

INTERFAITH COALITION FOR JUSTICE IN OUR JAILS (ICJJ)

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO 9 | April 2023



ICJJ

INTERFAITH COALITION
FOR JUSTICE IN OUR JAILS

a committee of [Faith in Action East Bay](#)

Visit our website at

www.icjjalamedacounty.org

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Who We Are: Mission Statement

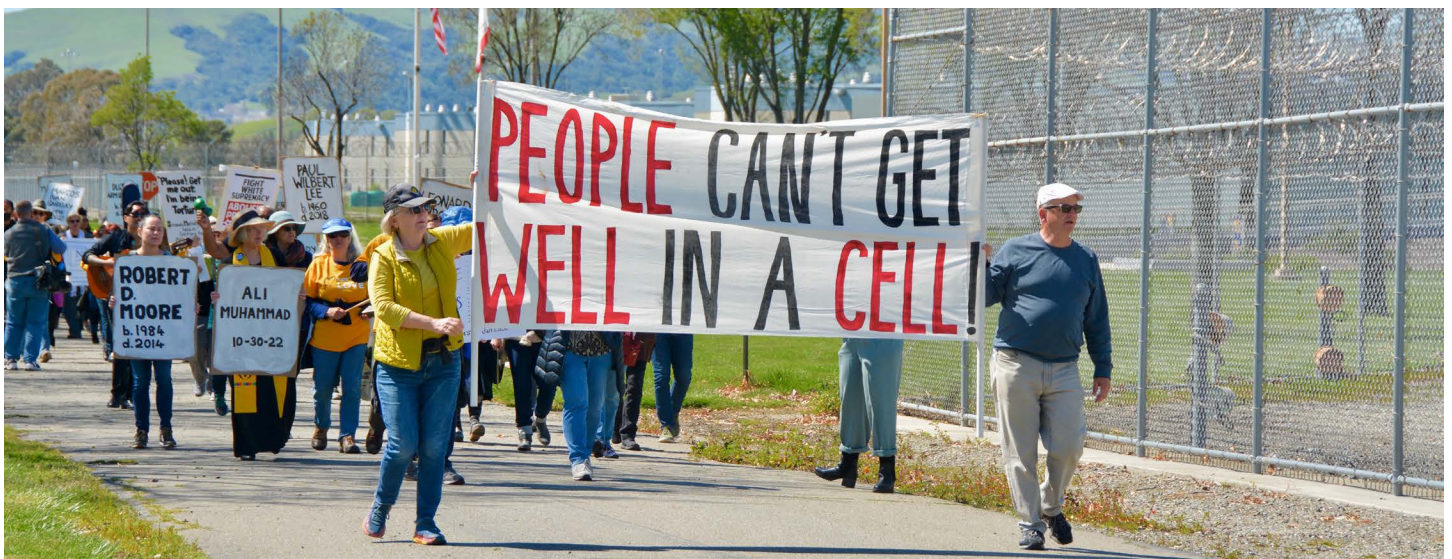
The ICJJ seeks to reduce incarceration as a response to social problems in Alameda County, California, and to decrease harmful conditions in the jail. We advocate to decrease the number of those imprisoned and close the revolving door to jail -- especially for those with mental health or housing needs. The jail must be safe, humane, and supportive of successful reentry into our communities.

Meet Our Congregations!

Congregation Netivot Shalom, Berkeley ~
First Church Berkeley, UCC ~
First Unitarian Church, Oakland ~ Interfaith
Council of Alameda County ~ Kehilla
Community Synagogue, Piedmont ~
Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church, Oakland
~ Lighthouse Mosque, Oakland ~ Montclair
Presbyterian Church, Oakland ~ Plymouth
United Church of Christ, Oakland ~
St. Columba Catholic Church, Oakland ~
Skyline Community Church, United Church
of Christ, Oakland ~ Starr King Unitarian
Universalist Church, Hayward

April 1, 2023 Rally at Santa Rita Jail, Dublin, CA

In partnership with the Care First Community Coalition (CFCC), the Interfaith Coalition for Justice in our Jails (ICJJ), member congregations, and CFCC partner organizations helped plan and organize a Care Not Deaths Noise Demonstration & Vigil at Alameda County's Santa Rita Jail in Dublin, CA, on Saturday, April 1, 2023.





Rally participants contemplate names of Santa Rita detainees who died in the last 10 years.

What are our objectives?

- End the criminalization of substance use and mental illness
- Make significant investments in housing and community mental health services that would divert people from incarceration in the county jail.

What needs to happen immediately?

"Alameda County's increasingly uncoordinated and inadequate community-based mental health systems have resulted in deep racial inequities where severely ill and traumatized Black and Brown residents get funneled into a deadly jail. Enough is enough. We are rallying to demand the supervisors address these human-caused crises with urgency."

— Margot Dashiell, East Bay Supportive Housing Collaborative.

1. All law enforcement agencies in Alameda County, including the Sheriff's Office, must be provided with alternatives to county jail for people in need of preventive and other treatment services for mental health and substance abuse problems.
2. The Board of Supervisors and municipal leaders must make the necessary investments in a system of care that diverts potential arrestees at the point-of-arrest (or as shortly thereafter as possible) from the criminal-legal system into medically appropriate treatment for mental

illness, substance abuse and co-occurring disorders.

3. One step in this direction requires that the Alameda County Board of Supervisors immediately fund more than \$50 million of life-saving community mental health services they committed to last year, but they have failed to do so.

4. The Alameda County Board of Supervisors must order independent investigations of deaths in Santa Rita Jail, including the four in the first two months of 2023.

Alameda County is in a crisis moment:

- Many speakers spoke of personal history with Santa Rita and conditions for themselves as former prisoners and/or their family members.
- Names of the 70 people known to have died since 2014 were read and held up as we marched and made noise so the prisoners inside could hear us.
- Annually Santa Rita Jail costs Alameda County more than \$345 million: that is more than \$180,000 a year for each person incarcerated. We constantly reflect on the array of affordable housing and preventive behavioral health services that those funds could support in the community toward diverting individuals from entry into the county jail.

What can you/your congregation do to support the objectives voiced at the rally?

Pray:

Creator of us all,
We pray for a revival in Santa Rita, where our loved ones are and ask that the love of you, our Creator, would permeate the atmosphere, break bondages and set people free. Send laborers to bring Your Spirit and Your truth and let the Word of God become real to them like never before.
(from St. Columba Church, Oakland)

Learn:

Follow pending legislation in Sacramento <https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/home.xhtml>, such as *SB 809: would build on the Fair Chance Act (2017) to ensure that conviction history doesn't prevent qualified candidates from employment.

*AB 544: improves access for those detained in county jails to exercise their rights to register to vote and vote.

Act:

- Engage in the debate about the Alameda County budget; let your representative on the Board of Supervisors know your concerns.
- Share this newsletter with friends, neighbors, and fellow congregants or members of your faith community.
- Join actions as they take place.

To learn more:

- ICJJ website: <https://www.icjjalamedacounty.org>
- Care First Community Coalition: <https://www.carefirstcoalition.org>

Photo Credits

Dorsey Nunn: photo (right) of congregation Starr King UUs, congregants from Mid and South County. Steve Thomasberger: all other photos.



Patricia Contreras Flores Bruja Chingona and Kari Malkki, a healing justice organizer at Restore Oakland, singing and holding their hearts, facing the crowd of demonstrators on the plaza in front of Santa Rita Jail on April 1, 2023.

