

Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council

NOVEMBER 2018

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MAKING A BELOVED COMMUNITY

“MOVING FORWARD WITH GRATITUDE AND HOPE”

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The Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council asks that the interfaith community draw itself close to support our Jewish Brothers and Sisters within our communities in the wake of the tragedy that occurred October 27, 2018 at the Tree of Life or L'Simcha Congregation in Pittsburg PA. We are one and will continue to unite against intolerance and violence. May our prayers lead us all to action in Striving to Build a Beloved Community free from such tragedy.*



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

Deacon Tim Williams-Chair
First Baptist Church
Kenilworth

Sidney Blanchard
Executive Director of CAU

Rabbi Joel N. Abraham
Temple Sholom
Scotch Plains

Ayaz Aslam
Muslim Community Center of UC
Elizabeth

Pastor H. Bryant
Honorable Retired
Presbyterian Church USA

Denise Fernandes
Latino Outreach

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

Father Michael Saporito
The Parish Community of St. Helen
Westfield

Roderick Spearman
CAU Consultant

Reverend Ronald C. Thomas
Fountain Baptist Church
Summit

Elder Arthur "Skip" Winter
Cranford Presbyterian Church
Cranford

guest message

By: Rabbi Joel N. Abraham
Temple Shalom; Scotch Plains



I was not as shocked as I wish I could have been last Shabbat, one week ago.

Too many lives have been lost - in churches, in schools, in public spaces, in homes, in workplaces, and in the streets.

I am saddened that, to my son, who participates in lockdown drills every marking period, it was not a question of why but a question of when.

This is anti-Semitism, but it is a piece of the hatred and divisiveness we have allowed to rise in our world. Individual acts are the fault of individuals, but the climate is one that we have all allowed to ferment - either by actively encouraging words of hate, or by remaining silent when they are raised - even by those who stand on our own political side of the aisle.

Isaiah, chapter 2, verse 4 says, “and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

We must do the same thing with our words. If we want to remove the idea of war and killing from our politics, we must remove it from our political speech. Campaigns, wins, losses, getting beaten, trounced, under siege, attacks, invasion.

Our Reform prayerbook quotes a poem by Yehuda Amichai on the next step: “Don't stop after beating the swords into plowshares, don't stop! Go on beating and make musical instruments out of them. Whoever wants to make war again will have to turn them into plowshares first.”

How do we take our rhetoric of hate and turn it into a song of love? How do we recapture the idea that we are “one nation” - whether under God or not - “indivisible, with liberty and justice for all”? How do we change our conversations so that we first consider the humanity of the person across from us, before we push them away and imagine them as a statistic, or an enemy?

We turn hate into love, when we turn others into friends, when we recognize that we are all created *b'tzelem elohim* - with a piece of God's incredible image.

We start by knowing the people around us, by talking not only to our neighbor, but to the person who is two streets over, or in the “other” neighborhood; who may not look like us, or talk like us, or go to the same church or synagogue, but who we find is so much more like us when we continue the conversation after hello.

We learn their names. And we start by remembering those we have all lost. Not just those killed last Saturday at a synagogue, but also Maurice Stallard and Vickie Jones, who were killed earlier that week outside of a Kroeger's, because another hate-filled person could not kill those individuals praying in an African-American church in Kentucky.

In a moment, we will call up members of our community who have come here to give comfort to the Jewish community by saying their names for our memory. Before we do that, make yourself a promise. Before you leave tonight, learn the names of the people around you - learn the names of the living, before we have to remember the names of the dead.

Hundreds Gather for Fifth Annual Union County Day of Prayer

Hundreds gathered at St. Bartholomew of the Apostle Church in Scotch Plains October 9th for the fifth annual Union County Day of Prayer, which featured speakers from the Sikh and Hindu faiths for the first time in the event's history.

With the theme "Striving to Make a Beloved Community," the evening delivered a variety of messages centering on unity, embracement of diversity and goodwill toward others. Each year, the Union County Day of Prayer brings together leaders and individuals from across the spectrum of religious identity.

Sharmila D. Jaipersaud, an attorney with the law firm Schenck, Price, Smith and King, was one of the first-time speakers representing Hinduism.

"Division is simple," she said. "We can see the differences between us. When you have an interfaith gathering like this and we can come together to pray, it shows those who are against us we are unified. There's a power in numbers."

Navdeep Tucker, a Sikh from DashMesh Barbar Gurudwara in Carteret, read two passages from the scriptures.

"The first describes (the Sikh) belief in the attributes of God," he said. "The second relates to the different ways people worship, but how we're all seeking a relationship with God."

Welcoming the audience, the Rev. John Paladino of St. Bartholomew touched on the dividing forces that work against community values.

"It's no secret we live in a divided time. There is much strife," he said. "People see themselves as belonging to a certain race or ethnicity or class. Is that what the reign of God should look like?"

Other speakers echoed Paladino's theme.

"Interfaith and the idea of unity of all people is an essential principal of our practice," said Michael Petkov, a Buddhist with the New Jersey chapter of Soka Gakkai International. "All people have the Buddhist nature, this higher condition of life and the ability to make all people happy."

Zagham Chaudry, secretary general of the Muslim Community Center of Union County, noted most Americans have never met a Muslim and said he strives to change misperceptions about the religion.

