

Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council

DECEMBER 2016

SPONSORED BY COMMUNITY ACCESS UNLIMITED



FAITH CELEBRATIONS:

TURNING OUR CELEBRATIONS OF FAITH INTO A CELEBRATION OF OTHERS.



HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE:

About UCICC
page 2

Message from the
Chairperson
page 3

Editorials:
pages 4 & 5

Faith in Action!
pages 6—7

Special Feature:
"A Place to Call Home"
page 8

Homeless Sabbath & Vigil
Pages 10—13

"There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land." Deuteronomy 15:11



As people of faith we are all called to serve the poor, the homeless, the sick, the hungry...

1st Annual Homeless Sabbath & Homeless Persons' Vigil

Pray for the homeless December 16-18 and then join us for an Interfaith Service on December 21st at 7PM.
Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Springfield, NJ

(see pages 10-13)



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
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

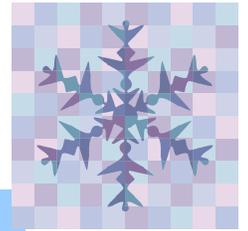
Fr Michael Saporito
The Parish Community of St. Helen
Westfield

Roderick Spearman
CAU Consultant

Elder Arthur “Skip” Winter
Cranford Presbyterian Church
Cranford

message

from the chairperson



December is not just the 12th month of the year or the month that bridges Thanksgiving to a New Year, it is perhaps the month that most speaks to the greatness of our God. Why? Because December encompasses Holy Days and Holidays that reflect diverse faiths, a multiplicity of culture, a regard for history and a reverence for a Holy Deity.

As we usher in the Month of December as an interreligious, interfaith, and intercultural community, let us do so:

With expectation, like those who observe **Advent**, the season of waiting,

Seeking wisdom, like those who observe **Bodhi Day**, a day of spiritual enlightenment,

Full of Joy, like those who rejoice over the birth of the Christ Child on **Christmas**,

Celebrating the miracles and faithfulness of God, like those who will light the menorah for **Hanukkah**,

Remembering the importance of our history and strength of our communities, like those who will light the Kinara for **Kwanza**,

Committed to fulfilling the will of God in spite of rejection, like those who will travel from home to home for **Las Posadas**,

Holding the memories of those who have gone on before us in our hearts, as we prayerfully endure the **Longest Night**,

Thankful for the obstacles we've already overcome and looking towards new beginnings, like those who will observe the festival, **Pancha Ganapati**,

Awaiting the morning's blessings, like those of long ago on **Watch Night**.



Rev. Dr. Erika D. Crawford

Editorial

Linda Flores-Tober

Executive Director, Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless

Whenever I feel hopeless in the face of so many homeless without resources (no hotel money, no shelter beds, no affordable apartments etc), I read "The Long View," a prayer written by Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw in memory of Bishop Oscar Romero who was assassinated in 1980 for advocating for the poor in El Salvador. There, the line "*We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own,*" comforts me. I know that I am not in charge and that I just need to keep to the work.

That work, for me, is to serve the homeless: men and women living on the streets in the most dire conditions, working families who can't afford a simple apartment, seniors and the disabled living in poverty, the single woman with mental illness and no income...these and more are the people who need us to be their voice and to advocate for their needs. Never has the housing situation been so bad. Never have we seen so many homeless.

Yes, I feel very concerned about the changes coming and how our folks will fare. BUT, we can't dwell in worry; we must commit ourselves to helping the homeless in every way we can: collecting items they need, feeding the homeless, taking the homeless into our churches, working to ensure that our towns have enough affordable housing for *all* of their residents, volunteering at local shelters and agencies and raising money so that those working with the homeless can continue their work. Ultimately, we work toward the day when no one is homeless. Meanwhile, we work in the vineyards and hope for a future that is not our own.

Archbishop Oscar Romero Prayer: A Step Along the Way

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.

The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.

No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection.

No pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No program accomplishes the Church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.

This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.

