

The Relentless Pursuit of Justice

A reflection from CAJM's past Lead Organizer, Treva Williams

CAJM has a sister organization in Tallahassee and this year their theme is *The Relentless Pursuit of Justice*. I've been reflecting over the words of that theme and their meaning. Where have we seen relentless pursuits? I have to admit, my first thoughts were negative. I thought about the relentless pursuit of developers to get their hands on land. I thought of the companies coming in and relentlessly pursuing and snatching up homes for sale to flip them, raising home costs and rents to a level our own family and neighbors cannot afford. I thought of all the ways our officials relentlessly pursue tax breaks for businesses and developers and I grieved at the thought of the police that chased down and killed Tyre Nichols. Then I asked myself the question, do we have the same level of relentless pursuit of justice as these examples I've shared?

The theme easily could just have been The Pursuit of Justice. The word pursuit itself insinuates a level of intensity, but you add the word relentless and all of a sudden that pursuit of justice moves to a different level. The word relentless is defined as "oppressively constant" or "incessant". *The Oppressively Constant Pursuit of Justice*.

I've been reflecting over whether or not that phrase describes us in Charleston. When we set our sights on a goal, do our officials feel like our pursuit of that goal is "oppressively constant"? I think there have been times in our organization's history where officials have truly been worn down by our relentless pursuit of justice. But as I've stepped back in to help organize the policing and flooding committees, it's clear that these groups need reinforcements in order to keep up with the pursuit.

When our pursuit wanes, we see a halt in progress toward justice. For instance, on the implementation of the racial bias audit, after a year of assistance from CNA, the North Charleston Police Department has implemented a measly 18% of audit recommendations. The Charleston Police Department isn't much better, sitting at less than 50% of audit recommendations implemented, eight years after we first pursued the audit. We must remember why we started down this road. Hundreds of stories year after year were shared in our house meetings about our congregational members being stopped for racial profiling. What message do we send to our loved ones, our neighbors, our community, our officials when we don't relentlessly pursue justice? I invite you to become engaged in one of our committees to be a reinforcement that allows us to continue relentlessly pursuing justice. You can sign up for those committees below.

Housing Update

The Charleston County Housing Our Future (HOF) Plan is now live! The HOF plan is the comprehensive plan for addressing the housing needs of Charleston County. This is what we have been asking the county to release since November! This is why we have been showing up to all of those council meetings, and now we need to keep the pressure on! **We will hold a Nehemiah Moment for Housing on February 28th at the Johns Island Library at 5:15pm (email amber@thedartcenter.org to RSVP).** We will show our support for the inclusion of an affordable housing trust fund with a recurring funding

source in the plan. We will be sure to highlight that it was listed as a top priority to be implemented within the next two years so the county officials will have a harder time trying to delay implementation. Show up to have our voices heard!

There are also a number of other meetings for public comment being held prior to the 28th. If you happen to go, we would all like to be on the same page so the Housing Steering Committee has come up with the following talking points:

- We support the establishment of an affordable housing trust fund, but it must be for those at the 80% and below AMI income level.
- We support the recommendation for a dedicated source of funding
- We support a standing housing advisory committee
- We support these priorities becoming implemented in the next 0-2 years as outlined in the near term action steps.
- We do NOT support spending anymore of the set aside \$20 million from ARPA funding without investing in an affordable housing trust fund first!

You can head to the [Charleston County Housing our Future website](#) to view the entire plan. You can also leave comments with your feedback on the site.

[Here's a list of all the dates and locations for the public meetings.](#)

[Here's a brief overview of the Housing Our Future Plan.](#)

CAJM campaigns in the news!