"Interfaith is extremely important, especially in these times," he said. "People are comfortable in their communities and with like-minded people -- but when you interact with other people with other backgrounds, you realize they are not so different from you. We all have the same passions, the same insecurities and we all seek a peaceful, happy life."

The Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council (UCICC), which sponsors and organizes the event, promotes inclusion of all people within the community and creates a clearing house of faith-based, nonprofit and government community services available to the public, promoting greater awareness of these services, according to Sid Blanchard, executive director of Community Access Unlimited (CAU) and co-founder of the council.

CAU, a Union County-based, statewide nonprofit that strives to integrate people with disabilities and at-risk youth into the general community, supports its members with housing, vocational and life-skills training, education, advocacy and recreation.

Blanchard said people with disabilities experience the greatest level of discrimination in this nation, and that the UCICC was founded in part so that CAU members would have greater access to houses of worship where they would be welcomed, he added.

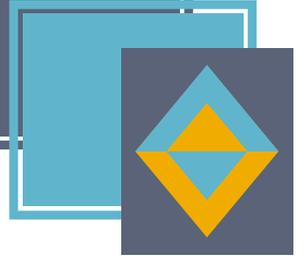
"Our mission is to help people with disabilities and young people become part of the community," he said. "To be able to do that, we have to have a community. If one person is excluded, everyone is excluded."





Why Do White Supremacists Love Fox News and President Trump?

Editorial By: Reverend Carmine Pernini
Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church; Rahway NJ



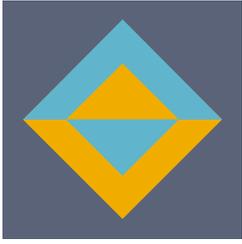
Barry Goldwater ran as the Republican candidate for president of the United States in 1964 against the pro-New Deal candidate Lyndon Johnson. Goldwater's platform was to make the Republican party the "white man's" party in fact, but not in name (Dr. Ian Haney Lopez, "Dog Whistle Politics: Coded Racism and Inequality for All," Brown University Lecture, 8/23/17). He used dog whistle politics by invoking "state's rights" and "school busing" during his campaign both of which indirectly addressed the Civil Rights movement's advances in ending segregation. Goldwater, nonetheless, lost to Johnson. Importantly, however, was the fact that Goldwater's strategy of using dog whistle politics gained traction in the South. Republicans took note of how Goldwater's strategy peeled off voters from Johnson even despite the fact that these Southern-

ers were pro-New Deal which was the platform of Goldwater's opponent, Johnson. In 1968, Richard Nixon ran on a similar platform, then labeled the "Southern Strategy," in order to break up the "New Deal Coalition." In '68 Nixon won, but just barely. In his second presidential bid, Nixon amplified his coded language to include dog whistles such as "Law & Order." Long after his presidency, video surfaced of Nixon watching his own campaign spots where he remarked on camera that "Law & Order" was about blacks and Puerto Ricans. Nixon won 49 states and 60% of the vote. His predecessor, Lyndon Johnson, would be the last Democrat to win a majority of the white vote.

Lee Atwater (1951-1991), advisor to presidents Reagan and H.W. Bush and one time chairman of the Republican National Committee, infamously said of the tradition of using racially coded language (the Southern Strategy) in 1981, "You start out in 1954 by saying, 'N------(the N word).' By 1968 you can't say "the n-word" – that hurts you, backfires. So you say stuff like, uh, forced busing, states' rights.... Now you're talking about cutting taxes, and all these things you're talking about are totally economic things and a byproduct of them is blacks get hurt worse than whites (<https://www.thenation.com/article/exclusive-lee-atwaters-infamous-1981-interview-southern-strategy/>)." The tactic of using dog whistles is one that has won elections for those who employ them.

This fact is something that the former KKK Grand Wizard and founder of the largest White Supremacist website in the United States, the Dailystormer, Don Black, has taken notice of. Black knew that most of the overt White Supremacist talking points were offensive to mainstream Americans. No one wants to be called a racist, a Holocaust denier, or Supremacist because it is socially taboo. That does not change the fact that many Americans are captive to racist ideologies. This is the tension that dog whistles capitalize on. They provide cover for what is described as "racial innocence," that is providing plausible deniability that the rhetoric is racist, while exploiting subconscious bias. Black, along with the pioneer of the Alt Right Richard Spencer, rebranded White Supremacy to White Nationalism. Rather than calling for the extinction of non-whites, this new softer version of White Supremacy calls for the separation of races along "tribal" lines because, "it is good for everyone, everyone wants to stay in their own tribe."

White Supremacists, after having rebranded themselves as White Nationalists, Alt-Right, or simply Nationalists, now employ rhetoric which does not disclose their end game of genocide, but rather, tends to use phrases and concepts which are more palatable to main stream Americans. The book, *Rising Out of Hate*, by Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Eli Saslow chronicles Derek Black's, son of Don Black of the Dailystormer,



movement from White Nationalist to a person who appreciates diversity and inclusion. Derek, in the book, reflects on the many hours that were spent with his father and a team of White Supremacists who were looking for ways to rebrand themselves and their talking points so that everyday Americans will hopefully inadvertently spread their propaganda unaware of its origin in a White Supremacist Think Tank.