*This prayer was composed by **Bishop Ken Untener** of Saginaw, drafted for a homily by Card. John Dearden in Nov. 1979 for a celebration of departed priests. As a reflection on the anniversary of the martyrdom of Bishop Romero, Bishop Untener included in a reflection book a passage titled "The mystery of the Romero Prayer." The mystery is that the words of the prayer are attributed to Oscar Romero, but they were never spoken by him.

'Tis the Season to Remember the Homeless in our Area.

Pastor J. David Knecht
Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Springfield

What child is this? the old Christmas carol goes. The standard answer is given as the song continues is “this is Christ the King”, but if one takes the Christian Scriptures seriously, there are other answers. In Luke, chapter 2, we learn that Jesus was born in shelter for animals and placed in a feeding trough. This was because in an unimportant town far away from the rich, powerful, and entitled, there was no room for them in the local inn. So Luke gives another answer to the question of what child is this? It is a homeless one.

In Matthew, chapter 2, we learn another answer to the question of what child is this? Joseph is warned in a dream to take up his young family and flee Bethlehem just in time to escape a political massacre with lots of collateral damage. This is known in church circles as the martyrdom of the innocents. So Matthew answers the question of what child is this? It is a refugee from violence.

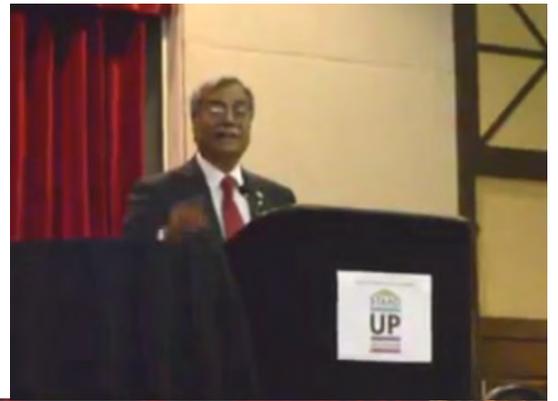
'Tis the season to remember the homeless in our area. Christmas celebrates the Christian doctrine of incarnation, which simply means that God comes “in the flesh”. What does it mean that God comes in the flesh as a homeless refugee? It means that by meeting the homeless and the refugee you might just meet God. Centrist Christian teaching is clear; in Mathew chapter 25 we learn that besides worship, prayer and bible study we meet God in serving the homeless. This is because Jesus was homeless. In our area, the Elizabeth Coalition for the Homeless, Family Promise, Home First, and Monarch Housing Associates all work to end homelessness in our neighborhoods. By supporting and partnering with these organizations, you can not only help the homeless, but help your own soul as your work together with others to provide hope for our community.

With the high cost of housing in our area, homelessness in Union county continues to be an issue for our families and communities. A minimum wage worker in New Jersey would need to work **108** hours a week to be able to afford a rental apartment in our region. We invite you to be part of the solution for your benefit as well as those we are called to serve.

The Union County Interfaith Coalition is sponsoring a Homeless Sabbath the weekend of December 16-18, where houses of worship of diverse faiths in Union County will offer prayers and raise awareness about the plight of our neighbors who need housing. The Coalition will also observe a homeless memorial vigil on the evening of Wednesday, December 21, at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Springfield. Please encourage your faith community to participate in these events. For if we remember a homeless family every Christmas eve, we should be able to remember our neighbors who live and work among us every day.

FAITH IN ACTION!

NJ INTERFAITH 'STAND UP FOR THE OTHER' RALLY ON 11/12 IN NEW BRUNSWICK.



SPRINGFIELD INTERFAITH CLERGY ASSOCIATION
Presents
ANNUAL COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING SERVICE

Temple Sha'arey Shalom
November 21, 2016
7:00 pm



SPRINGFIELD INTERFAITH CLERGY ASSOCIATION HOSTS A THANKSGIVING SERVICE NOVEMBER 21ST AT TEMPLE SHA'AREY SHALOM.



