

Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council



FEBRUARY 2017

SPONSORED BY COMMUNITY ACCESS UNLIMITED

FINDING SPIRITUAL COMMON GROUND DURING TIMES OF POLITICAL DISCORD

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.

Psalm 133:1

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UCICC EVENT: February 16th 10:00A—11:30A
**The Spiritual Approach to Finding Common Ground During a Time of
Political Discord**

See page 11



About the **Union County** **Interfaith Coordinating Council**

Our Mission

The Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council works to facilitate regular interfaith meetings in order to make way for the building of bonds within the interfaith community.

We respect and encourage the inclusion and welcoming of others regardless of faith, race or disability. We strive to be proactive on social issues.

Our Goals

- To grow the network of faith-based organizations in Union County.
- To encourage representatives from all faiths to join the Interfaith Coordinated Council including those of Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Islamic, and other faiths.
- To be engaged in:
 1. **Community Building** within faith-based organizations and the general Union County population.
 2. The advancement of **Social Justice**.
 3. The intentional **inclusion** of others regardless of gender, faith, race.
- To be active in activities that are inclusive and community building.

Our Objectives

- Sponsor regular engagement opportunities that facilitate the building of bonds within the Union County interfaith community and their congregations.
- Strengthen the Union County religious congregations through involvement, action and education in self-help.
- Build working relationships between Union County religious organizations and Community Access Unlimited that create opportunities for youth and people with disabilities and their support staff.

Potential Advantages to Joining the Interfaith Community

- Develop interfaith solidarity.
- Avail yourself of increased visibility within the interfaith community and build opportunities to share educational and community events with the group.
- Build religious membership.
- Gain exposure for you and fellow congregation members to educational opportunities regarding entitlements, housing, and other services, including but not limited to: programs for seniors, youth, people with physical and developmental disabilities, etc..
- Create full and part time employment opportunities for congregation members with CAU.

UNION COUNTY INTERFAITH COORDINATING COUNCIL Steering Committee Members

Pastor E. Crawford—Chair Emeritus
Ebenezer AME
Rahway

Deacon Tim Williams-Vice Chair
First Baptist Church
Kenilworth

Sidney Blanchard
Executive Director of CAU

Rabbi Joel N. Abraham
Temple Shalom
Scotch Plains

Ayaz Aslam
Muslim Community Center of UC
Elizabeth

Pastor H. Bryant
Townley Presbyterian Church
Union

Denise Fernandes
La Via al Exito

Erich Han William Kussman, Jr
Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Springfield

Pastor Mertz
First United Methodist Church
Westfield

Michelle Mobley
Director of Youth Service
Residential

Pastor Carmine Pernini
Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church
Rahway

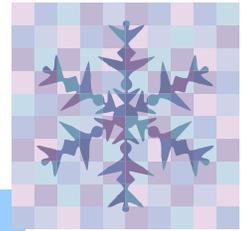
Fr Michael Saporito
The Parish Community of St. Helen
Westfield

Roderick Spearman
CAU Consultant

Elder Arthur “Skip” Winter
Cranford Presbyterian Church
Cranford

message

from the Chairperson Emeritus



Jim Wallis, a New York Times best-seller, founding editor of Sojourners magazine and a Christian community of the same name once said, “We can find common ground only by moving to higher ground.”

Wallis, known for his advocacy on issues of peace and social justice understands that in order for us to find a common place, we have to move from low ground, places of familiarity, and climates of comfort to higher ground.



Higher ground is not always easily accessible, nor is Higher Ground easy to get to because the way up isn't always clearly defined. The way up may be rough to climb, it may have slippery slopes and rugged terrain; but the view from up, from above, is so much greater than that of low ground that it is worth the work.

Everyone has access to low-ground. It is the place that requires the least investment, the least commitment and the least need to change or grow because it is the least challenging. It is the place that everyone can get to with little to no effort and where everyone is welcome to stay because there are no requirements, restrictions or expectations. There are no falls from low ground, and low ground requires no faith. Low ground causes us to focus on details and differences.

However, Higher Ground is just the opposite. Higher ground allows us to see the beauty of diversity, higher ground allows us to escape the noise of the crowd to hear the voice of God, higher ground elevates us above the pettiness found in the muck and mire of everyday life. Higher Ground comes with the risk of falling and failing. It requires existential leaps of faith over gaps, ridges, loose ground and troubled waters. Higher ground challenges us to find the balance between being pulled down and standing up.

