

Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council



OCTOBER 2018

SPONSORED BY COMMUNITY ACCESS UNLIMITED

MAKING A BELOVED COMMUNITY "KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR'S FAITH"

2

About UCICC
page 2

3

Newsletter Topic
page 3

4

Seventh Day Adventist
page 4

7

Hinduism
page 7

11

Unitarian Universalist
pages 11

16

Presbyterianism
Page 16

18

Sikhism
page 18



You are cordially invited to the
5th Annual Day of Prayer and Reflection
Striving to Make a Beloved Community
Organized by the Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council

Please join us to honor people of all faith communities:

October 9, 2018

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

St. Bartholomew the Apostle Church

2032 Westfield Avenue, Scotch Plains, NJ 07076



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 Shalom
Scotch Plains

Ayaz Aslam
Muslim Community Center of UC
Elizabeth

Pastor H. Bryant
Honorably 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

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.

newsletter topic

Know Your Neighbor's Faith

By: Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council

"Beloved community is formed not by the eradication of difference but by its affirmation, by each of us claiming the identities and cultural legacies that shape who we are and how we live in the world." - Bell Hooks



This month on October 9th the Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council will be gathering representatives from multiple faiths for the 5th Annual Day of Prayer "Striving to Make a Beloved Community". We felt that in order to make to strides in this direction we would send out the following request to the UCICC network and share the diverse interpretations of the prompt which was distributed below.

"During the month of October we are continuing to strive to make a beloved community. We want to give the Interfaith Community a glimpse into the many types of religions that are the corner stone of our lives. As you know each faith has many facets that bring with it different experiences, practices, and beliefs even though we may find Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, or Judaism at the core. We are all diverse and to Make a Beloved Community we must build a foundation of understanding our rich diversity as far as religious practices and beliefs. It is our hope that you will submit informative articles that highlight the core principles of your faith, spotlight practices/beliefs as well as how your faith motivates you to strive to make a beloved community."

Even though we were not able to receive responses from all of the faith's in our network we hope that you find the articles enlightening.

Sincerely,

Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council

Seventh Day Adventist Church

By: Norman K. Miles Sr., PhD , Senior Pastor
Trinity Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church, Newark, New Jersey

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a Christian church of the Protestant tradition which was established in the United States in the mid-19th century. Between 1838-1860 the United States went through a period of religious revival commonly known as the Second Great Awakening. The intense interest in religion resulted in a number of new religious movements such as the Mormon Church, the Evangelical Movement, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The group which would eventually form the Seventh-day Adventist Church, were originally followers of William Miller, a Baptist preacher in upstate New York, who believed that based on time prophecies in the Bible, Jesus would return to the earth between 1843-1844. His movement attracted thousands of people, but when Jesus did not return in 1844 many became disenchanted and went their own ways. A few came to believe that though his selection of a specific date for Christ's return was wrong, the emphasis on the second coming was correct. They began to study the Bible together in small groups across the northeast and mid-west, in an effort to better understand God's will for them, and as a result of their study began to develop specific beliefs. Among their first discoveries was the fact that the Sabbath day which God commanded to be observed in the Ten Commandments, was Saturday instead of Sunday. They also discovered that the Bible indicated that only certain animals and fowl were to be eaten. In 1860 these groups officially organized themselves as a church and took the name Seventh-day Adventists as an indication of their core beliefs, the observance of the seventh day Sabbath (Saturday), and the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Although the Seventh-day Adventist Church has a focus on the return of Christ, it takes Christ's command to do His work until He comes seriously, and is involved in religious, humanitarian, and educational work around the world. Adventists are an evangelistic people who believe in aggressively preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ everywhere. Adventists now number over 14 million members in churches in over 210 countries, and is one of the fastest growing churches in the world. These churches engage in religious and humanitarian work. Every church has a Community Service Department which is tasked with engaging with the local community to provide whatever help is necessary to help those who are disadvantaged and to respond to various disasters. We understand that we can't do everything to resolve the problems people face, but we believe every church is required to be an agency of help is the community.

Adventists are committed to Christian education, and have built a global system of over 4,500 schools from elementary to university levels. The Seventh-day Adventist educational system is currently the largest Protestant school system in the world. These schools provide a world class education with a strong spiritual and moral foundation. Seventh-day Adventist high schools have a 97% college acceptance rate in the United States, and around the world people educated in Adventist schools hold positions of leadership in all walks of life. The church also has a strong youth organization known as the Pathfinders. This group is a co-educational group similar to the Boy and Girl Scouts. They engage in camping, community service activities, and training in many skill categories. Every five years Pathfinders from various nations gather for a week-long convocation of inspiring activities. In August, 2019, Pathfinders in the United States will meet at Oshkosh, Wisconsin for a camporee. Over 45,000 Pathfinders are expected to attend.