*Carrie Jackson and the Jazzin' All Stars
Photo by John Meixner*



TOWNLEY CHURCH PREPARES TO DEPLOY 100 PERSONAL CARE KITS TO ELIZABETH COALITION TO HOUSE THE HOMELESS FOR USE IN THEIR 'OPERATION WARMHEART' PROGRAM AND HOSTS A JAZZ VESPERS 11/12 TO SUPPORT MONARCH HOUSING.



MEMBERS OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CRANFORD PREPARE FOR THEIR HOSTING OF GUESTS IN THE FISH HOSPITALITY PROGRAM FROM OCTOBER 9 TO OCTOBER 23 .

Is your House of Faith:

- **Advocating for Peace, Acceptance, Communication?**
- **Sharing your Faith?**
- **Supporting Social Initiatives?**



Email your photos and a summary caption to UCInterfaith@caunj.org by the 11th of each month.

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

by **Reverend Ron Thomas**

Associate Minister, Fountain Baptist Church

These words are found on the website of Homefirst Interfaith Housing and Family services and are echoed by many of the non-profit agencies, religious institutions and faith-based organizations and that provide shelter and housing for those in need across Union County. Our faith and beliefs tell us that we are to care for the least, the lost and the left out, yet homelessness is an ever-present reality that reminds us that one of the most basic needs we all have that has not been met for everyone. Food and clothing needs can be met by a number of initiatives on an on-going basis. We all feel good when there is a drive for winter coats to clothe those in need or for food to feed the hungry. Homelessness is more difficult to respond to because it requires more than the few dollars it takes to buy a coat or a bag of groceries. Ending homelessness requires a concerted and sustained effort of awareness, advocacy and action in and by the community.

Next month, the first annual Homeless Sabbath Weekend will take place December 16-18, 2016, on behalf of all people who are homeless in Union County. Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council has joined non-profit agencies and interfaith congregations, including Community Access Unlimited, Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless, Family Promise of Union County, Homefirst, and Monarch Housing Associates to raise the level of awareness of extent and impact of homelessness in Union County.

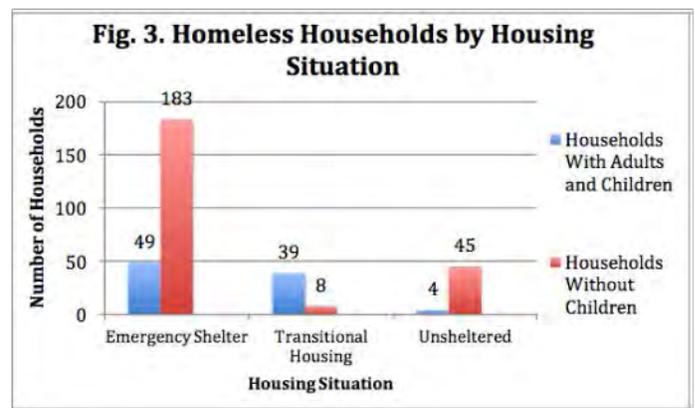
There are numerous homeless statistics that are available at: <http://wp.me/PeqFK-8H0> or on Social Media Hashtag: #HomelessSabbathNJ regarding homelessness in Union County, but the adjacent figure tells the story of how many households lack permanent housing. The 328 households consist of 513 people without shelter or transitional housing and includes 49 households consisting of 62 people that were living on the streets of the county. If these numbers are compared to last year's count, there has been an almost 23% increase in homelessness.

Affordable housing is needed to provide a long-term solution to homelessness in the county, the state and the country. The reality is that NJ is the 6th most expensive state in the US, requiring earning \$26.52 per hour or \$55,161.60 per year to afford a two-bedroom apartment at a fair market rate of \$1,379 per month. That is out of reach if you are making minimum wage and very difficult even for the average renter's wage of \$16.98.