Let us challenge ourselves in this time of GREAT political discord by climbing higher, let's get “unstuck” by the things of the world, by the negativity and pessimism and go higher in search of truth, in search of good, in search of a new disposition, attitude and altitude. Let's head for higher ground.

Rev. Dr. Erika D. Crawford

Editorial

Hate Crimes After the US Presidential Election

by Rev. Carmine Pernini

An increase in hate crimes following the presidential election has been widely reported. There is debate as to whether or not these reports are factual or simply trumped up accusations from the political left in order to smear Donald Trump, his rhetoric, and presidency. For my own part, I have witnessed first hand hate speech, threats, and innuendo lobbed at both clergy and laity. I have also been the target of such aggressions after Nov. 8. Yet, despite my own personal experience of hate speech and hate crimes, I know that examples which stem from personal experience are anecdotal at best. What follows is a high level analysis chronicling a brief history of hate crimes reporting, annual data on hate crimes committed, as well as a definition of what a hate crime is. The information gleaned from myriad sources comes primarily from a “Faith in Public Life” webinar that I participated in on Jan. 12, 2017 with senior fellows from the Southern Poverty Law Center and Anti-Defamation League, multiple news sources, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (fbi.gov), a crime becomes a hate crime when there is an element of bias based on race, gender, gender identity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity. Hate crimes can target people or property. The nation’s first hate crime legislation, The Civil Rights Act of 1968, focused protection from hate crimes in the areas of race, religion, or national origin. It wasn’t until 2009 that violence based on gender, sexual orientation and identity, or disability was recognized as needing special protection under the law. The US attorney general reports on hate crimes annually because of the Hate Crime Statistics Act of 1990. The FBI collects *voluntary* (that is, *not* mandatory) reports of hate crimes from local jurisdictions and began publishing hate crime statistics in 1996. According to a report by CNN, the FBI reports that the numbers of hate crimes have decreased over several years, with the exception of 2015.

Mark Potok, senior fellow at the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), said during a webinar that I participated in, “...A wave of hate crimes and lesser hate incidents that perhaps don’t amount to an actual crime wash[ed] across the country [after the General Election in November, 2016]... What we found was that we counted 1,094 [one every 17 minutes] “bias incidents” in the first 34 days after the election...[where] the largest count of these incidents was on the day immediately after the election on November 9 (“Faith in Public Life” White Nationalist WBinar Transcript – 1/12/17).” According to the FBI’s database (fbi.gov) there were 5,850 hate related incidents in all of 2015. However, during the period of just 34 days after the election, there were 1,094 incidents of hate incidents. If the trend of 1,094 incidents of hate continued for an entire year we could expect to see 12,478 incidents of hate for the year which would be more than double what we have seen in recent memory and, should the trend continue, this number would be the highest number of hate crimes per year in their recorded history. That is to say, the incident of hate crime during the period immediately following the presidential election are anomalous. Mark Potok said, “And what we found was that a full 37 percent of the incidents involved perpetrators directly referencing Donald Trump, his campaign slogans, or his infamous remarks about grabbing women by the genitalia.” In fact, the greatest number of hate crimes in the 34 day period that the SPLC studied occurred on the three days following the presidential election with 202 incidents on Nov. 9, 166 on Nov. 10, and 138 on Nov. 11. The majority of these crimes were done in the name of Donald Trump and White Nationalists/Alt Right, were against women and GLBT people, Jews and Muslims, people with disabilities, and immigrants and refugees (“Faith in Public Life” White Nationalist WBinar Transcript – 1/12/17).