The talking points include: “White Genocide,” “Loss of Western Culture,” “Assimilation,” “Immigration as Invasion,” “Negative Views of Multiculturalism,” “Dog Whistle Anti-Semitism,” “Law & Order,” “Tribalism,” “White Pride/White Lives Matter,” and generally anything that plays on American anxieties about race and gender. Taken as a whole, these new talking points paint whites as victims, victims of an amorphous “other” who is undermining white influence, culture, and power. While the name White Supremacists has changed, their arch enemy is still Jews. Most of the above listed talking points relate tangentially to the Anti-Semitic conspiracy theory that Jews, who are not considered “white” by White Supremacists, are attempting to undermine the power of Whites in the West. The myth of “White Genocide” has been rebranded to “Loss of Western Culture” where main stream Americans irrationally fear losing their “western” cultural heritage due to the “invading” forces of non-white immigrants at the whims of “globalists.” Globalists here is also an anti-Semitic label which is meant to stir up animosity towards those who place the needs of the global community above that of the “homeland.” Here, according to White Supremacists, Jews are to blame.

A White Supremacist defense of their position against “multiculturalism” is usually tribal in nature. “Don’t people of the same tribe want to stay together?” An extension of the tribalism motif is found in a reaffirmation of segregation for the better of all. Here, the propaganda is that modern segregation, effectively worse than that of the Civil Rights era, is a choice rather than the product of systemic racism and that this supposed “choice” is justification for whites to want to segregate themselves even more.

These views are troubling in and of themselves. But even more worrisome is the effectiveness of these new talking points in swaying main stream Americans to the White Supremacist cause, in fact if not in name, and the frequency by which these ideas are unwittingly spread on social media and the news by people who probably are not White Supremacists. Derek Black, the subject of the book above and the man who left the White Supremacist lifestyle behind, speaks about dispatching “armies” of internet trolls to seek out social media, news, and blog posts that focus on race who then “comment” on these pieces in an effort to shift the flow of the argument away from overt to covert White Supremacy which focuses on concerns about White victimhood, marginalization, and loss of culture. The White Supremacist movement has been engaging in this kind of “cleansing” of their rhetoric on a global scale and they have been successful in shifting our public conversation, tipping the electoral scales towards candidates who are more sympathetic to their views (even if the candidates are not White Supremacists), and toppling democracies across the globe.

The rebranding of White Supremacy has been so effective as to become a proven electoral formula in places like Brazil, Germany, France, Turkey (fascism here), Poland, Hungary, and the UK as well as a way to garner ratings on news programs and views on websites (Jason Stanley, *How Fascism Works: the politics of us and them*, Random House, 2018.). If you tune in any night to Fox News’ “Tucker Carlson Tonight” you will routinely here Carlson’s screeds against multiculturalism, his categorizations of immigrants as invaders and vermin, claims of White Genocide, and his complaints about the potential of losing “our Western heritage (“Why White Supremacists Love Tucker Carlson” – Vox - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SkQKVMYyPoM>.)” The same, sadly, is true of President Trump who also advances these same positions and who regularly cites the Jewish Billionaire, George Soros, as the boogeyman and enemy of Democracy. Trump has recently alluded to the conspiracy theory that the so-called “migrant caravan” heading to the US has





been funded from an outside source. Far Right news and social media sources are less ambiguous in that they ascribe the funding directly to Soros. The public, naturally puts the two together and the dog whistle is successful. The effect of the Soros dog whistle is such that the general public probably doesn't care about Soros being Jewish, but the animosity that is ginned up by covert anti-Semitism leads to a distinction without a difference in regards to a White Supremacists overt Anti-Semitism. Both Trump and Carlson have embraced the dehumanizing rhetoric of categorizing immigrants as diseased and an infestation. These along with many other statements are dog whistles which signal to White Supremacists that their ideas are now main stream.

Finally, before Robert Bowers entered the Tree of Life Congregation in Pittsburgh and killed as many Jews as he could, Bowers posted that the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), a Jewish nonprofit that aids refugees, was bringing "hostile invaders to dwell among us (the rebranding of White Supremacy is apparent in categorizing immigrants and refugees as hostile forces)." Bowers also said, "HIAS likes to bring invaders in that kill our people. I can't sit by and watch my people get slaughtered." Trump, Carlson, and many others on the right have stereotyped immigrants as invading forces and as recently as this week Trump has doubled down on this rhetoric by sending military forces to guard the southern border of the US against the migrant caravan.

Bowers also criticized Trump of being a globalist and not a nationalist. In the days following the horrific killing of 11 Jews and many injured at Tree of Life Congregation, Pittsburgh, Trump declared that he is in fact a "nationalist." Nationalism in this context is the antonym of "Globalist" which is what White Supremacists routinely label Jews. Whether or not Trump, or Carlson or anyone else for that matter, is a White Supremacist is beside the point, they are spreading White Supremacist propaganda and creating a new Golden Era for the mainstreaming of White Supremacist ideologies in the United States and around the globe. If Europe is any indicator as to where this will go, we can sadly expect more Anti-Semitic violence and the continued dehumanization of non-whites.