This affordability gap requires advocacy and action by the community and the response should be led by the faith community. This not a call for churches, mosques, synagogues and temples trying to start from scratch but rather to partner with and support the organizations that are already providing housing and family services in the county. They need financial help as the government reduces and redirects its efforts to combat homelessness. Even when these non-profit organizations have housing solutions they need money to maintain their properties, staff and services beyond what is provided by government grants.

The faith community needs to lead the conversation about the extent and impact of homelessness. Homeless Sabbath is a great time to begin to increase awareness about the issues surrounding homelessness. The challenge is to embrace it by encouraging your congregation to get involved. Visit a shelter and take the time to talk to someone there. When you do, you will find out that they are not a statistic but God's creation deserving love and compassion. If you leave saying, "There but for God's grace go I", then also say, "Because of God's grace, I have to do something." Sometimes, we can advocate for a homeless person by listening to their needs and offering to go with them to the county One-Stop Career Center to help them connect with the services they need. You will be surprised at what a difference that can make.

Homelessness will not go away by itself. The faith community can have an impact when we come together for a common cause. We cannot do it all and we can not do it alone. But together we can influence and direct the response and the outcome. Let Homeless Sabbath 2016 be the beginning of the end of homelessness in Union County.



Union County's 2016 Point-In-Time Count of the Homeless
- Monarch Housing Associates

Christmas-at-Sea

Would your congregation like to bring joy to seafarers who will not be home with their families for Christmas? Our port chaplains bring satchels filled with gifts to the ships they visit in the weeks prior to Christmas. Later, on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, when the ship is in the middle of the ocean, the captain holds a holiday celebration and every crew member will open their satchels, each containing



One Sweatshirt – hooded or unhooded (size L-XL),
Three Pairs of Socks – thermal or white gym,
One Casual Pullover T-Shirt (size M-L),
One Knit Winter Cap,
One Can of Nuts or Large Bar of Chocolate, and a
Christmas Card from you!

(You pick the colors, styles and brands you wish, but please no substitutions from the list. The Christmas-at-Sea satchels should be comparable for each member of the crew).

What might otherwise have been another lonely night at sea becomes a joyous occasion, not just because of the beautiful gifts received, but because complete strangers ashore have taken the time to share the spirit of Christmas with these otherwise forgotten seafarers. It's awesome!

Your congregation may want to assemble complete Christmas-at-Sea satchels for an entire ship. Generally, a ship's crew consists of 25 seafarers. Of course, we're grateful for any number of satchels your congregation can fill. If it is more convenient, you can supply a quantity of just one or two of the gift items. There are sales on many of these gifts throughout the year, so you may want to get a jump start on purchasing them. Or you may write a check and have us purchase the items for you. Typically, a completely filled satchel costs about \$25.

Our port chaplains start to distribute the Christmas-at-Sea satchels after Thanksgiving, so we start collecting them as soon as your congregation is ready through December 15th. Call or email one of the following persons to order the number of satchels you want to fill or to receive further information. Remember to put a return address on your Christmas cards, because occasionally the ship captain or crew members will send you a personal note of appreciation, and you'll find these notes are just priceless.



Blessings to you for your outreach to seafarers.

Noreen Fleming
212-677-4800 (ext. 1218)
nfleming@sihnyc.org

Chris Roehrer
212-677-4800 (ext. 1203)
cvr@sihnyc.org

Ruth Setaro
203-687-2177
ruthsetaro@snet.net



The Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council is supporting the Seafarer's International House's Christmas at Sea. Please help support this cause! Items from the list above, or completed satchels, can be dropped off at Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, 215 Elm St., Rahway, NJ ~or~ a member of the UCICC can come to you to pick up items that you have collected by calling Rev. Carmine Pernini at 732-284-6054. The deadline to donate items is Dec.1, 2016.

Annual Homeless Sabbath



"We are all called to serve the poor, the homeless, the sick, the hungry".

Join us for a Sabbath Weekend as we pray for the homeless and discuss our call to make a change.

We can provide your House of Worship with materials to include in your service.