At this point it should be noted that the reporting of hate crimes by jurisdictions is voluntary, as opposed to mandatory, which means that the actual number of crimes reported is *less* than the number of crimes committed. For example, according to CNN, “Every year since the FBI began tracking hate crimes in 1996, more than 80% of jurisdictions have reported ‘zero’ hate crimes. In 2015, only 11.6% of participating law enforcement agencies reported hate crimes. The vast majority of participating jurisdictions -- 88.4% -- said not a single hate crime occurred in their cities (<http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/05/health/hate-crimes-tracking-history-fbi/index.html>).” Furthermore, five states, WY, AR, GA, MI, and SC have no hate crime laws. 15 states have hate crime laws that do not include crimes based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Given that the FBI’s data on hate crimes are reported voluntarily and that a number of states have no hate crime legislation, the FBI’s hate crime numbers are unsurprisingly lower than the actual number of hate crimes committed. However, the Federal Bureau of Justice Statistics’ numbers, which are based on reports *made by victims* as opposed to jurisdictions volunteering reports, are considerably higher at 293,800 per year which is 50 times more than that of the FBI (see the link to the cnn article above).

Given the data that I have collected and shared with you it is terrifyingly obvious that there has been an exponential increase in hate crimes committed since the presidential election on Nov. 8, 2016, many which were done specifically in the name of Donald Trump or inspired by his rhetoric. This, dear friends, does not bode well for our collective future because the muse of many hate criminals is going to be the president of the United States. The Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council and our many partners have assented to “Stand Up For the Other(www.standupfortheother.org)” which binds us inextricably to those in our communities who are on the receiving end of hate. To attack one of us is to attack all of us. In times such as these volume is essential. Whose voice will be the loudest and clearest, those purveying hate, or those standing up for love? We, as a community guided by love, beloved though we aspire to be, have to answer this question not as one but many. God has endowed our community with a multiplicity of spiritual gifts and power, but our response can only be effective if we respond and anticipate together. An old Ubuntu saying provokes us today, it reads, “I am because we are.” Or, I am not because we are not. The UCICC is because we are. All of us. Stand up. Together. For the other. For each other.

Member Spotlight

Reverend Barry Wise

Greater Mount Moriah Baptist Church, Linden

Reverend Barry E. Wise II was born in Rahway, New Jersey as the oldest son of Barry Sr. and Sandra Wise. He was an active member of the Greater Mount Moriah Baptist Church Youth Choir and other youth activities, regularly engaging in the life of the church from an early age.

He attended Rahway High School, where he was also an active participant in the Marine Corps JROTC unit and the Cross Country/Track teams. Upon graduating from Penn State University, he returned home to work in the IT field in New York City. It was during this time that he began to feel the pull of the Lord toward the ministry and sought the counseling of Pastor Reverend Ronald A. Green, Sr. for discernment.

After a long period of prayer, reflection, and meditation, Reverend Wise delivered his initial sermon in January 2007 and was licensed as a minister of the gospel in the same month. Under the ardent tutelage of Reverend Green, he began his ministry at Greater Mount Moriah Baptist Church, preaching and teaching Sunday school and Vacation Bible School.

Reverend Wise began his theological education at Northern Baptist School of Religion and later enrolled at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, where he currently serves as the President of the Student Society of Inquiry and Ministry (SSIM) and is working to complete his Master of Divinity degree. In January of 2014, Reverend Wise received his ordination under the leadership of Reverend Green. On May 15th 2015, Reverend Wise was installed to the position of pastor by the congregation of Greater Mount Moriah Baptist Church of Linden, NJ.

Seeking to serve and improve the communities in which he lives, Reverend Wise also participates in the New Jersey Clergy Coalition for Justice and the Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council. He is committed to the advancement of a variety of causes: seeking justice and fairness regarding police brutality and training, establishing economic justice for lower and middle class members of our society, and reaching across ethnic and social barriers to form genuine bonds of community.

Reverend Wise is married to his devoted wife and best friend Kimberly, with whom he shares a home in Rahway, NJ.



February Spotlight on Faith: Unitarian Universalism

A religious perspective by: Reverend Ann Marie Alderman

Unitarian Universalism is on occasion assailed as not being a real faith. I am here to assure you that it is quite real! We are a people descended in thought and practice from the early Christians, even though early unitarian and universalist beliefs were declared heretical during the third century by those who were instrumental in creating the Christian empire. Descendants of the people who held these unitarian and universalist beliefs would much later help spark the Radical Reformation, and even later bring their hopeful faith to North America.

The distinct denominations were organized in the early 1800's, by then committed to freedom of thought, voluntarism, equality, free assembly, and the good news of a loving God. In 1961, they came together as UU's. Unitarian Universalism today continues to be a hopeful faith. We have faith in an evolutionary theology; meaning that we hold that every UU must, in community with others, continually refine their beliefs and practices according to the demands of the times.