In our public discourse, when we have heartfelt debates about immigration, culture and security, you yourself may not be an anti-Semite, but arguments which operate out of the framework of "loss of western culture," "assimilation," "Law & Order," "immigration as invading forces," and which reinforce and essentialize ethnic, racial, and national differences, are being fed to you by White Supremacists. You may or may not want to continue any given debate about the topics above, but remember, there have historically been other ways that these difficult conversations have been carried out in the public square. Other ways which do not lead to Charlottesville torch marches, a 57% increase in Anti-Semitic hate crimes in 2017, and to the killing of 11 Jews and countless others injured at Tree of Life Congregation, Pittsburgh. We can disagree without dehumanizing others or each other.



**A NIGHT OF LISTENING:
How Can We Fight Racism as a Community?**

*The YWCA Union County and
The Union County Racial Justice Task Force
presents*

**STAND
AGAINST
RACISM**

For questions, contact Danika Ali
908-355-1995 ext 136

Monday, November 12th, 2018, 6-8pm
Family Success Center
688 Maple Ave
Elizabeth, NJ 07202

Parking in 2nd Lot on Carteret St
& Street Parking Available

HOW SOCIAL MEDIA CONTRIBUTES TO ANGER AND POLITICAL DIVISION: A DISCUSSION BEFORE ELECTION DAY

BY: SEAN FOLEY



Democracy is beginning to crack under the weight of tribal politics and fictitious news. The causes of these fissures are the result of many considerable causes; political partisanship on the national, state and local level, TV networks and radio stations that are designed only to appease a particular political tribe, and most portentously, social media applications with its algorithms designed to “think for us.” Social media’s involvement has created a society of political brainwashing that further separates us from fact and unbiased agendas. This is what was so disturbing about the Cambridge Analytica & Facebook scandal from a few months ago, for it was not just about the stealing of the public’s data, but using that stolen data to successfully achieve a mass scale societal political form of brainwashing.

Smartphones and the internet have been an immense element for exacerbating our political divisions. No matter what new algorithms or regulations that the leadership team over at Facebook strategically puts in place, it will do little to reduce the polarity of our politics. (As a side note about Zuckerberg’s proposed changes; I personally don’t feel any confidence about his steps to improve his application for the better of society. Any individual(s) that continuously works to engineer new ways to keep people hooked on their application from the moment they wake up to the moment they fall asleep doesn’t get my trust.) There are many reasons for the political detachment we are currently experiencing. For one, the majority of society is just not neurologically capable of navigating the internet or social media without predominantly utilizing the primitive areas of our brain. Upon observation, the internet and social media have exposed how primitive we are in the face of such great technology. No matter how evolved humans have become, millions of years of evolution have not prepared us for the power of “tweets” and “likes.”

This new technology has also contributed to a shortened attention span and because of this anything past 280 characters or a video longer than one minute causes us to lose concentration and just plainly bores us (for example, if you are still reading this, congrats you have an attention span longer than the average person.). Topics revolving around politics, government, economic and social justice are very complex issues and without an effective attention span cognitively equipped, then how are we to learn of democracies complexities and not be bored of its details? We simply can’t and it causes us to take a stand on issues that are expressed by the partisan opinions of tweets and memes.

If we are only subscribing to pages and people who think like us, we neglect ourselves from understanding the other side, causing us to withdraw from engaging in any thoughtful discussion with those whom have diverse principles. This act further places the public into a profounder ideological bubble. Yes, I know you are probably saying, “Sean have you seen some of these people on the internet, they are insane!” I have and I completely agree with anyone who exclaims that viewpoint, for there are some people whom are so lost and extreme in their politics that engagement may be pointless. Nevertheless, these hyper-partisan individuals only calculate into a very small fraction of our population and if we can personally engage with people with different beliefs, it will reduce the likelihood of more of these extremely biased individuals from falling further into the depths of political division.

To fix our politics, we need not only to be politically engaged and present in the voting booth, we must also learn how to civically engage with one another. It is vital that society recalls how to become non-defensive, use active listening and apply understanding when we are observing a person's political beliefs that differs from our very own. We forgot this art of civility because of the political bubble in which many of us currently habituate in.

Political divisive Facebook posts, tweets and memes are only designed to divide individuals ideologically further. This allows people to become comfortable only with their political allies and political philosophies, which results in people reacting with great sensitivity and discomfort when they are presented with different views. Thus, in an effort to avoid such negative emotions and distress, individuals simply place the person(s) into the category of a "political enemy", and erases them from their technological circle. This allows a person to avoid any negative emotions while using social media and finding comfort in those whom think only like them. With technology advancing at its current heightened pace, this divide will only grow further and our political divisions will be at heights even more consequential and devastating than it is now. This is why the public must take action and learn to get uncomfortable by openly and rationally discussing opposing political views. They must also begin to move away from using sites such as Reddit and 4chan, political divisive websites and from pages on social media applications that are designed to show explicit political bias. Colleges and universities should promote political clubs to host forums bringing Republicans and Democrats together discussing party philosophies to decrease partisanship on campuses. Towns and committees should engage in discussions that can present unbiased dialogues about one another's political beliefs. These actions are necessary if we are to keep engagement and understanding with each other in this time of political contention. In the end we must practice in our thoughts, the quote by Sherry Turkle, in which, she states that, "Intelligence once meant more than what any artificial intelligence does. It used to include sensibility, sensitivity, awareness, discernment, reason, acumen, and wit."

