



## 2018 Community Problems Assembly

**Hundreds of CAJM members completely filled the sanctuary** of Morris Brown AME Church on November 5, 2018.

Early in the meeting, members heard reports on work that CAJM has been doing for the past several years. The Chief of Police of the City of Charleston, Luther Reynolds, reported on the City's progress in choosing a qualified firm to conduct an audit to examine racial bias in police practices. Chief Reynolds thanked CAJM for its commitment to this issue, stating that he was looking forward to learning from the audit, which would begin soon. (Chief Reynolds spoke of being awed at standing in the pulpit and seeing this cross-section of the Charleston area together in one room.) Other speakers reported that CAJM's Wage Recovery Program is now being carried out by [Charleston Legal Access](#), and they are eager to work with anyone who has not been paid what they are owed.

The main event of the evening was a presentation of three major issues that CAJM might choose for the coming year. These issues emerged after hundreds of house meetings allowed people to share issues and problems that were of greatest concern to them. CAJM's Steering Committee collected notes from all these meetings, then team leaders voted on the top three issues for us to consider at tonight's meeting. For the first issue, Crime and Violence, we heard information and examples of the kinds of

crime and violence affecting many people who have experienced it as victims, have lived with the fear of crime and violence, and who have lost loved ones. Evangelist Tyese Miller shared her own experience of her son's death, a terrible loss that she knows is similar to losses many others have suffered. We listened, understanding that "we lift our stories with hope that justice will roll down."

Next we heard information on the second issue, Education. Inadequate learning environments provided to many of our community's children and youth. Testimony came from Mr. Jesse Wilson, of Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, who shared his frustration that our local schools were doing little to help direct young people to good jobs like those in his manufacturing company. Once again "we lifted our stories with hope that justice will roll down." The third issue we considered was Transportation. We heard information on the inadequacies of public transportation, the lack of safe pedestrian and bikeways, and the many ways inadequate transportation has caused people to lose time, money, and sometimes their jobs. Testimony was shared by Ms. Donna Kinsey of St. Patrick Catholic, a retiree who had once relied on the bus to get to church, the doctor, the store, and social activities. Now that bus schedules are shrinking, she and others her age find themselves increasingly homebound and unable to contribute to their communities and family members. And again "we lifted our stories with hope that justice will roll down."

After new congregations came forward to agree to become a covenanting member of CAJM, it was time for all congregations to collect their commitments (personal and financial) from network members and then caucus to discuss the issues to be voted on. Following the caucus, representatives from 29 congregations and organizations presented their commitments and their votes.

One by one, congregations presented their votes as all of us listened. Each of these issues was clearly a very worthy cause for CAJM to work on. The final tally was 84 votes for the issue of Crime and Violence, 132 votes for Education, and 221 for the issue of Transportation. Having seen democracy at work, we turned homeward, inspired to begin the year's work at the Research Kickoff on Monday, December 3rd, at St. James Presbyterian Church on James Island.

This was serious work we were doing--voting to choose just one issue, out of three that all deserved attention. It was also joyful, hearing members speak proudly of the congregations they represented and cheering each other on for their powerful turnouts. Veteran CAJM members saw many

friends we've made through our shared work, folks who've attended research meetings with us, showed up at City Council meetings, stapled programs and collected tickets and shared meals and sung together at the Nehemiah Assembly. We got to see each other's families again, people's kids a little taller and older this year, along with other folks we don't yet know. New people were there too, never having imagined that a diverse group of folks could work together as we are working.

Our work will continue as long as each of us keeps our commitments and all of us continue to use our collective power. Together we bring the Charleston area closer to becoming the beloved community.

**We lift our stories with hope  
That justice will roll down.**

by Julia Eichelberger

*CAJM is a growing network of faith-based congregations who come together with one goal: to make the Charleston area more just. We are culturally, economically, geographically, and religiously, diverse. Together, we speak with one powerful voice for justice for our community.*

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***Coming up soon - Remind your friends***

**Research Kickoff**

**December 3, 2018 - 6:30 PM**

St. James Presbyterian Church  
1314 Secessionville Rd, Charleston, SC 29412

All Network Members, Team Leaders, and Clergy

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*"Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice.  
Justice at its best is love correcting everything that stands against love."*

*-- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr*

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**\* There is still time to send in your 2018 investment \***

Please make your investment today!

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CAJM  
PO BOX 71416  
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[Givelify](#)

CAJM is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. All or part of your investment may be tax deductible as a charitable contribution. Please check with your tax advisor.

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***Read more great coverage of the Community Problems Assembly***



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**Transportation will take top priority for Charleston Area Justice Ministry in 2019**

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