December 16, 17 and 18
at
Your House of Worship

For More Information Contact us at:

Sabbath2016@monarchhousing.org

Or call Claire at:

(908) 272-5363 x 234

Sponsored by:





1st Annual Homeless Sabbath Weekend

As many of you prepare for the upcoming holiday celebration in your home and congregations, please remember the many individuals, families, and children who do not have a

home for the holidays or throughout the year.

Please give them a voice, hear them, and help them.

How Many of our Neighbors are Homeless in Union County?

On January 26 2016, NJCounts conducted a “snapshot” of homelessness on that one night.

- 328 households (513 people) were homeless on that night
- 49 households (62) people were unsheltered, on the street
- There was an increase in family homelessness from 2015-2016, by 22.7%
- Primary factors for cause of homelessness:
 - Asked to leave shared residence 26.2%
 - Eviction 15.9%
 - Loss or reduction of job/income 15.5%

Homelessness Can Happen to Anyone

“I’m educated. I look just like you. I walk and talk well. But I don’t have a roof. And I don’t have my own key” said one of our homeless neighbors.

She became homeless when her rent became unaffordable. Her story illustrates how one crisis can cause someone’s life to spiral into homelessness.

P
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What can I do to help my homeless Neighbors?

1. **Donate** – Union County has a full continuum of services for the homeless provided by non-profits. Even a small contribution can help their clients find a place to call home;
2. **Volunteer** – all the non-profits need volunteers to help in their work to end homelessness. Every age, skill and talent is needed;
3. **Participate in Homeless Persons Memorial Day Vigil** – attend the vigil and help remember our neighbors who died due to lack of housing and supportive services;
4. **Engage** – talk to your family, your neighbors, your co-workers and elected officials about homelessness in Union County and how we need to work together to end homelessness. To achieve that goal, we need to change the conversation and focus on the needs of our neighbors; and
5. **Form a homeless ministry** - Begin discussions that focus on what more your congregation can do to end homelessness.

Homeless Persons' Memorial Day Vigil



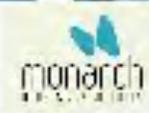
Call for more information at 908.261.1234

Wednesday, December 21, 2016 at 7PM

at Holy Cross Lutheran Church

639 Mountain Avenue

Springfield, NJ



Collecting contributions of new & unexpired packages of Pasta and Sauce, Cereal, Oatmeal, Canned Soup, and Paper Towels for the Holy Cross Food Ministry, which serves people of all backgrounds in the Springfield Area.

Homeless Persons' Vigil

Tragically, some of our most vulnerable neighbors die on the streets each year. On December 21, at Holy Cross Lutheran Church 639 Mountain Ave. Springfield, NJ at 7 PM, a vigil will be held for those who have died in the last year.

We remember them on the day with the least amount of daylight and the longest night because it symbolizes the struggle of those who are homeless, and who often live out their lives on cold streets or in dangerous abandoned buildings.

As people of faith we are all called to serve the poor, the homeless, the sick, the hungry...

Remind us, O God, that we cannot rest fully secure in our homes each night until all your children have a place to call home.

Union County Homeless Services Resource Information

Prevention Services & Rapid Re-Housing (rent/mortgage/security/utility assistance):

- ❖ *Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Newark*- 505 South Ave East, Cranford, NJ 07016, (908)497-3900, M-F 9-4:30pm
- ❖ *Elizabeth Coalition*- 118 Division Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07201, (908)353-4006, M/T/Th/F 9-12 and 1-5pm W 1-5pm
- ❖ *Plainfield Action Services*- 510 Watchung Avenue, Plainfield, NJ 07060, (908)753-3519, M-F 9-5 pm
- ❖ *PROCEED, Inc.* – 1126 Dickinson Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07201, (908)351-7727, M-F 8:30-4:30pm
- ❖ *Salvation Army/Elizabeth*- 1018 E. Grand Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07201, (908)352-2886, Open 24 hours/7 days
- ❖ *Urban League of Union County*- 288 North Broad Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07208, (908)351-7200, M-F 9-5 pm
- ❖ *Family Promise*- 402 Union Avenue, Elizabeth, NJ 07208, (908)289-7300, M-F 9-5 pm