Let us be human again and deny power to the machines and applications, for it is vital to ensure the survival of our democracy.



Reflection on Gratitude

If You're Not Thankful to People You're Not Thankful to God

Be grateful to the creator for everything that you possess including your wealth, health, status, family, friends, community, intellectual abilities and **life**.

First, take nothing and no one for granted. Remember to be grateful for everything – for health, breath, the heart pumping in your chest, wholesome food on the table, rain falling unbidden from the sky, family, friends, the Quran "Holy books", the Prophets (May God's Prayers and Peace be with them), and everything around you. Gratitude is the first order of the day. Gratitude is the path to loving Allah. Gratitude is the only argument one needs against daily negativity. It is the cure for sadness and materialism as well, and is the motivation to do better tomorrow. When I sit down to eat with my family, we first say Bismillah 'in the name of God' to start the prayers, then each of us names three things for which we are grateful. It has the effect of connecting us to the blessings of the moment – such as the food on the table – and the greater blessings that we often take for granted, such as the presence of family and the gift of people in our life "community".

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "He who does not thank people, does not thank Allah" (by Ahmad, Tirmidhi). What's interesting is that he did not mention limit thankfulness to relatives, only Muslims or believers. He used the Quranic term "Naas" which means all human beings. So the attitude of thankfulness and gratefulness to each and all, Muslim or non-Muslim, neighbor or non-neighbor, is the way to be thankful to God. This reflects a winning attitude toward life. Life would be miserable if we only counted the people who do bad things. We can keep worrying about them or start counting the jewels of humanity that are all around us and start recognizing each good thing they have to offer. Anytime anyone does any favor, a little courtesy and you say thank you in a way that your whole face is smiling, not just your visible teeth and your eyes are in their eyes, you offer your best self.

There is thank you and then there is the real thank you. Sometimes, thank you come out without us even

thinking about them. We receive many of those all day long and there is nothing wrong with that. It's common courtesy and somewhere in your subconscious, you mean it as well, giving and receiving it casually.

Many of us watch sports on television more than we play, laugh at comedy on the internet instead of being humorous and joyful with each other. Perhaps this is why, very often, our expressions of thankfulness often reflect this distance we have from others, a lack of di-



Reflection on Gratitude

Continued from previous page...

I don't hate many things in life. I actually don't remember anyone I hate. Hate to me is not casual. It's a very strong word. But I feel very bad when I say thank you and the person on the other side says "uh huh". I really feel like telling this person, "Look at me! I really mean it!". But I don't. So if you are on the receiving end of thank you, you should really respond in a better way. Allah has guided us in the Quran to do better. When you greet someone, respond with something better (Quran 4:86). And that is what most humans do. But it may be a good idea to remember that when you, in a busy day, get a thank you, take a half second to say "you are most welcome!" in the best possible manner with the presence of mind and heart. In the Quran, Allah reminds us that, "if ye are grateful, I will add more (favours) unto you..." (14:7).

Interestingly, this applies to human beings as well. When we are grateful to others, they are more than willing to help us and do good for us. Think of that nice boss or co-worker who helped you move up in your career or that professor or teacher who went out of their way to help you with a difficult class. They helped you over an extended period of time and it's likely you expressed your profuse thanks for their help. As we all pass through life looking at people and materialistic things around us, We often tend to look at people above us and desire to be like them. But Islam advises us to look at those below us and feel content at what Allah has provided us and Together we can Move forward with Smile, Gratitude and Hope.

Wishing to our beloved community Happy and Healthy, Thanksgiving!

Wail Rasheed ICUC



"First Friends of NJ and NY upholds the inherent dignity and humanity of detained immigrants and asylum seekers. We provide compassion and hope through volunteer visitation, resettlement assistance and advocacy."

...WE NEED YOU TO BE A FRIEND



BE A VOLUNTEER



BE A VISITOR



BE A PEN PAL



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IF YOU CAN HELP IN ANY WAY PLEASE CONTACT: FIRST FRIENDS

53 HACKENSACK AVENUE, 2nd FLOOR, KEARNY, NEW JERSEY

PHONE: 908.965.0455 **Email:** info@firstfriendsnjny.org

Tree of Life We Will Remember You



PICTURED LEFT TO
RIGHT

- Jerry Rabinowitz
- Rose Mallinger
- Bernice Simon
- Melvin Wax
- Joyce Fienberg
- Daniel Stein
- Irving Younger
- Sylvan Simon
- Richard Gottfried
- David Rosenthal
- Cecil Rosenthal

On 10/27/18 Tree of Life Congregation in Pittsburg, PA tragically lost 11 members of their congregation while 6 additional members were injured. The same week there was an attempted racially motivated attack at First Baptist Church (a predominantly African American Church) in Jeffersontown, KY that led to the loss of Maurice Stallard and Vickie Jones at a local Kroger. One cannot truly understand fully the amount of fear, ignorance, hatred, racism, and Anti-Semitic propaganda that led to yet another tragedy in the faith community. However the faith community does understand the interconnectedness of all people and as such houses of worship and faith leaders across our county have condemned these acts. With statements such as:

“The Muslim Community Center of Union County is appalled by the innocent loss of life at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh this past weekend. We ask that we all draw ourselves close to support our Jewish Brothers and Sisters in the wake of this horrific tragedy. We are united and will continue to unite against all intolerance, violence, and hate. We are so sorry for the loss, you are in our prayers.”

