



**Durham  
Congregations  
In Action**

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Durham Congregations in  
Action

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2023

Prepared For:

DCIA

Prepared By:

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## Building Beloved Community

In 2023, DCIA brought together faith communities around religious bias and hate, racism, classism, and public health through events, projects, and monthly assemblies to build a beloved community in our city. Details are in this report.

# Message from the Executive Director

## BRINGING OUR COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

We do not know if the founders of Durham Congregations in Action imagined what it is today, or even who Durham is today, back in 1969 and 1972, but they would not be shocked that DCIA is still bringing congregations together to address the needs of Durham, to be community with one another, and to stand alongside our neighbors in their struggles and triumphs.



The board of directors for DCIA started 2023 at a run last January, with clear goals and the energy needed to sustain a year of transition and change. Congregations showed up to events, offered resources and ideas, and shared the labor of organizing aid, actions, events, and volunteers. Without our directors, our congregations, our volunteers, and our sustainers, DCIA would not be able to do the work that we are called toward in Durham.

Thank you to everyone who made all of what you will read in this report and more possible. Our national panel on antisemitism, our pilgrimage on racial justice, or the training we co-coordinated with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum would not be possible without you, just as our smaller, day-to-day activities of handing out over 500 COVID-19 tests, acting quickly in a winter crisis, and advocating for affordable housing would not happen without your support. Let's keep being the Durham we dream.

Rev. Breana van Velzen  
Executive Director



# Who is Durham Congregations in Action?

Durham Congregations in Action engages diverse faith communities to build beloved community.

## ABOUT US

For decades, DCIA congregations have learned from the best information available about community needs and challenges. And during those decades, DCIA has built a history of initiating cooperative programs among people of faith to address those issues. From the beginning, DCIA has created space and opportunity for people of different traditions and ethnicities to share and to grow from each other's strengths and experience, putting shared values to work. The shape of DCIA's services over the years has changed, but it has continued to build bridges among its members and to the most vulnerable and forgotten in our community, planting seeds in new initiatives to change lives in Durham.

## WHAT WE DO

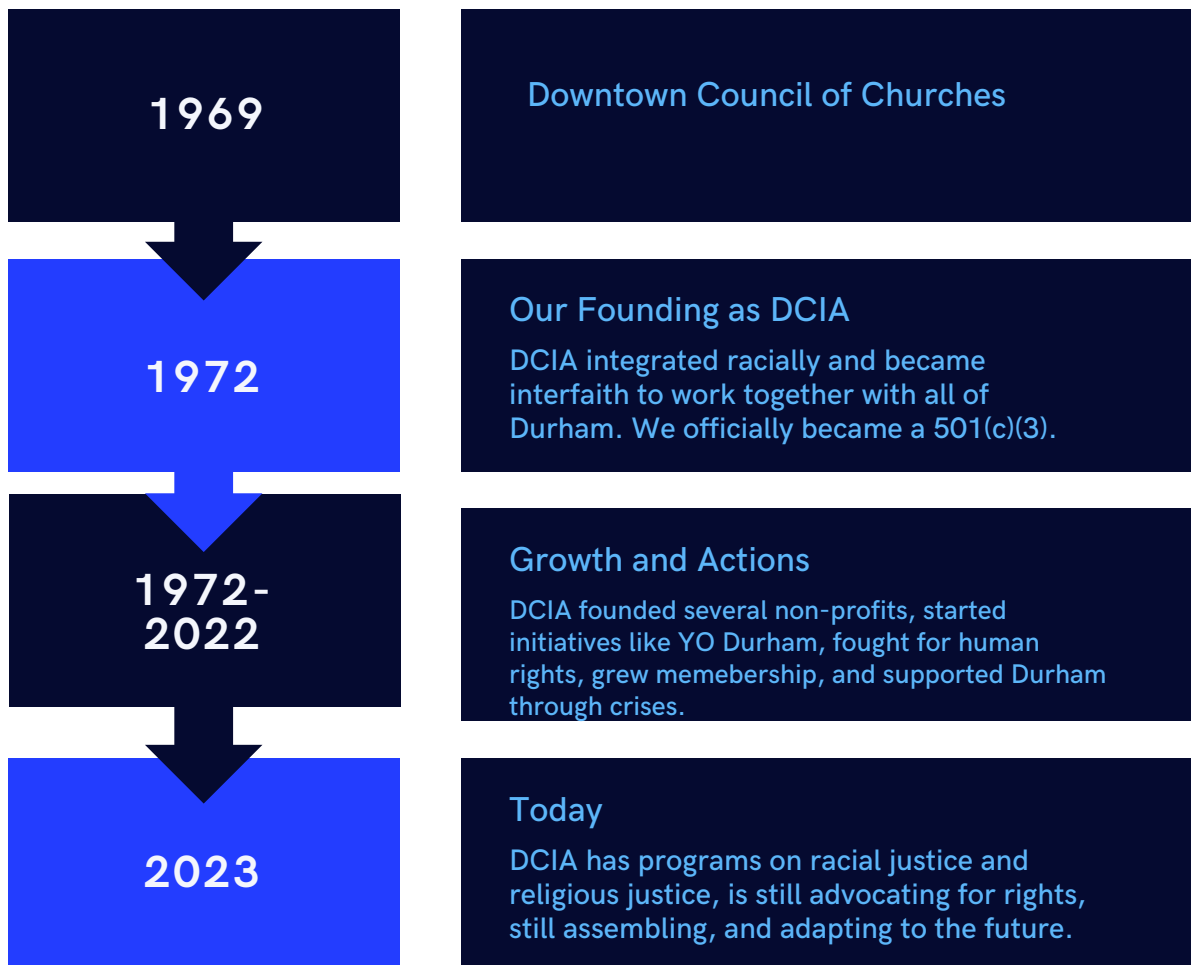
Our programs and day-to-day work include:

- Monthly Assemblies, Clergy Connection Luncheon, and other opportunities for networking and relationship-building
- Educational Programming
- Listening and Advocacy
- Grant management
- Collaborative projects
- Project and non-profit incubation



## OUR HISTORY

In 1969, four congregations in downtown Durham, NC, organized the Center City Church Council to address together needs for transportation and visitation for the elderly, and soon also started programs for children and youth. We incorporated in 1972 and, during the next six years, membership grew to 12 congregations. In 1976, the group's name changed to Durham Congregations In Action, and its membership continued to grow over the years to include dozens of congregations of Christians, Jews, Muslims, and others cooperating together in service. We have continued that tradition into 2024.



# STRATEGIC Plan Progress



In 2023, DCIA reached over 357 people; managed \$159,000 in EFSP and food security grants, and hosted 8 unique events.

DCIA started programs such as the Interfaith Pilgrimage for Racial Justice, did a series of events on gun violence, and started collaborative work on religious discrimination.

## 01. Food Security

DCIA co-planned World Hunger Day, updated the food resource guide. Managed EFSP, Durham County Food Security Microgrant, shared MOWD and EHD resources, and is the fiscal sponsor for EHD. We continue to work with CROP Hunger Walk. Durham is #2 in the nation for 2023!

## 03. Safety and Peacemaking

We partner regularly with RCND on gun violence, tabled at a forum on gun violence, hosted three assemblies on gun violence, and joined the sheriff's council to work on gun violence. We met with Mayor O'Neal about gun violence as well as the mayor pro tempore and mayor elect. DCIA hosted de-escalation meetings on Israel-Palestine late 2023.

## 02. Housing Security

Restarted the HomeShare steering committee, prepared for launch. We met with housing organizations and HSAC members, hosted white flag information sessions, wrote city and county officials on behalf of affordable housing efforts with CAHT and CAN (Carver St. Apts.), hosted the Annual Homeless Memorial Vigil, and managed the EFSP grant.

## 04. Communication, Partnership, and Involvement

DCIA updates social media regularly, re-vamped the website and the newsletter, and regularly contacts member congregations. DCIA worked with five new partners in 2023 and increased member involvement.





# STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS

## LIVING INTO OUR MISSION

Our photos show our training on antisemitism and genocide prevention in Washington, DC; our CROP Walk teams,, and our CROP Walk Award Reception for autumn 2023.



### 05. Faith Leader Relationships

We hosted our annual clergy connection luncheon with over 50 clergy! Additionally, we made changes to assemblies and added an annual picnic based on data in 2020-2022, including faith leader surveys. We called together faith leaders in 2023 on multiple crises, including gun violence, antisemitism, Islamaphobia, and food security.



### 06. Building Beloved Community

The core of DCIA's work--and in 2023, DCIA launched our Interfaith Pilgrimage for Racial Justice, started a series of events on addressing religious discrimination, continued our work with the MLK Rally & March, and officially partnered with the Mt. Level Partnership for Racial Justice.



## Looking Ahead in 2024

DCIA is proud to announce that we are hosting an art exhibit and launching our first open-to-the-public Interfaith Pilgrimage for Racial Justice in February, and we have expanded our membership options for 2024.



DURHAM

## MORE ABOUT US

For more information about DCIA, please check out our website, social media, email us, or reach out to our office. We are always happy to meet with you, visit your congregation, or share about what we do and who we are as an organization. Thank you for all you do.

DCIA 2023 Board of Directors:

Rev. Donna Banks, Epworth United Methodist – President  
Hope Hartman, Beth El Synagogue – Vice-President  
Bob Newlin, Parkwood United Methodist Church – Treasurer  
Dennis Cullen, Westminster Presbyterian – Secretary  
Rev. Tanya Best, Mt. Calvary UCC  
Larry Brown, Bahá'í Community of Durham  
Rev. Deborah Cayer, UUA Church of the Larger Fellowship  
Rev. Dr. Warren Herndon, City of Joy Ministries  
Katushka Olave, Immaculate Conception Catholic Church  
Rev. Michael Page, Antioch Baptist Church  
Rashad Rahman, W. Deen Muhammed Islamic Center  
Kevin Griffin, Masjid Muhammed  
Gordon Whitaker, Watts St. Baptist Church – Past President  
Jo Wall, Cole Mill Road Church of Christ  
Rev. Melinda Keenan Wood, Pilgrim United Church of Christ



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