Seventh-day Adventists are well known for the emphasis the church places on health and health education. Adventists pledge not to consume tobacco, alcoholic beverages, and illegal drugs. In addition, Adventists do not eat pork, shell fish, or other meats condemned in the Bible. In fact, the church has for over 100 years recommended a plant-based diet as most beneficial for humans. Adventist colleges and universities

serve only vegetarian meals in their cafeterias. A number of studies health studies have been done using Adventists as the control group, and all have indicated that Seventh-day Adventist who follow the recommended dietary guidelines live longer and healthier lives than the general population by at least 7 years.

Seventh-day Adventists take the Bible seriously, and are anxious to please God in every way, but we realize that we are saved by Grace, not by works. It is the love for Jesus that motivates us to seek to live for Him, love others, and share His word with the world.



Save the Date

**6th Annual Union County
Youth Networking Conference**
October 24, 2018
8:00 AM—3:00 PM

Community Access Unlimited
80 West Grand St.
Elizabeth, NJ 07202

For More Information Contact
Rolando Zorrilla at 908-354-3040 x4305
rzorrilla@caunj.org

Sponsored by:



UNION COUNTY
We're Connected to You!

LUTHERAN

BY: PASTOR CHRIS HALVERSON

ST STEPHEN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH- S. PLAINFIELD



The writing prompt I was given was “How does my tradition motivate me to make a beloved community?” It doesn’t.

As a Lutheran I am deeply skeptical of humanity’s ability to do much of anything—we’re always painfully ambiguous creatures, and if you find someone who claims otherwise I can show you someone who is deluding themselves or trying to sell you something. We can not make a beloved community. God, however, can.

In one of our most fundamental documents, Luther’s Small Catechism, our understanding of the Lord’s Prayer is described and with each petition we acknowledge that everything from the Holiness of God’s name to our deliverance from evil is provided by God, our prayers do not make it happen, instead we are simply asking to be joined to that which God is already doing. So too the creation of a beloved community. All I can ask is

that I am allowed to participate in the weed-like growth of what Jesus called The Kingdom of Heaven.

This week is the 7th anniversary of my calling to St. Stephen and ordination in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), so perhaps I am a little circumspect as I write this. I can tell you, every single time I’ve thought I knew where things were headed in my congregation, every time I pushed my weight around a bit and insisted upon a particular program or direction, I’ve been wrong, and yet God still acts. For example, I planned for us to partner with 3 congregations in Edison and put a fair amount of time and energy into making it so, instead we connected with Cross of Life Lutheran in Plainfield and when it closed their members joined us here and now that maxim that Sunday morning is the most segregated hour is not true here. I didn’t make that happen, but I thank God that I get to be part of this re-creation here at St. Stephen, this small yet potent living out of a beloved community.

I am not saying, however, that the Lutheran tradition does not have tools to assist us as we are swept up in God’s ongoing gracious action, transforming the world into what it is, good.

As Lutherans we believe God is found on the cross of Jesus. This means we ought to look for God in the last place we’d naturally think to look. How different the world looks through the lens of the cross—when we look for God in the arms of the young peasant girl, rejected by religious folk and executed by the politically powerful—that’s some potent stuff!

As Lutherans we read our Scriptures as Mirror, Window, and Love Letter. This way of studying scripture helps us look at ourselves more objectively than our natural inclinations would allow, look at our society with justice in mind, and not despair when we see things clearly. I thank God that the bible helps me be self-reflective, justice minded, and grounded in the love of God so that the depths of this world doesn’t grind me down.

Additionally, as a clergyperson in the ELCA, we have a wide variety of [social statements and social messages](#) that help me think through the particulars of really big questions in our society that are frankly overwhelming to think about without a wide variety of conversation partners, from folk on the ground whose lives are shaped by the particular issue, to respected theologians, to lay experts on the subject—all shaped by input from congregations throughout North America.

In short, I thank God for the coming gift of the Beloved Community, pray that I might participate in it, and hold fast to the tools of my faith that help me to navigate that which God is doing.

Hinduism

Sharmila D. Jaipersaud
Durga Mandir, Princeton NJ



Core Principals of the Hindu Religion

Unlike other religions, Hinduism does not have a set of rules, like the Ten Commandments, for example. Hindus do believe in certain concepts, such as Truth, Dharma and Karma. The Vedas are the sacred scriptures that Hindus follow. Each term has its own importance in the religion:

Truth - Hindus pursue knowledge and understanding of the Truth: the very essence of the universe and the only reality. According to the Vedas, Truth is One, but the wise express it in a variety of ways.