Since 10/27/18 people of faith and good conscience have gathered at vigils representing the communities of Cranford, Clark, Westfield, Springfield, Summit, Berkeley Heights, New Providence, Scotch Plains to name a few. Houses of Worship such as Beacon Unitarian Congregation of Summit (pictured below) stood vigil outside of Congregation Ohr Shalom welcoming worshippers with “Shabbat Shalom. We stand with you.” People of multiple faiths attended Shabbat in solidarity throughout the county. We have drawn ourselves close during this time of tragedy and for this we all are grateful. In an effort to continue fostering bonds while addressing issues of concern UCICC would like to encourage you to attend our next UCICC steering committee on December 6, 2018; 10am at Community Access Unlimited—80 W. Grand St. , Elizabeth to plan our future.



November 1, 2018—Stronger Than Hate—An Interfaith Vigil for Pittsburgh at Congregation Ohr Shalom





Gov. PHIL MURPHY | Lt. Gov. SHEILA OLIVER | Dir. JARED MAPLES

NJOHSP

INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION RESOURCE SHEET

RELIGIOUS FACILITIES

Religious facilities serve millions of people of all faiths and denominations throughout the United States. These facilities are generally open-access public assembly venues, and terrorists have successfully targeted them in the past.

Threats of Most Concern to Religious Facilities

Include:

- Improvised explosive devices
- Arson or incendiary attack
- Small-arms attack
- Assassination or kidnapping

Potential Indicators of Terrorist Activity

Include:

- Suspicious persons wearing bulky clothing that may conceal explosives or weapons
- Suspicious or illegally parked vehicles near buildings or where crowds gather
- Unattended packages such as backpacks that could contain explosives
- Unexpected or unfamiliar delivery or maintenance vehicles

Potential Indicators of Terrorist Surveillance

Include:

- Persons using or carrying camera or other observation equipment in or near the facility over an extended period
- Persons discovered with facility maps, photos, or diagrams with critical assets highlighted or listing of personnel
- Persons loitering in the same area over a multiple-day period with no reasonable explanation

Considerations for Law Enforcement Include:

- Prepare mentally and physically for attacks at religious facilities that could result in mass casualties
- Be aware of tactical challenges of limited ingress, egress, low visibility, and potential for mass panic
- Be cognizant of the potential for multiple shooters or a barricaded suspect with hostages

Protective Measures Include:

- Develop plans for security and emergency response
- Establish regular communications with local law enforcement
- Conduct regular emergency response exercises with employees
- Incorporate security awareness and response procedures into congregation training
- Control access to the facility and its restricted areas
- Install and regularly test an emergency communication system
- Take threats seriously and encourage congregation to report any threat or suspicious situation

Incident Response

Alert law enforcement immediately by calling 9-1-1

Connect.

Visit njohsp.gov to connect with NJOHSP, find resources available, and maintain awareness of threat information.

Prepare.

Visit njohsp.gov/resources to learn about planning resources for your organization.

Train.

Visit njohsp.gov/programs to learn about training and exercises for your organization.

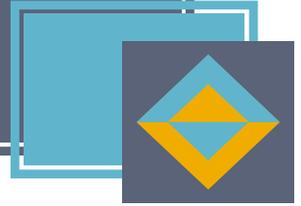
Report Suspicious Activity.

Dial 1-866-4-SAFE-NJ or e-mail tips@njohsp.gov to report suspicious activity in New Jersey.

Visit njohsp.gov/report to learn more about suspicious activity reporting.

SOURCED FROM THE US DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY'S INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION REPORT SERIES

Life Is Full Of Surprises: There Is Much To Be Thankful For



By: Jean Wands
Coordinator of the Cranford/Elmora Soup Kitchen
First Presbyterian Church of Cranford

Life is full of surprises.

Did we ever expect to be deeply committed to a soup kitchen program? **Not At All.**

30 years ago at Elmora Presbyterian Church, during 2 separate Bible Study groups, the idea of a Soup Kitchen arose and took hold. Rev. Ted Granberg began an investigative process that resulted in discussions with Pastor Shipp, of the First Baptist Church of Cranford/Elizabeth which resulted in the birth of the Elmora Soup Kitchen. As with all things, as time passes changes occur. The Elmora church closed but the First Presbyterian Church of Cranford adopted the program which is now known as the Cranford / Elmora Soup Kitchen. This community program continues to serve a complete meal to the financially stressed and homeless each Sunday afternoon from 3 to 4 p.m. at the First Baptist Church located at 402 Union Ave. Elizabeth. During this 30 year period over 135,000 meals have been served by hundreds of volunteers.

What has been the actual result of this program?

It seems appropriate at this Thanksgiving time to acknowledge all the good and wonderful things that have happened over the years.