Our faith is not so much about what we believe as about what we do. We are committed to hear and to follow the call to do what is just and right in the name of Love. We have faith that our work in solidarity with others work will make a difference far beyond our small numbers, and far beyond our short lives. For me this is real faith. It is alive as revelation is never sealed. And it is always demanding of my best, at the very same time that UU's fully accept who I am, just as I am.

The Reverend Ann Marie Alderman grew up in Jacksonville, Florida. As a youth, she was an active Southern Baptist. After graduating from Florida State University with a major in religion in 1975, she was unsure what to do with her fascination with all things religious. Yet, she soon found herself at Vanderbilt Divinity School, at the same time as the first woman dean of a major seminary was taking over. It was exciting times. Ann Marie changed denominations, moving from Baptist to United Methodist.

Upon graduation from Vanderbilt and she realized that the traditional Christian ministry was not for her. She then spent several years in "alternative" careers, including working as automobile mechanic and later and for nearly twenty years, as the manager of her family's wood flooring business. By mid-life the urge to find a deeper purpose began when she relocated to Savannah, Georgia to manage a small bookstore in the historic district. It was there and in a nearby small town where she first experienced the warm welcome of Unitarian Universalist fellowships. After a few years, she returned to Jacksonville and by 2001, both of the UU congregations in her hometown had joined together to ordain her to the ministry.

She began serving as the Developmental Minister with the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield, New Jersey, this past August.





FISH Hospitality Program

Serving Middlesex, Union, and
Somerset Counties in New Jersey

FISH Hospitality Program (FHP) is an affiliate of *Family Promise* and was developed in 1990 using the Interfaith Hospitality Network model. *Family Promise* now has nearly 200 Affiliates in 42 states. IHNs help achieve lasting independence at a third of the cost of traditional shelters, with nearly 80 percent of families nationally transitioning to long-term housing. FHP assists families and single women who have become homeless. Our 14-bed shelter rotates through a network of 15 churches that provide a secure and supportive environment for our clients to stay overnight where they are welcomed as "Guests".

JOIN THE FISH FAMILY OF HOST CHURCHES

The FISH Hospitality Program is looking for congregations to host FHP families.

What are the benefits of getting involved?

FOR GUESTS

- Safe, homelike shelter where families can stay together
- Guests cite the caring of volunteers as one of the most important benefits: "I never knew so many people cared."
- Intensive case management by a social worker to assist in finding housing and jobs and in meeting other needs
- About 70% of guest families secure permanent housing

FOR CONGREGATIONS

- Opportunity for outreach ministry (within the congregation's own facilities) focusing on the needs of people in the community
- Opportunity for participation in a community project with other faith based organizations
- Increased sense of community among members as they work together in shared mission
- Catalyst for renewed faith and further mission effort

From Interfaith Hospitality Network Guide to Recruiting Host Congregations

To learn more about becoming a host church, contact the FHP office:

Telephone: 732-968-5957

Office E-mail: fishhosp@verizon.net

Website: www.fishhospitality.org



FAITH IN ACTION!

UCICC members Carmine Pernini, Erich Kussman (l) and Ayaz Aslam (r) attend the Women's March in Trenton on January 21st. Organizers expected 1200 people; they got 7200!




**Union County
Interfaith
Coordinating
Council**



UCICC hosts, "Spiritual Approach to Meeting the Needs of the Re-Settlement/Refugee Population on January 19th at the Unitarian Society of Plainfield, featuring speakers, Reverend Cynthia Cochran-Carney and Seth Kaper-Dale.



Save the Date!
February 16th, 2017

You are Invited to Join the Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council for:

A brief time of Interfaith Prayer

Followed by a discussion on the topic:

**The Spiritual Approach to Finding
Common Ground During a Time of
Political Discord**

**Christ Fellowship Church
1121 Elizabeth Avenue • Elizabeth, NJ 07021**

10:00A—11:30A

Light Refreshments will be provided ~ Sign-in begins at 9:30A

**Stay tuned for upcoming
information about our featured
guest speakers!**



80 West Grand Street
Elizabeth, NJ 07202
(908) 354-3040

Please Reserve Now!
E-mail or phone your RSVP to:
UCInterfaith@caunj.org
(908) 354-3040 x4324

In Honor of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day
Iris House, Inc. in Partnership with
Ruth Fellowship Ministries
Presents

“Saved, Sanctified, & Tested!”