Dharma -means duty, virtue, morality, even religion and it refers to the power which upholds the universe and society. ... Each person therefore has their own dharma.

Karma- Karma is the Hindu view of causality in which good deeds, words, thoughts, and commands lead to beneficial effects for a person, and bad deeds, words, thoughts, and commands lead to harmful effects. These

effects are not necessarily immediate but can be visited upon a soul in future lives through reincarnation; additionally, good or bad fortune experienced in life may be the result of good or bad actions performed in a past life.

The Vedas are the most ancient religious texts which define truth for Hindus. It is believed that the texts were received by scholars direct from God and passed on to the next generations by word of mouth.

Another major belief in Hinduism, based on Karma, is reincarnation. Reincarnation is when the soul, which is eternal and part of a spiritual realm, returns to the physical realm in a new body. A soul will complete this cycle many times, learning new things each time and working through its karma. Reincarnation is called samsara.

Hinduism is well known for being a very tolerant religion. As a Hindu, we are taught to be tolerant, accepting and understanding of all faiths. This is what guides me as a leader in the community to help and understand people of all backgrounds.





Mire rápidamente el desarrollo temprano de su niño

¡Venga a un rápido examen
de desarrollo **GRATIS!**

Jueves, Octubre 25, 2018
Temple Day Care
134 First Street
Elizabethport, NJ 07206
9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Las citas para los exámenes serán cada 30 minutos

Exámenes de desarrollo temprano GRATIS

El 13% de los niños en los Estados Unidos tienen algún retraso en el desarrollo, y muchos de ellos no son identificados hasta que entran al kindergarten.* Visite a los expertos del hospital para un examen del desarrollo gratis para niños de 1 a 5 años. Recursos valiosos para padres curiosos sobre el desarrollo infantil estarán disponibles.

LA REGISTRACIÓN ES RECOMENDADA

El espacio es limitado y no se garantiza lugar disponible sin cita

Para obtener más información o para programar una cita gratis por favor llame al 908-301-5498
o visite

www.childrens-specialized.org/developmentalscreening



Children's Specialized Hospital ofrece este
servicio comunitario a través de la generosidad de



*American Academy of Family Physicians

Preguntas
más
frecuentes

Análisis de desarrollo temprano gratis

¿Qué es un análisis de desarrollo?

Un breve análisis diseñado para asegurar que el niño esté en el camino de desarrollo apropiado para su edad. Ayuda a identificar niños que pueden necesitar una evaluación adicional.

¿Para quién es el análisis?

Para niños (11-66 meses) que aún no tienen un diagnóstico ni están recibiendo servicios. Los padres/cuidadores no necesitan tener preocupaciones para programar una cita.

¿Cuánto cuesta? ¿Debo llevar mi tarjeta de seguro?

Los análisis son gratuitos para la comunidad. No es necesario tener seguro.

¿Alguien más puede llevar a mi hijo al análisis?

Si el padre/cuidador del niño no puede ir, puede mandar a su hijo con otro miembro de la familia que sea mayor de 18 años de edad con una carta firmada que indique que podemos compartir los resultados del análisis con ese miembro de la familia.

¿Quién administrará el análisis?

Personal calificado de Children's Specialized Hospital.

¿Cuánto dura la cita?

La cita dura aproximadamente 30 minutos.

¿Necesito tener una cita?

Recomendamos programar una cita porque no siempre tenemos cupo para acomodar niños sin cita previa. Por favor visite

www.childrens-specialized.org/developmentalscreening
o llame al (908) 301-5498 para registrarse y hacer una cita con anticipación

¿Qué sucede durante el análisis?

El evaluador hará un análisis standard interactivo con usted y su hijo, se calificará en el momento y los resultados serán compartidos con los padres/cuidadores al finalizar la cita. Si se recomiendan evaluaciones adicionales el evaluador le dará información y le ayudará a conectarse con los servicios necesarios. Todas las familias recibirán un paquete de información apropiada para la edad de su niño. Si se han recomendado evaluaciones adicionales la familia recibirá una llamada de seguimiento aproximadamente un mes después de la cita.

¿Dónde puedo encontrar más información?

Para obtener más información sobre nuestro programa de análisis de desarrollo temprano gratis, por favor visite www.childrens-specialized.org/developmentalscreening o llame al (908) 301-5498.



www.childrens-specialized.org





Nichiren Buddhism

Soka Gakkai International

BY: Carolyn
Somerville
NJ Zone Peace &
Community Relations
Rep.