Emergency Shelters

- ❖ *Elizabeth Coalition*- 118 Division Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07201, (908)353-4006, M/T/Th/F 9-12 and 1-5pm W 1-5pm
- ❖ *Family Promise*- 402 Union Avenue, Elizabeth, NJ 07208, (908)289-7300, M-F 9-5 pm
- ❖ *FISH Hospitality Program, Inc.*- P.O. Box 5440, Plainfield, NJ 07061, (908)968-5857, M-F 9-5 pm
- ❖ *Plainfield Area YMCA*- 518 Watchung Avenue, Plainfield, NJ 07060, (908)756-6060, Open 24 hours/7 days
- ❖ *YMCA of Eastern Union County*- 135 Madison Avenue, Elizabeth, NJ 07201, (908)355-9622, Open 24 hours/ 7 days
- ❖ *YWCA of Eastern Union County*- 1131 East Jersey Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07201, (908)355-1500, M-F 9-5 pm

Transitional Housing

- ❖ *Community Access Unlimited*- 80 West Grand Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07202, (908)354-3040, M-F 9-5 pm
- ❖ *Elizabeth Coalition*- 118 Division Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07201, (908)353-4006, M/T/Th/F 9-12 and 1-5 W 1-5pm
- ❖ *Flynn Christian Fellowship of New Jersey*- 1089-1091 East Jersey Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07201, (908)351-2265, M-F 6-6 pm
- ❖ *Homefirst, Inc.*- 905 Watchung Avenue, Plainfield, NJ 07060, (908)753-4001, M-F 9-5 pm
- ❖ *PROCEED, Inc.*- 1126 Dickinson Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07201, (908)351-7727, M-F 8:30-4:30 pm
- ❖ *Raphael's Life House*- 231 Court Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07206, (908)354-4750, M-F 9-5 pm
- ❖ *YMCA of Eastern Union County*- 135 Madison Avenue, Elizabeth, NJ 07201, (908)355-9622, Open 24 hours/7 days

Permanent and Supportive Housing

- ❖ *Bridgeway, Inc.* – 265 West Grand Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07202, (908)289-7330, M-F 9-4:30 pm
- ❖ *Community Access Unlimited*- 80 West Grand Street, Elizabeth, NJ, (908)354-3040, M-F 9-5 pm
- ❖ *Elizabeth Coalition*- 118 Division Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07201, (908)353-4006, M/T/Th/F 9-12 and 1-5 W 1-5pm
- ❖ *Faith, Bricks, & Mortar, Inc.*- 164 East Front Street (Rear), Plainfield, NJ 07060, (908)756-5774, M-F 8:30-4:30 pm
- ❖ *Greater Plainfield Habitat for Humanity*- 315 West 7th Street, Plainfield, NJ 07060, (908)769-5292, M-F 10-1
- ❖ *Homefirst, Inc.*- 905 Watchung Avenue, Plainfield, NJ 07060, (908)753-4001, M-F 9-5 pm
- ❖ *Plainfield Area YMCA*- 518 Watchung Avenue, Plainfield, NJ 07060, (908)756-6060, Open 24 hours/7 days
- ❖ *Volunteers of America*- 205 West Milton Avenue, Rahway, NJ, (732)827-2444, M-F 9-5 pm
- ❖ *YMCA of Eastern Union County*- 135 Madison Avenue, Elizabeth, NJ 07201, (908)355-9622, Open 24 hours/ 7 days
- ❖ *YWCA of Eastern Union County*- 1131 East Jersey Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07201, (908)355-1500, M-F 9-5 pm