The *Post & Courier* endorses Affordable Housing Trust Fund -
The *Post & Courier* Editorial Board published an opinion piece on Charleston County's Housing Our Future plan over the weekend. They

explicitly came out in favor of an Affordable Housing Trust Fund, stating, "That's why the plan's most important recommendation may be to create a new housing trust fund, a source of money that would enable the county to continue to partner with nonprofits, local governments and others working on new housing initiatives." **You can read the rest of the article here.**

Change to reform police violence is long past due - Rev. Jeremy Rutledge, Senior Pastor of CAJM congregation Circular Congregational Church, wrote an editorial in the Charleston City Paper calling on the Charleston and North Charleston Police Departments to implement the recommendations of each department's racial bias audit. **You can read the article here.**

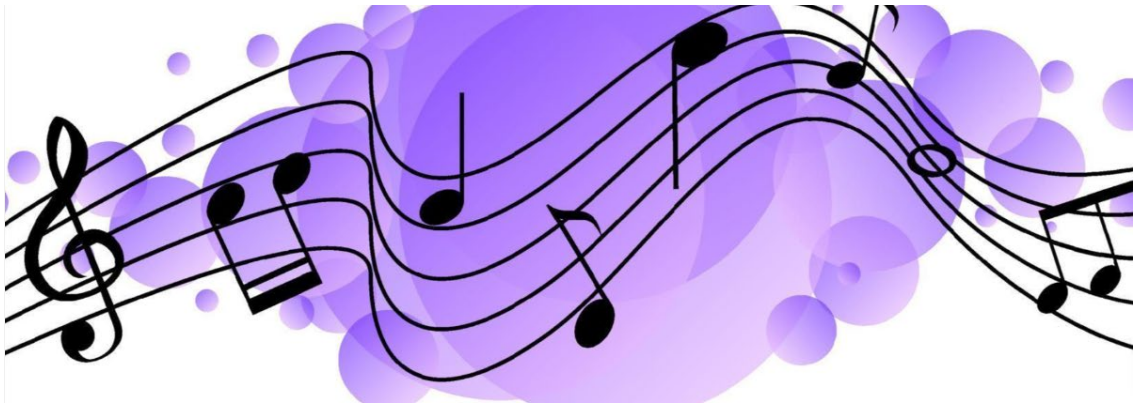
It's not too early to get started on your 2023 CAJM investment!



Do you want to join the CAJM Choir?

Do you love to sing? Sign up to participate with the CAJM Choir!





Upcoming CAJM Events



Rally

When: February 27, 2023 @ 7pm

Where: Mt. Moriah Missionary Baptist Church

RSVP: Ask your Team Leader for a ticket!



Nehemiah Action

When: March 20 @ 7pm

Where: Mt. Moriah Missionary Baptist Church

RSVP: Pick up your ticket at the Rally!

Upcoming Research Visits

We encourage **ALL CAJM MEMBERS** to join us for research visits and full committee meetings! Email dorightcajm@gmail.com to be connected with a research committee, and/or use the links below to sign up to attend.

Clay Middleton, Charleston



Mayoral Candidate (Flooding & Policing)

What: The flooding and policing committees will be scheduling meetings with Charleston Mayoral candidates in the next month to see where they stand on supporting our Gadsden Creek campaign and on pushing forward with implementing best practices from the racial bias audit. That Mayoral race is in November of 2023!

When: February 8, 2023

Pre-Meeting: 10:30am (*You must attend the pre-meeting to attend the meeting!*)

Meeting: 11:30am

Where: Circular Congregational Church (150 Meeting Street) - ***This is a CORRECTION; this meeting is no longer on Zoom***

RSVP: [Click here to register](#)



Fetter Check-In (Healthcare)

What: Join us for our check-in with Dr. Powers, CEO of Fetter Healthcare Network.

When: February 8, 2023

Pre-Meeting: 12:40pm (*This is an abridged pre-meeting. You must still attend the pre-meeting to attend the meeting!*)

Meeting: 1:00pm

Where: Zoom

RSVP: [Click here to register and get a link](#)



February Flooding Full Committee Meeting

What: We are planning a mini-action so please join to give input and see how to participate! We need a representative from every congregation to attend. And we will have you out in time to get to your Super Bowl party!