When people hear the word, “Buddhist,” they think of Shakyamuni Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama) a wealthy prince born 2500 years ago, who abandoned his life in the palace and went out into the world to understand and overcome human suffering. Or they often think of a monastic religious tradition where individuals seclude themselves from the world and go off to mediate on some mountaintop. But not all Buddhist traditions are monastic; Nichiren Buddhism, is an engaged Buddhism.

Nichiren Buddhism emerged in the 13th century Japan when the Buddhist reformer, Nichiren Daishonin, developed the practice of chanting Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo and encouraged his followers to seek enlightenment through chanting. As a result of his efforts, Nichiren Buddhism continued to be passed down from family to family, but it was a religion that remained restricted to Japan. In the 1920s, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda, both educators, began the practice, and they founded a lay Buddhist organization, the Soka Gakkai (Value-Creating Society) in 1930. Incarcerated during the war for refusing government edicts to unite with the emperor’s religion, Shintoism President Makiguchi died in prison. President Josei Toda emerged from prison and took over as the second president of the Soka Gakkai until his death in 1958. In 1960, Daisaku Ikeda took over as the 3rd President of the Soka Gakkai (International), and in that same year took his first trip abroad in order to spread Nichiren Buddhism. Today, over 15 million people practice Nichiren Buddhism in over 193 countries and territories.

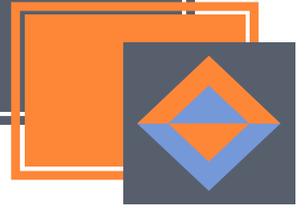
The practice of Nichiren Buddhism consists primarily of chanting Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo and reciting portions of the Lotus Sutra. Nichiren Buddhism is based on 3 pillars: practice for self and others, study, and faith. The purpose of Nichiren Buddhism is to create a more peaceful world, but a peaceful world can only exist if people are happy. But to become happy, people need to be able to overcome the sufferings that they face. Through the practice of Nichiren Buddhism people awaken to the belief that dignity and power reside within them and, therefore, they can transform their lives on the deepest level to overcome their sufferings. Nichiren Buddhists experience positive changes through the process of self-transformation or human revolution. Individuals consumed by hopelessness, fear, anger, greed etc., come to feel more hopeful, courageous, compassionate, wiser, etc. This positive inner transformation results in changes in the environment: overcoming family disharmony, severe illnesses, poverty, and many other problems. We call this “relative happiness” and understand that it is short-lived and temporary, depending upon circumstances outside of us. On a more profound level Nichiren Buddhism aims to help people achieve “absolute happiness,” where nothing can destroy, defeat or take away one’s inner state of joy and confidence. Nichiren Buddhists, through chanting Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo, come to have joy even in the midst of painful struggles and obstacles.

As our SGI President, Daisaku Ikeda, has said, “Our task is to establish a firm inner world, a robust sense of self that will not be swayed or shaken by the most trying circumstances or pressing adversity. Only when efforts to reform society have as their point of departure the reformation of the inner life—that is, human revolution—will they lead us with certainty to a world of lasting peace and true human security.

I know this to be true in terms of my own life. Now in my 30th year of practice, I live more confidently, optimistically, courageously, and determined to create a more peaceful world by helping others do their human revolution and become happy.

Unitarian Universalism

By: Reverend Emelie Boggis
Beacon Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Summit



Entry Points into Covenantal Religion

I love watching people's expressions when I tell them I'm a Unitarian Universalist minister. Their face melts into confusion and their hearing shuts down. A what? First, it's all of the syllables. Then, they'll often confuse us with Unity or The Universal Life Church. We are neither.

Unitarians and Universalists are two denominations that helped transform Christianity in the Protestant Reformation, although we have ties to many pre-Reformation thinkers. Unitarians were non-Trinitarians, and Universalists argued that God was a loving God who would not condemn his creation to eternal damnation. In 1961, the two denominations consolidated to one Association of

Congregations.

Unitarian Universalism is a covenantal religion. There is no creed that members must believe upon entering. We often say that we are centered in right relationship, not right belief. It means that we are quite diverse theologically. When you walk in the door, you'll meet Christians, Atheists, Jews, Humanists, Buddhists and so on. I recently heard a leader describe herself as a Hindutarian, as she was raised Hindu and claimed Unitarian Universalism as an adult. As we see a rise in interfaith marriages, it has been important for families to find a community that honors their diversity.

What's central for UUs (as we are often called) are our seven principles. While many assume them to be our beliefs, our Principles are actually our covenant with one another. It is our mutual agreement for how we will live and work together. We affirm and promote the inherent work and dignity of every person, the right of conscience and the democratic process within our congregations, the respect for the interdependent web, just to name three (#1, #5, and #7). These Principles have evolved over time as we have evolved, and it's why many have argued that Unitarian Universalists are about deeds, not creeds.

