE had chosen to address police relations and is now in the research phase.

**Findings:** Over the next few months, ICARE leaders will be meeting with local stake holders and national experts to understand how best to improve the relationship between the police and the community. We will present a solution at the ICARE Nehemiah Assembly on April 23rd at Abyssinia Missionary Baptist Church.

Contact Mike Shell, clerk of Jacksonville Friends (Quaker) Meeting, for information –  
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