When: February 12, 2023 @ 1:30pm

Where: Redeemer Lutheran (714 Riverdale Drive)

RSVP: Email trevva@thedartcenter.org to RSVP



CCSD School Board Meeting (Education)

When: February 13, 2023 @ 5:00pm

Where: 80 Broad Street

RSVP: Email raynique@thedartcenter.org to RSVP



N Charleston Police Chief Reggie Burgess (Policing)

When: February 14, 2023

Pre-Meeting: 1:00pm

Meeting: 2:00pm

Where: CAJM Office (2021 Reynolds Ave)

RSVP: Email trevva@thedartcenter.org to RSVP



Tamika Gadsden, Charleston Mayoral Candidate (Flooding & Policing)

What: The flooding and policing committees will be scheduling meetings with Charleston Mayoral candidates in the next month to see where they stand on supporting our Gadsden Creek campaign and on pushing forward with implementing best practices from the racial bias audit. That Mayoral race is in November of 2023!

When: February 16, 2023

Pre-Meeting: 2:00pm (*You must attend the pre-meeting to attend the meeting*)

Meeting: 3:00

Where: In person, location TBA - **This is a CORRECTION; this meeting is no longer on Zoom**

RSVP: [Click here to register](#)

Housing Full Committee Meeting

What: Join us for important updates and to strategize for this year's Nehemiah Action! We need a representative from every congregation to



attend.

When: February 16, 2023 @ 6:30pm

Where: Zoom

RSVP: Email amber@thedartcenter.org to RSVP

Flooding Action PART 1



What: We are holding a press conference to protest the filling of Gadsden Creek. Please show up and bring your friends, family, neighbors, and anyone else who doesn't want to see Gadsden Creek ruined!

When: February 17, 2023 @ 10:30am (sign-holding until 2pm)

Where: Near Gadsden Creek, exact meeting space TBA

RSVP: Email trevva@thedartcenter.org to RSVP

Flooding Action PART 2



What: We are holding a rally at the Sewe Festival to protest the filling of Gadsden Creek. Show up with as many people as possible!

When: February 18, 2023 @ 10am-2pm

Where: Near Brittlebank Park, exact meeting space TBA

RSVP: Email trevva@thedartcenter.org to RSVP



Policing Full Committee Meeting

What: Join us for important updates and to strategize for this year's Nehemiah Action! We need a representative from every congregation to attend.

When: February 19, 2023 @ 3:00pm

Where: Zoom

RSVP: [Click here to register and get a link](#)



Healthcare Full Committee Meeting

What: Join us for important updates and to strategize for this year's Nehemiah Action! We need a representative from every congregation to attend.

When: February 21, 2023 @ 6:30pm

Where: Zoom

RSVP: [Click here to register and get a link](#)

Community Events

Shared Legacies Film Screening

What: CAJM congregations Charity Missionary Baptist Church and Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim are co-hosting a screening of the film **Shared Legacies**. The film tells stories of coalition and friendship between the Jewish and African-American communities during the Civil Rights Movement.

When: March 16 @ 7:00pm

Where: Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim (90 Hasell Street)



Veterans for Peace - Peace Sailing Tour

What: The renowned anti-nuclear sailboat Golden Rule will be arriving in Charleston on Saturday February 25 as one of over 100 ports of call on its 13,000 mile Great Loop voyage which began in Minnesota in September. She will be at the

Ashley Marina for three nights,
departing Tuesday February 28.

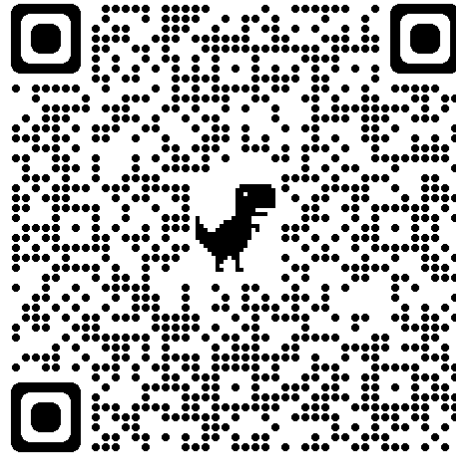
[Click here for more info.](#)



New to CAJM and want more information?

We are so glad you are here,
and we'd love to connect you
with a CAJM Team Leader!

Use the QR code to the right, or
follow [this link](#), to fill out a short
survey so that we can match you
with the Team Leader who best
fits your needs.



Follow us on social media!

