MICAH (Memphis Interfaith Coalition for Action and Hope) is a coalition of more than 60 faith, labor, and community organizations representing over 30,000 residents of Memphis and Shelby County.

MICAH was formed in 2017 to work towards creating a more just and equitable Memphis for all of its residents. Since our founding, our coalition has been standing up for justice and equity, which requires dismantling the systemic racism that has gripped our community for more than 200 years. We have seen progress in our work, but such a time as this calls for urgent transformation. We have applied pressure to public officials to take action and have worked with community and business leaders to propose and implement systemic change. Our calls, along with the calls from many others, insist that the time for fundamental, systemic change – the change MICAH was created to catalyze – is now. We demand action.

WE ARE MICAH. THIS IS WHAT WE DO:
- We build leaders and amplify voices.
- We cultivate relationships with decision makers and hold them accountable.
- We organize a diverse coalition, unified in our commitment to justice and equity.
- We envision the community we want to live in and work to make it so.

To continue our pursuit of justice & equity, 'For such a time as this,' MICAH continues its calls for:

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY
MICAH believes law enforcement should be focused on serving the community’s needs, enhancing the quality of neighborhood life for all residents, providing prevention and community-centered safety policing. MICAH is in conversation with the MPD and SCSO around issues of transparency, training, and community interaction. MICAH demands public officials and law enforcement leaders act to:

A Strong Civilian Review Board:
- Hold CLERB members, City Council Liaison, City Mayor, and Memphis Police Director accountable to the 2016 CLERB Ordinance.
- Appoint CLERB members who represent the diversity of our community.

Strengthening local law enforcement’s relationship with the community:
- Ban and criminalize the use of excessive force, such as choke-holds, by law enforcement officers. Require de-escalation efforts ahead of any use of force and/or aggression. Expand de-escalation, bias and crisis intervention training for all officers and allow observation by MICAH and community activists.
- Increase and maintain transparency. Provide consistent updated reports from law enforcement relating to excessive force complaints and Response to Resistance Forms to create an early warning system to uncover and remove problem officers. Conduct an audit of MPD internal affairs. The last such audit was done in 2008. Release information around current occurrences as necessary.
- Seek Community engagement and input in the MPD Director search.
- Uphold and follow the Kendrick Consent Decree, which protects civilians from unlawful surveillance, without seeking modification.
- Hire Shelby County residents to serve in law enforcement within their communities.
- Place a hold on any and all ICE operations in Memphis and an end to all collaboration between local law enforcement and ICE.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM
MICAH believes in safeguarding the full humanity and preserving the rights of all residents in Shelby County. Our criminal justice system locks up too many people, especially Black and Brown residents, which creates a demand for more dollars to run the jails and prisons. The policies in place criminalize poverty and do little to promote reentry success. MICAH demands public officials: (see next page)
• Reduce the pre-trial population detained in Shelby County, limit the length of time detainees are held prior to being charged and remove all policies which criminalize those in poverty, including the elimination of cash bail.
• Implement equitable, accessible, rehabilitative programming and educational/vocational training services for the incarcerated population to reduce recidivism
• Restore full citizenship and voting rights for those convicted of a felony upon completion of time served
• Change sentencing laws for low-level crimes, reducing sentencing requirements by at least 20 percent

ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC INEQUITY
MICAH believes that an equitable, safe community must invest deeply in resources, services, and programs as well as uphold intentional, bold policies that prioritize lives and communities that have been plagued by purposeful disinvestment. MICAH calls for:

• Equitable funding for public education in Shelby County to ensure every student has the opportunity and resources to thrive. As the only municipality in Shelby County that does not contribute to the education of its youth, Memphis must make a significant investment in K-12 education as well as programs and services for youth, including expanding Mploy.
• Ensure current and future allocations, like the $5 million from Memphis CARES Act, to support SCS digital needs and the YES Fund for early literacy, college and career, and high school success.
• Commit significant capital funds to support the SCS Reimagining 901 Facilities goals and ensure 21st century facilities for all students within Shelby County.
• Increase PILOT withholding to 40% for K-12 education with the full amount going to education.
• Support restorative justice practices, expansion of reset rooms and increased social emotional learning (SEL) as alternatives to suspensions/expulsions to break the school to prison pipeline.
• A shift in the city and county budgets away from the overcriminalization of the poor and the Black and Brown residents within our community. Memphis and Shelby County must become more centered on prevention than punishment, including reallocating a portion of funds from law enforcement and detention centers to necessary preventative support services and resources such as mental health services, social and emotional learning and support in schools, community investment, education and economic equity across all areas of Shelby County.
• Ensuring the City and County provide funding to MATA to better equip residents from all areas to have more equitable economic and social opportunities.
• Development of adequate infrastructure to provide equitable language access informed by community stakeholders
• Address the importance of fair housing, including renters’ rights, investment into affordable housing, and equitable opportunity to Memphis’ low-and moderate-income communities.
• Reduce the number of renters and increase home ownership in these communities, especially for Black and Brown Memphians.

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY
MICAH believes that government alone is not going to propel our city from poverty to prosperity and equity; we need the business community to be a partner as well. The business community needs to contribute to providing stability and economic equity for workers and the greater community, whether by investing in services, like transit, or ensuring that financial resources, such as nonpredatory loans, are available to the disenfranchised. MICAH calls on the business community to:

• Address the wealth inequity from historic redlining, disinvestment, and predatory lending that impact Memphis’ low-and moderate-income communities, especially those of color, by ensuring the investment of banks’ Community Reinvestment Act dollars into those communities.
• Build a culture where paying a living wage to workers with paid sick leave, vacation, and parental leave is held up as the model.

In this majority Black community, justice demands systemic change for Black and Brown Memphians who are too often suffocated by injustice. In this community plagued by disparities, justice demands deeds and not merely words. The transformation that justice demands can only be realized when public officials, the business community, and the people work together in the same direction. In this call for action, MICAH retains hope that for such a time as this, we can walk humbly, love mercy, and do what justice demands.