Food Assistance

- ❖ *American Red Cross*- 121 Elm Street, Westfield, NJ 07090, (908)232-7090, M-F 9-5 pm
- ❖ *Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Newark*- 505 South Ave East, Cranford, NJ 07016, (908)497-3900, M-F 9-4:30pm
- ❖ *El Centro Hispanoamericano*- 525 East Front Street, Plainfield, NJ 07060, (908)753-8730, T/Th 10-6 W 12-7 S 10-2
- ❖ *Elizabethport Presbyterian Center*- 200 Second Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07206, (908)659-2184, M-F 9-5 pm
- ❖ *Jefferson Park Ministries*- 477 Madison Avenue, Elizabeth, NJ 07201 (908)469-9508, M-Th 9-5 pm F 9-4 pm
- ❖ *First Baptist Church of Cranford/Elizabeth*- 402 Union Ave, Elizabeth, NJ 07208, (908)352-0519, 2nd & 3rd Th 4-7pm 4th Th 10-1 pm
- ❖ *Liberty Baptist Church*- 515-517 Court Street, Elizabeth, NJ (908)354-3362, M 10-12 pm
- ❖ *Salvation Army/Elizabeth*- 1005 East Jersey Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07201, (908)352-7057, M-F 9-5 pm
- ❖ *Saint Mary of the Assumption*- 155 Washington Ave, Elizabeth, NJ (enter church basement), (908)352-5154, Last Tuesdays of the month

We are all called to serve the poor, the homeless, the sick, the hungry...

Information/Documents Online at: <http://wp.me/PegFK-8H0> * Social Media Hashtag: #HomelessSabbathNJ



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!



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



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



Building Bridges: Working with communities of faith to help recovering sex offenders return to the community

An inter-faith panel will discuss ministering to sex offenders, sexual abuse prevention, responding to disclosures and the creation of sound congregational policies and procedures. The panel will explore how communities of faith can increase social connectedness and decrease risk amongst sex offenders while maintaining safety within their congregations.

Friday December 9, 2016
9:00am - 12:00pm

9:00am-10:00am coffee, bagels and networking
Meet professionals working in the field with sex offenders and sexually abusive youth.
Gather information and resources to bring back to your community of faith.

10:00am - 12:00pm Inter-faith Panel Discussion

Burlington County Human Services Building
795 Woodlane Rd
Westampton , NJ 08060

There is **NO** admission fee.
This is a free event sponsored by NJATSA.

Please email Carol at carolsomlo4@gmail.com for additional information
about this training or visit www.njatsa.org for information about our organization.

FREE HIV TESTING!

WORLD AIDS DAY

STOMP OUT STIGMA!

**Come join us for our second Annual
World AIDS Day Event
Friday December 2nd 2016
3pm - 8pm
The First Unitarian Society of Plainfield
724 Park Ave
Plainfield, NJ 07060**

**for more info please call:
Stephanie A. 862-240-1461 or Audria R. 908-561-5057**



**Free
Get Stuff**

**FREE
FOOD**

**FREE
STI/STD TESTS**

FREE! FREE! FREE!
Live Entertainment
Fashion Show
Raffles
Dietary Consultations
Counseling Services
Medication Management/ Adherence
Affordale Health Care Enrollment
Blood perssure/Blood Sugar Screening

HYACINTH
AIDS Foundation

IrisHouse





Save the Date!
January 19th, 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 Meeting the
Needs of the Refugee/Re-Settlement
Population**

**First Unitarian Society of Plainfield
724 Park Avenue • Plainfield, NJ 07060**

6:00P—7:30P

Light Refreshments will be provided ~ Sign-in begins at 5:30P

Featuring Guest Speakers:

**Reverend Cynthia Cochran-Carney
Willow Grove Presbyterian Church, Scotch Plains**

**Reverend Seth Kaper-Dale
Reformed Church of Highland Park**



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



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

What are you doing on January 16?

Make the day count.

