

Nehemiah Assembly Logistic Information

The 2017 ICARE Nehemiah Assembly will be held on March 27, 6:30 PM, at Abyssinia Baptist Church, 10325 Interstate Center Drive, Jacksonville, 32218. The building is very visible on the west side of Interstate 95 between the Zoo Parkway exit and the Dunn Ave/Busch Drive exit. The easiest way to explain getting there if you don't have a GPS is to exit onto Dunn Ave/Busch Drive. Go west 3/10 mile to Monaco Drive. Go South (left) on Monaco Drive about a half mile to DePaul Drive. Go east (left) on DePaul Drive. Follow DePaul Drive as it almost immediately turns south and becomes Interstate Drive. Abyssinia Baptist Church will be visible on the left.

NOTE: This meeting is called a Nehemiah Action Assembly because it is based on a biblical story from Nehemiah Chapter 5 where the prophet Nehemiah gets the "nobles and officials" to return houses, fields, vineyards and children that they have taken through exploitative lending practices. Nehemiah accomplishes this act through a "great assembly."

Basic ICARE Information

The Interfaith Coalition for Action, Reconciliation and Empowerment (ICARE) is a church-based community organization formed by 38 religious congregations – Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Unitarian – in Jacksonville, Florida. The yearly cycle includes...

- Identifying public issues that need attention at House Meetings held in every ICARE congregation. (BBUUC Team Leaders held four House Meetings.)
- Selecting the most important issues to pursue in depth at the Community Problems Assembly in October. The Community Problems Assembly is the second largest yearly meeting typically drawing 500 people.
- Empowering a Research Committee for each issue to interview all stakeholders including those affected by the issue, government and community leaders who control resources, and persons who created successful solutions to similar problems in comparable communities nationwide.
- Then bringing as many people as possible together at the Nehemiah Assembly to hear public officials make commitments related to those issues.

Each of the past several years 1,500 to 2,200 people have gathered at the Nehemiah Assembly. The results of commitments made in front of those audiences include the following:

- 157 middle and high schools in Duval County now use Restorative Justice rather than making arrests for minor school skirmishes. Offending students face Student Accountability Boards where the needs of both victim and offender are addressed and, over time, offending students become part of the solution rather than part of the problem.
- Sheriff Williams is working to increase the percentage of eligible youths who receive Civil Citations instead of arrests for non-violent offenses.
- Four Neighborhood Accountability Boards help community recipients of Civil Citations to come to grips with what they have done and chart a positive course for their lives.
- Mayor Curry is being held accountable to bring more city resources to help homeless individuals re-orient their lives.
- The Jacksonville Re-Entry Center is increasing its services to persons released from prison. They have received a \$900,000 grant and ICARE is asking for a larger share of the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office budget to go to Re-Entry services.
- The Northwest Jacksonville Community Development Commission is working to establish an employee owned, cooperative grocery store. ICARE is helping to find resources and to learn from the experiences of other communities that have developed successful cooperatives.