We have grown from 4 to 8 committed teams that serve on an 8 week rotation, most of them youth based. As we walk down memory lane, we remember hundreds of volunteers that have so willingly served each week. Some teams have served from the beginning and 4 people from Elmora Presbyterian Church that helped to start the program still serve. Team members did not just serve. They came with ideas, energy and hope for helping others. They were committed.

We have served over 135,000 meals to wonderful people. We have gotten to know many of our guests. We have seen people disappear and wonder and worried about what happened to them. We have seen the cultural census change. We have seen our guest numbers go up and down as per the economy. We have had guests tell us that they like coming to our program because we treat them with respect. We have had many a thank you and God Bless you bestowed upon us. We have seen our program grow to include regular sock distribution, Pinho's Bakery donations each week and many other special offerings. We now have the Cranford Madrigal Singers serenade our guests during our special Christmas Dinner. We have seen the Cranford Jaycees come and bring toys, scarves, hats and gloves for our Christmas Dinner. We have more volunteers than we can accommodate. We have high school seniors that have told us that their experiences at the Soup Kitchen helped them choose their life path. Some said nothing but chose careers that led them in a humanitarian direction. Whenever we have a problem, we get an answer.



Did we ever expect this to happen **Not At All.** but **God did and it happened.** In spite of all that is going on in the world today, **there is much to be Thankful** for. May we all focus on ways the we can work together to

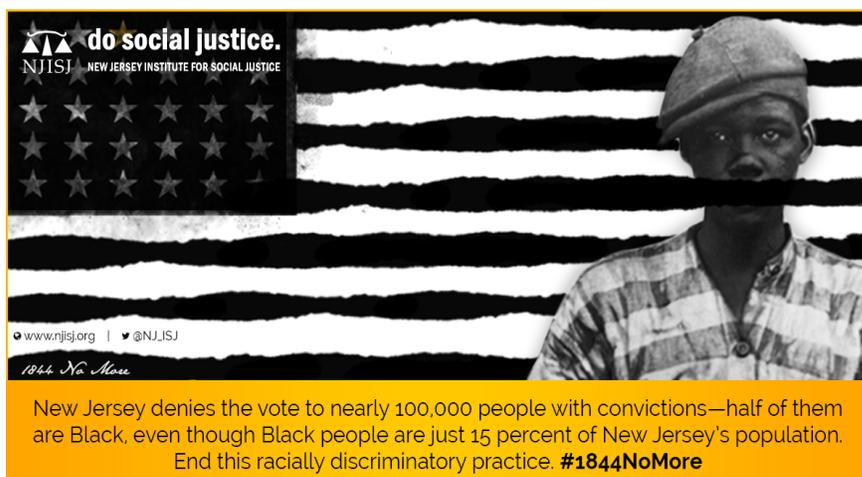


On Sunday, October 7, 2028—Fountain Baptist Church of Summit NJ and Beacon Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Summit Celebrated the second year anniversary of joint raising of Black Lives Matter banners as a public expression of the two congregations' opposition to racism and commitment to racial justice. During the event there was a community picnic and fellowship with speakers and advocacy around the 1844 No More—the movement to restore voting rights to NJ citizens with criminal convictions. Attendees filled out postcards for their legislators to support legislation to restore the right to vote to over 94,000 people within the state of NJ.

Dear Governor Phil Murphy, Senate President Steve Sweeney, and Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin:

We write to ask that you stand with us and take all necessary actions to end New Jersey's practice of denying the right to vote to people with criminal convictions.

New Jersey currently denies the right to vote to **more than 94,000 people** serving a sentence for a felony conviction, including people in prison, on parole, and on probation—more people than live in Trenton, New Jersey's capital city, Camden, Hoboken, Montclair, or over 150 other cities in New Jersey.



Three-quarters of those who have currently lost their voting rights—or 70,000 people—are living in the community while completing a term of parole or probation. New Jersey denies the right to vote to more people with criminal convictions who are living in the community than any other state in the Northeast.

New Jersey **first denied voting rights based on criminal convictions in 1844**, the same year its constitution restricted the right to vote to white men only.

More than a century and a half later, New Jersey's law accomplishes the very racial exclusion that was prevalent in 1844, and that was meant to be eradicated by the Fifteenth Amendment, which guarantees that the right to vote cannot be denied on account of race.

Incredibly, today, **about half of all disenfranchised people in our state are Black**, even though Black people make up only about 15 percent of New Jersey's population. In all, over five percent of New Jersey's Black voting-age population is denied the right to vote because of a criminal conviction, leading to a significant reduction in Black voting power.

In fact, owing to population increases, the **number of Black residents currently denied the right to vote** because of a criminal conviction greatly surpasses the number of Black people in New Jersey who were prohibited from voting in the decades prior to the adoption of the Fifteenth Amendment.

A **quarter of those removed from the voter rolls** because of a criminal conviction are from Essex and Camden Counties. Just five counties—Essex, Camden, Hudson, Monmouth, and Ocean—are home to **almost half of those removed from the rolls**. Those same five counties contain **46 percent** of the state's Black population.

These disparities exist because New Jersey's law ties the right to vote—one of the most fundamental of rights—to a criminal justice system infected with racial discrimination. **New Jersey has the shameful distinction of having the highest disparity in Black/white incarceration rates in the nation** for both adults and youth—**12:1** and **more than 30:1**, respectively.