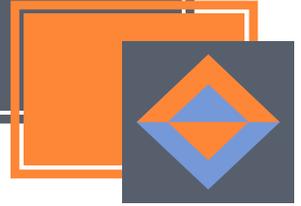
In a time when our country is divided and when loneliness is an epidemic, covenantal religions are important. They remind us to place a priority on relationships, especially how to live in right relationship even when we disagree, and how central to human existence relationships are.

That said, it's a win if you can just say all ten syllables right!



Islam

By: Dr. Wail Rasheed, President
Islamic Center of Union County, "ICUC"
2372 Morris Ave, Union, NJ 07083



Origins and the Life of Muhammad the Prophet

Islam, Judaism, and Christianity are three of the world's great monotheistic faiths. They share many of the same holy sites, such as Jerusalem, and prophets, such as Abraham. Collectively, scholars refer to these three religions as the Abrahamic faiths, since it is believed that Abraham and his family played vital roles in the formation of these religions.

Islam began with the Prophet Muhammad. Islam means "surrender" and its central idea is a surrendering to the will of God. Its central article of faith is that "There is no god but God and Muhammad is his messenger".

Followers of Islam are called Muslims. Muslims believe that they are following in the same tradition as the Judeo-Christian figures Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus who they believe were significant prophets before Muhammad.

The Qur'an, the holy book of Islam, provides very little detail about Muhammad's life; however, the hadiths, or sayings of the Prophet, which were largely compiled in the centuries following Muhammad's death, provide a larger narrative for the events in his life (although there is significant debate in the Muslim world as to which Hadiths are accurate).

Muhammad was born in 570 C.E. in Mecca, and his early life was unremarkable. He married a wealthy widow named Khadija who was 15 years older and his employer. Around 610 C.E., Muhammad had his first religious experience, where he was instructed to recite by the Angel Gabriel. After a period of introspection and self-doubt, Muhammad accepted his role as God's prophet and began to preach word of the one God, or Allah in Arabic. His first convert was his wife.

Muhammad's divine recitations form the Qur'an and are organized into books (surahs) and verses (ayat). Because these revelations focused on a form of monotheism considered threatening to Mecca's ruling tribe (the Quraysh), which Muhammad was a part of, the early Muslims faced significant persecution. Eventually in 622, Muhammad and his followers fled Mecca for the city of Yathrib, which is known as Medina today, where his community was welcomed. This event is known as the Hijra, or emigration. 622, the year of the Hijra (A.H.), marks the beginning of the Muslim calendar, which is still in use today. Between 625-630 C.E., there were a series of battles fought between the Meccans and Muhammad and the new Muslim community. Eventually, Muhammad was victorious and reentered Mecca in 630.

One of Muhammad's first actions was to purge the Kaaba of all of its idols (before this, the Kaaba was a major site of pilgrimage for the polytheistic religious traditions of the Arabian Peninsula and contained numerous idols of pagan gods). The Kaaba is believed to have been built by Abraham (or Ibrahim as he is known in Arabic) and his son, Ishmael. The Arabs claim descent from Ishmael, the son of Abraham and Hagar. The Kaaba then became the most important center for pilgrimage in Islam.

In 632, Muhammad died in Medina. Muslims believe that he was the final in a line of prophets, which included Moses, Abraham, and Jesus.





After Muhammad's Death

The century following Muhammad's death was dominated by military conquest and expansion. Muhammad was succeeded by the four "rightly-guided" Caliphs (khalifa or successor in Arabic): Abu Bakr (632-34 C.E.), Umar (634-44 C.E.), Uthman (644-56 C.E.), and Ali (656-661 C.E.). The Qur'an is believed to have been codified during Uthman's reign. The final caliph, Ali, was married to Fatima, Muhammad's daughter and was murdered in 661. The death of Ali is a very important event; his followers, who believed that he should have succeeded Muhammad directly,



became known as the Shi'a ("party" or "followers"), referring to the followers of Ali. Today, the Shi'ite community is composed of several different branches, and there are large Shia populations in Iran, Iraq, and Bahrain. The Sunnis, who do not hold that Ali should have directly succeeded Muhammad, compose the largest branch of Islam; their adherents can be found across North Africa, the Middle East, as well as in Asia and Europe.

During the seventh and early eighth centuries, the Arab armies conquered large swaths of territory in the Middle East, North Africa, the Iberian Peninsula, and Central Asia, despite on-going civil wars in Arabia and the Middle East. Eventually, the Umayyad Dynasty emerged as the rulers, with Abd al-Malik completing the Dome of the Rock, one of the earliest surviving Islamic monuments, in 691/2 C.E. The Umayyads reigned until 749/50 C.E., when they were overthrown. The Abbasid Dynasty assumed the Caliphate and ruled large sections of the Islamic world. However, with the Abbasid Revolution, no one ruler would ever again control all of the Islamic lands.