Join us for an exciting discussion!
Panelists: Rev. Tracy Brown,
Ann Robinson, & Delores Dockery
Come out & learn about your and your
community’s health!

When: Friday, February 10, 2016

Time: 6:30pm-9:00pm

Where: Ruth Fellowship Ministries

733 South 2nd Street

Plainfield, NJ 07060

- **Free Health Screenings**
- **Free Giveaways**
- **Lite refreshments will be served**

Please RSVP by Feb. 3, 2017 :
Email Audria (arussell@irishouse.org) or
Charla (ccousar@irishouse.org)
or call : 908.561.5057



**Ruth
Fellowship
Ministries**

www.irishouse.org



Iris House: A Center for Women and their Fami-



lies @IrisHouse

Ingrid Floyd, Executive Director

Sponsored by a grant from DHSTS-Division of HIV/STD & TB Services



Gov. CHRIS CHRISTIE | Lt. Gov. KIM GUADAGNO | Dir. CHRIS RODRIGUEZ

NJOHSP

OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND PREPAREDNESS

Security Workshop for New Jersey Faith-based Institutions

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Southern New Jersey and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security are hosting a one-day workshop to enhance preparedness against active shooter incidents. Participants will return to their organization with the initial elements of their active shooter emergency action plan along with other tools and resources to help protect and secure their facilities.

WHEN

Wednesday, February 22, 2017
8:30 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. (lunch included)

WHERE

Katz Jewish Community Center - 1301 Springdale Road
Cherry Hill, NJ

AGENDA

7:30 A.M.	Registration
8:30 A.M.	Opening Remarks and Welcome
8:45 A.M.	Guest Speaker
9:00 A.M.	Training Modules 1-3
12:00 P.M.	Lunch
1:00 P.M.	Training Modules 4-6
3:45 P.M.	Closing Remarks

This event is open to: Staff and lay leaders from Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and all Houses of Worship; Private and parochial day school staff and leadership; Community response officials; Law Enforcement; Supervisory first responders; and Homeland security representatives.

REGISTRATION

To register please visit <https://www.govevents.com/details/21940/dhs-active-shooter-preparedness-workshop--cherry-hill-nj/>

Registration closes February 20, 2017 at 12:00 P.M.

Note: A Federal, state or local government-issued ID (e.g. state issued driver's license) will be required for entry. If you do not have a government-issued ID, please contact David Snyder at dsnyder@ifednsj.org or (856) 673-2524.





Ask the Clergy: Coffee & Clergy Jewish-Christian Dialog

with

**Pastor David Knecht (Holy
Cross Lutheran Church)**

and

**Rabbi Mark Mallach
(Temple Beth Ahm Yisrael)**

Join us for our 6th year in an informal & enriching series of discussions based on timely topics and **Biblical** texts.

Where: Barnes and Noble, Rt. 22, Springfield, NJ

When: Thursday evenings, from 8-9pm

2016: ~~October 13, December 8~~

2017: February 23, April 6, June 8



NEXT MEETING FEB. 23



Questions contact:
TBAY 973-376-0539
office@tbay.org

Or: Holy Cross
973-379-4525
office@holycrossnj.org



*Open your heart
and your home*



All that is missing is **YOU!**
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Be part of the ride.



For more information contact:

(877) NJ FOSTER, www.njfoster.org, (800) 99 ADOPT, www.njadopt.org



JOIN OUR TEAM!

Community Access Unlimited welcomes those with a big heart! Due to our continuing expansion, there are a number of **full time** and **part time** openings for those interested in guiding people with disabilities and youth at risk who are on the road to independence.

For those looking for part-time positions, CAU offers available house on the weekends and overnights! Minimum requirements are:

- Valid driver's license
- Access to vehicle daily to use for work purpose
- Original High School Diploma/GED/College Degree

Experience working with individuals with developmental disabilities and/or youth at risk are a plus! Of course compassion for the work and a flexible schedule is also required when providing support to our members.

Working at CAU is not just a job but a career! We offer promotional opportunities for employees, competitive salaries and a comprehensive benefits package to full time employees!