In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday,

Participate in the 4th Annual

Cranford Community Service Project Fair

Monday, January 16, 2016

4:30-6:30p.m. at The First Presbyterian Church of Cranford



In preparation for the fair, the Interfaith Community Service is looking for donations of:

- Single serving healthy snacks
- Single serve juice boxes`
- Single serve 1%low-fat milk boxes-non refrigerated, like Parmalat **(most needed!)**
- Single fruit or applesauce cups
- Single serve sugar free cereal boxes, such as Cheerios, Rice Krispies, etc.
- Single serve microwaveable pop- top meals like stew or mac and cheese(no Ramen type noodle cups, please)
- Any house cleaning products, such as spray cleaners, multi-purpose cleanses,toilet bowl cleaners, sponges, etc.
- Disposable baby diapers, any size

Donations can be dropped off at any House of Worship in Cranford. With everyone's support, we hope to make this year's service fair even more successful than our last, as we continue to establish this tradition for our community.

Thank you for your continued support and participation.

Janice Grevious, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service Committee

The Cranford Clergy Council and the Interfaith Human Relations Committee

Any questions, contact

Janice at jansport2@verizon.net or Cindy at cindy@patwin.com



*Open your heart
and your home*



All that is missing is **YOU!**
Become a foster or adoptive parent
Be part of the ride.



For more information contact:
(877) NJ FOSTER, www.njfoster.org, (800) 99 ADOPT, www.njadopt.org

In a post by Jennifer Jones on February 2, 2015, the author asserts, “I know the secret to happiness.” Helping others. She goes on to say, “Something magical happens when you turn your focus outward and give of yourself to another person or cause. Helping others is the kind of giving that leaves you with a full tank afterwards.”

An article in The New Times, “[The Science of Paying It Forward](#)”, posits that generosity among strangers can be ‘socially contagious’ —that one act of kindness—whether received or witnessed— can create a reactive chain of ongoing generosity.



The UCICC Family Wishes You,
Your Family & Your Community
a New Year of Generosity,
Kindness, Happiness, and a
Full Tank!

Reading for a Happy New Year

[Pay it Forward: A Novel](#) by Catherine Ryan Hyde

[The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game](#) by Michael Lewis

[The Invisible Thread: the True Story of an 11-year-old Panhandler, a Busy Sales Executive, and an Unlikely Meeting with Destiny](#) by Laura Schroff

[7: an Experimental Mutiny Against Excess](#) by Jen Hatmaker

[True Belonging: Mindful Practices to Help You Overcome Loneliness, Connect with Others and Cultivate Happiness](#) by Jeffrey Brantley

[Love Does](#) by Bob Goff

[Mother Teresa: In My Own Words](#) by Mother Teresa

[Giving: How Each of Us Can Change the World](#) by Bill Clinton

[One Simple Act: Discovering the Power of Generosity](#) by Debbie Macomber

[Live Generously: 50 Small Acts that Make a Big Difference](#) by Julie Van Pelt

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

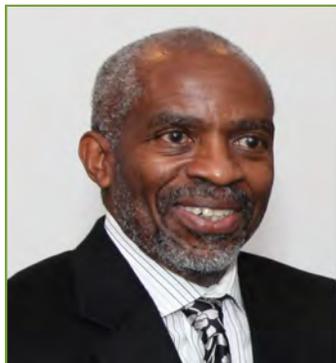
To make an appointment, please call an HR representative at (908) 354-3040 ext 203. If you are unable to attend the open house, please fax resume to (908) 354-0283 or email to rwright@caunj.org.



UCICC Outreach Coordinating Team



*Sidney Blanchard,
Executive Director
Community Access Unlimited
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*Roderick (Rod) Spearman
UCICC Interfaith Coordinator
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*Pastor Howard A. Bryant,
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*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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PERMIT 225
Elizabeth, NJ

80 West Grand Street
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

December 1, 2016 at 10:00am
80 W Grand St
Elizabeth NJ 07202

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
→

Full UCICC Invitation

Join us as we support the Elizabeth Coalition for the Homeless in a Prayer Vigil, "Homeless for the Holidays"
7 PM - December 21, 2106
Holy Cross Lutheran Church
639 Mountain Avenue , Springfield, NJ

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 at 10 AM
Location TBA



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