"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 PEN PAL**

 **BE A VISITOR**

 **BE A DONOR**

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

Baptist

By: Pastor Barry E. Wise II

Greater Mount Moriah Baptist Church—Linden, NJ



What is the Baptist Faith?

Well, first, it's not a faith at all – Baptists are a branch of Protestant Christians who trace their lineage to those who broke away from the Catholic church after Martin Luther wrote his famous 95 Theses to protest what he believed were errors in the Catholic practice of Christianity. After this initial separation, there were a series of offshoots that resulted in the creation of the Anglican Church in England.

Baptists formally got their start in England as another offshoot – this time from the Puritans in the 18th century.

In terms of polity, or governance, Baptists believe in a concept known as the priesthood of believers, which means that all Christians have equal access to God. This plays out in church governance through democratically

elected deacons, elders, trustees, and pastors who are prayerfully selected by the larger group to lead the congregation. Rules for the church are also decided by the congregation as a whole. Leaders are asked to provide vision, service, preaching, and teaching to the congregation, to whom they are accountable after their primary responsibility to God.

The major rites and ceremonies are known as “Ordinances”, which are Communion, also known as The Lord’s Supper, and Baptism. These are recognized as the only two biblically-based religious rites established by Jesus Christ.

To really understand Baptism, you first need to understand salvation. Baptists believe in the Calvinistic concept of Original Sin, which means that all human beings are marked by the sin of the original man and woman, Adam and Eve. As a result of this sin, we are subject to a corrupted nature that cannot resist doing wrong and are guilty in the eyes of God through both inheritance and our own actions.

We believe that the remedy for this condemnation is salvation, acquired when a believer confesses their faith in Jesus Christ. The ordinance of Baptism follows this confession, but is not a prerequisite for justification with God. Many portrayals of Baptism in the media are dramatic, powerful, and touching (rightfully so) but the Baptism itself is only the outward demonstration of the inward change that has already occurred within a believer’s heart and mind.

As Baptists, we believe that the practice of Communion is a memorial ritual that calls each believer to recall their own experience of salvation. The elements commonly used in other Christian rites of Communion, bread and wine, are also included, but there is no theological doctrine of transubstantiation, or the literal body and blood of Christ. Baptists, like many Protestants, take this as a figurative expression that involves the presence of the Holy Spirit, but no physical presence.

Baptists do not have a higher body of authority other than the local congregation, but do participate in voluntary associations which are groups of churches that freely associate, worship, and learn together. These associations exist at the local (municipal or county), state, national, and even global level. Similar to congregational processes of selecting leaders, these associations nominate and democratically elect leaders whose authority comes from the people who voted for them as well as a spiritual authority that is recognized as coming from God. Baptists have varying stances on theological views, ranging from liberal to moderate to conservative congregations. While Baptist churches share a common framework, no two Baptist churches are exactly the same. The African American Baptist tradition, due to the legacy of activism against slavery, Jim Crow and Segregation, has long maintained a stance that is oriented towards liberation theology and the value and dignity of the oppressed.

Reform Judaism

Why Reform Judaism Resonates So Much with Me

by Michael Loberfeld

a member of Temple Sholom of Scotch Plains-Fanwood, sholomnj.org

As a Reform Jew, I believe my responsibilities toward God, and toward fellow human beings, go hand in hand. I think about my relationship to, and interaction with, "God". I feel that God is all good, but sometimes people stray from what is right. I welcome the stranger, because both Jews historically, and myself personally, know what it is like to be strangers ourselves. My temple has an Inclusion committee, which is aimed at welcoming people who may have special needs. As Jews, we recognize the importance of slowing down and focusing on what matters: Shabbat, which is from sundown Friday evening until sundown Saturday evening, is a time of rest and reflection. Realizing that each person is on their own unique personal spiritual journey, and that people come from different backgrounds, we encourage each person to believe and practice in a way that is most meaningful for them. There is no one way to believe in Reform Judaism; beliefs are as diverse as the people who hold them. Some Reform Jews, myself included, do not necessarily believe that a particular Messiah will come in the future. Rather, we believe that it is up to all people to work in partnership with God to bring about a time of greater peace, harmony, and unity, among all people in the world. Reform Jews sometimes refer to this greater future for all, within our reach, as a Messianic age. We believe we can foster healing and compassion for each other. Jews call this "tikkun olam" which means repairing the world. Each Shabbat at temple we sing a song for healing (composed by Debbie Friedman), which begins "May the Source of strength, Who blessed the ones before us, Help us find the courage, To make our lives a blessing". As we sing, we think of people we know, who are in need of some type of healing. This plants seeds in our hearts about reaching out to them and being present with them. It reminds us that we can make a valuable difference. It reminds us too that we all need healing. In addition, we share stories and memories about people who have passed away, because we believe as long as we keep them in our hearts and thoughts, a part of them lives on with us. We believe that we must speak up and advocate in support of justice, love, and kind treatment for all people, including those people who are from other religions and cultures. We must speak up for others, in the same way we would wish others to speak up for us in our time of need. We believe in the power of community, not only in terms of Jews, but in forming bonds with all people. I personally believe in unity among religions, and that although we, as human beings, sometimes have different names for our beliefs, and although we may have different rituals, we have love and ideals in common, and this represents the power of transcendence among us.