Please take the time to visit our agency website www.caunj.org for more information and current openings. Community Access Unlimited is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

CAU Hosts a weekly Open House Mondays from 4 PM -6 PM

The Cafeteria at 80 West Grand Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07202

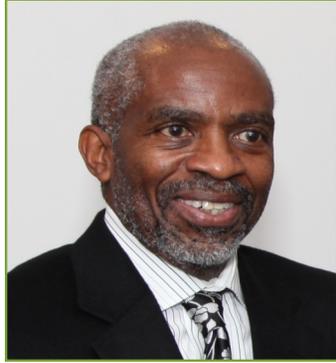
Don't forget your resume and
come prepared to fill out an application

To make an appointment, please call an HR representative at (908) 354-3040 ext 203. If you are unable to attend the open house, please fax resume to (908) 354-0283 or email to rwright@caunj.org.

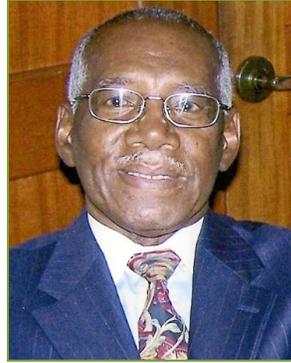
UCICC Outreach Coordinating Team



*Sidney Blanchard,
Executive Director
Community Access Unlimited
sblanchard@caunj.org*



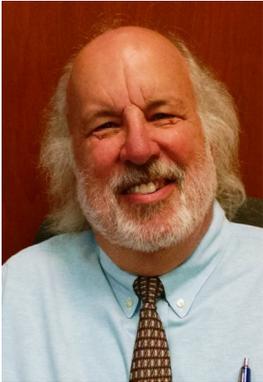
*Roderick (Rod) Spearman
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*Pastor Howard A. Bryant,
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*Pastor Carmine Pernini
UCICC Interfaith Coordinator
cpernini@caunj.org*



*AH 'Skip' Winter
UCICC Steering
Committee Member*



*Michelle Mobley
CAU Director of Youth
Service Residential
mmobley@caunj.org*



*Cynthia Manno
UCICC Administrative Assistant
cmanno@caunj.org*

Join & Be Active Today!

- Attend monthly meetings.
- Invite other community leaders to attend our meetings and events.
- Support or host fundraising programs to support the Record Expungement Grant Program.
- Sign up for our mailing list.
- Share useful information about your organization.

Advertise in the UCICC Newsletter!

Have an exciting event or program happening?

Reach out and build bonds with members of the interfaith community in Union County by advertising in this newsletter!

Please send all print-ready ads to Rod Spearman at rspearman@caunj.org by the **13th** of every month to save a space!



Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council c/o Community Access Unlimited
80 West Grand Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07202
Phone: (908) 354-3040 x4324 • Email: UCInterfaith@caunj.org

www.facebook.com/UnionCountyInterfaithCoordinatingCouncil



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Elizabeth, NJ

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Elizabeth, NJ 07202
Phone: 908-354-3040 TTY/TTD: 908-354-4629
Fax: 908-354-2665 www.caunj.org

Community Access Unlimited's Mission: *To provide community access through effective and comprehensive support services for people with disabilities and at-risk youth, giving them the opportunity to live independently and to lead normal and productive lives in the community.*

UCICC & STEERING COMMITTEE UPCOMING EVENTS

UCICC Steering Committee

January 5, 2017 at 10:00am
80 W Grand St
Elizabeth NJ 07202

UCICC Steering Committee

February 16, 2017 at 10:00am
See Right side

UCICC Steering Committee

March 2, 2017 at 10:00am
80 W Grand St
Elizabeth NJ 07202

Full UCICC Event

**The Spiritual Approach to Meeting the Needs of the
Re-Settlement/Refugee Population**
January 19, 2017 — 6P—7:30P
Plainfield Unitarian Society
724 Park Avenue, Plainfield, NJ

**Spiritual Approach to Finding Common Ground During
Times of Political Discord**
February 16, 2017 - 10 AM
Christ Fellowship Church
1121 Elizabeth Avenue, Elizabeth, NJ

Full UCICC Event

Housing/Homeless Summit
March 15, 2017 - 7 PM
Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Mountain Avenue, Springfield, NJ



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