Finally, New Jersey's law serves no legitimate public safety or criminal justice interest. In fact, because voting helps to facilitate rehabilitation and reduce recidivism, New Jersey's law actually **undermines these interests**.

It is time for New Jersey to sever the link between voting rights and criminal convictions. New Jersey must eliminate loss of voting rights as a consequence of a criminal conviction and restore voting rights to the 94,000 people in prison, on parole, and on probation who are denied access to the fundamental right that, as the Supreme Court has explained, is preservative of all other rights.

We ask you to join us in taking the steps necessary to erase this moral stain on our democracy. The integrity and legitimacy of our democracy demand an end to this antidemocratic practice.

We are **1844 no more**. Let us vote. —*Letter from <http://www.njisj.org>*

Holy Cross Lutheran Church

639 Mountain Ave. Springfield, NJ 07081
(973) 379-4525

Springfield Interfaith Clergy Association Annual Thanksgiving Service

NOVEMBER

19

Monday

7:00 – 8:00 PM

Combined Congregational Choirs.
Springfield Children's Community Choir.
Collecting contributions of packaged goods for the **HC Food Bank**
and monetary donations for the **Springfield First Aid Squad**.

*Third Annual Union County Homeless Sabbath
Dec. 14-16, 2018 in Your House of Worship
Homeless Persons' Memorial Day Vigil
Dec. 20, 7 pm St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 1430
Park Avenue, Plainfield.*



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

Join us for a Sabbath Weekend in praying for the homeless and discussing our call to effect change.

Materials for your House of Worship are available.

Sponsored by:



For More Information:

Web: <https://monarchhousing.org/homeless-sabbath/>

Email: Sabbath2018@monarchhousing.org

Social Media Hashtag: [#HomelessSabbathNJ](https://twitter.com/HomelessSabbathNJ)

Or call Claire at: (908) 272-5363 x 234



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 listings.

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

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 4203. If you are unable to attend the open house, please fax resume to (908) 354-0283 or email to rwright@caunj.org.

UCICC –CAU COMMUNITY HELP LINE

**DO YOU NEED HELP WITH FOOD? HOME HEALTH OR PERSONAL CARE
HOME AND PROPERTY CARE
DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO DOES?**

Call CAU's Information and Referral Office at
908-354-3040 [X 4272] for answers and resources.

CAU's community service mission includes providing direct services to people in need as well as information on how to locate services provided by other agencies.

This month we highlight **one of CAU services available to qualified recipients** in our Union County communities.

1] **Free home delivered meals** [6 week program; one meal per person per day] for Union County residents who are US citizens and their families who need food and who are:

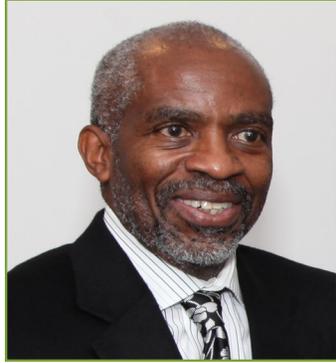
- *Age 59 or younger [head of household]; *Living in low income households;
- * Unable to access adequate food for themselves and their families.
- * Documents and interview are required to qualify.

Contact Gene Tavera X 4272.

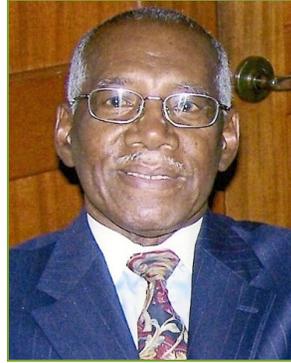
UCICC Outreach Coordinating Team



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



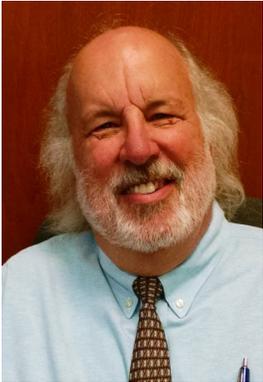
*Roderick (Rod) Spearman
UCICC Interfaith Coordinator
rspearman@caunj.org*



*Pastor Howard A. Bryant,
UCICC Interfaith Coordinator
hbryant@caunj.org*



*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*



*Charlene Walker
UCICC Administrative Assistant
cwalker@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.

Contact Rod Spearman at
908-354-3040 x 4324
for more information on becoming
a member

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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PAID
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 UP-COMING EVENTS

UCICC Steering Committee
November 1, 2018 at 10:00am
80 W Grand St
Elizabeth NJ 07202

→
See Right side

NO UCICC EVENT
Be on the lookout for E-mail Blasts to support
UCICC Network Events

UCICC Steering Committee
December 6, 2018 at 10am
80 W. Grand Street
Elizabeth, NJ 07202

→
See Right side

Homeless Person's Memorial Day Vigil
December 20, 2018 at 7pm
St. Mark's Episcopal Church
1430 Park Avenue

UCICC Steering Committee
January 3, 2019 at 10:00am
80 W Grand St
Elizabeth NJ 07202
See Right side

UCICC EVENT TBD



Rod Spearman
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