Michael Loberfeld serves on the Social Action, Inclusion, and Caring committees of Temple Sholom, and is a 13 year volunteer at a local nursing home.



JOIN US: NUNS ON THE BUS
We're Coming to NORTHERN NJ!

Dear UCICC Network

In just a few days, I'll be on the road with Nuns on the Bus -- and we're headed in your direction! We need to hold elected officials accountable to undo the damage of the 2017 Tax Law and instead work for reasonable revenue for responsible programs. Who we elect matters!

Join NETWORK's Nuns on the Bus in NORTHERN NEW JERSEY:

**BUS SIGNING RECEPTION &
LIVE INTERVIEW WITH
JESUITICAL PODCAST**

Tuesday, October 23
7:00 pm

Church of the Redeemer
36 South Street
Morristown, NJ 07960

[Download our flyer](#)
[RSVP](#)

SITE VISIT AND RALLY:

First Friends NY/NJ
Wednesday, October 24
10:30 am

First Friends NY/NJ
53 South Hackensack Ave.
Kearny, NJ 07032

[Download our flyer](#)
[RSVP](#)

On October 23 prior to the Town Hall for Tax Justice in Morristown, Church of the Redeemer will be hosting a **Community Dinner for Nuns on the Bus from 6:00-7:00 pm**. If you would like to attend, [please let the church know!](#)

Nuns on the Bus: the Tax Justice Truth Tour is traveling from California to Mar-a-Lago ahead of the 2018 midterms to hold elected officials accountable for their votes in favor of the 2017 Tax Law and attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act. We know that our tax policy hurts our communities while giving handouts to the wealthiest in our nation. We must work for just tax policies that mend the gaps!

[You can view our entire schedule and RSVP at https://networklobby.org/bus2018/events/](https://networklobby.org/bus2018/events/)

I hope to see you there!



In solidarity,
Sister Simone Campbell
Executive Director
NETWORK: Advocates for Justice, Inspired by Catholic Sisters

Nuns on the Bus is a campaign of NETWORK: Advocates for Justice, Inspired by Catholic Sisters.

Become a NETWORK member or donate:
www.networklobby.org/bus2018/donate/

Presbyterianism

By: Rev. Dr. Christopher
Pastor Emeritus of the Community Presbyterian Church in Mountainside, NJ.



Presbyterianism is one of the older branches of Christianity, dating from the 16th century C.E. in Europe. Our name comes from our form of church government. We believe that God's Spirit works through the gathering of disciples. So, church members elect Elders (Presbyters) to lead the congregation. Each Elder serves a limited term. The authority/decision making power is always resting in the group of Elders, called the Session, and never in an individual.

We believe that God expresses the Divine Self in three primary ways. These are the Creator (God the Father), the Redeemer (God the Son - Jesus Christ) and the Sustainer (God the Holy Spirit). This makes us a "Trinitarian" church. We believe that each person has a direct relationship with God and that God loves each person. God invites each of us to understand ourself as a child of God,

chosen by God. There is no distinction by gender, color, race, or any other criteria. Each is a child of God. An Elder or a Pastor is no more or less important than anyone else. We each serve as God calls us to serve be it preaching, teaching, leading or cooking, comforting, encouraging. God calls each individual to be part of the Kingdom in his/her unique way serving with her/his unique skills.

Presbyterians believe that God created the world as good. Sinfulness came through humans' disobedience and dishonesty. The Biblical story is the story of God's work to redeem humanity so we may be what we were created to be. While we believe that the Bible is the word of God, we also believe Jesus Christ to be the ultimate revelation of God - even God with us - and so we are to interpret the Bible from the perspective of Jesus' teachings.

We believe that God gave us two special ways of drawing close to the Divine. These two sacraments are baptism and Holy Communion. The act of baptism reminds us that we are called by God and that we become a new creation because of God's love. Baptism marks the beginning of our life's journey with God and so we usually only baptize a person once. One can only begin once. Holy Communion is a sharing of bread and wine that reminds us of God sharing the Divine Self with us in the body of Jesus Christ. God enters our physical life to walk with us, guide us, encourage us and bless us. Even the food we eat becomes sacred when we share it in love. God is with us whenever love is shared. Holy Communion may be shared as often as daily though most Presbyterian churches tend toward a once a month observance.

Sikhism

By: Navdeep Kaur Tucker

House of Worship Dashmesh Darbar Gurudwara



Sikhism is a monotheistic faith that originated in the Punjab region of the Indian subcontinent about the end of the 15th century. The word “Sikh” means “disciple” or “student”. Sikhism is one of the youngest of the major world religions, and the fifth largest. The fundamental beliefs of Sikhism, articulated in the sacred scripture, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, include faith and meditation on the name of the one creator, divine unity and equality of all humankind, engaging in selfless service, personal sovereignty, striving for justice for the benefit and prosperity of all, and honest conduct and livelihood.

Sikhism is based on the spiritual teachings of Guru Nanak Dev, the first Guru (1469–1539), and the nine Sikh Gurus that succeeded him. The Sikh Gurus served as prophets/teachers. Their poetic writings, along with the writings of other enlightened individuals, were compiled into what ultimately became the Sikh scripture. The Tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh,

named the Sikh scripture, Sri Guru Granth Sahib as his successor, terminating the line of human Gurus and making the scripture the eternal, religious spiritual guide for Sikhs. The Sikh scripture opens with a description of the attributes of God:

One God/Supreme Source, Whose Name is Truth, Creator of All, Without Fear, Without Enmity, Beyond Time and Space, Beyond the Cycle of Birth and Death, Self-Existing, Achieved Through Grace

Though translations of scripture will often gender God as “He”, Sikhs do not believe in a gendered God, and the script of the original language does not have a gendered description of *Waheguru* (a name for God). Practice of the Sikh faith involves prayer, fellowship, and service. Simran (meditation on the words of the Guru Granth Sahib), can be expressed musically through *keertan* or internally through repetition of God’s name as a means to feel God’s presence. Sikhs are taught to control and/or transform the “Five Thieves” (lust, rage, greed, attachment, and ego). Hand in hand, secular life is considered to be intertwined with the spiritual life. Sikhs are to live in the world, be of service, and continue to learn and grow in their spirituality.

The Sikh Gurus preached against asceticism, idol worship, blind ritualism, and discrimination. They taught that irrespective of faith, gender, class, etc., we are all creations of God. Sikhs can be identified through various outer articles of faith which include uncut hair, often tied up in a top-knot and covered by a turban, the *kara* (steel/iron bracelet), the *kachera* (long under-shorts), the *kanga* (wooden comb), the *kirpan* (sword/dagger to be used in defense against injustice).

Sikh services take place at a *Gurdwara*. Gurdwaras are open to all and services include a meal shared together, which is called *langar*. Langar is prepared by members of the congregation and is to be shared while all who are able are seated on the floor together, regardless of any distinction. Service is concluded by *Ardaas*, a collective prayer that is led by a member of the congregation. My faith motivates me to strive to make a beloved community. This is embodied in the lines that conclude the *Ardaas*. “Nanak Naam chardi kala, Tere bhaanay sarbat da bhalaa.”

Nanak says, “Oh Lord, your name keeps the spirit ever-rising. With your blessing, may the whole world prosper.”



More than a Cut-a-Thon Sunday, Oct. 28 • 10am-3pm @ The Guillotine

108 Central Avenue, Westfield

Services Offered & Pricing for the Day:

Woman's Haircut only \$35

Woman's Haircut with Blowdry \$45

Men's Haircuts \$25

Kid's haircuts (ages 11 and under) \$20

Blowdry only \$25

Mini Facial \$40

Plus, Beauty Basket Raffles and a 50/50

100% of all proceeds to benefit the Homelessness, Hunger & Poverty programs of NJ, as well as continuing in our global efforts to support the social justice programs in Nicaragua.



Please call today to make your appointment and participate in this charitable fundraising event with First Presbyterian Church.

908-654-8686

www.guillotinesalonandspa.com

SAVE THE DATE!

Register Now! Sign up for Day of Prayer and RSVP by October 5th at <https://5thannualdayofprayer.eventbrite.com> or call 908.354.3040 x4371

5th Annual Day of Prayer and Reflection **Striving to Make a Beloved Community**



Union County **Day of Prayer**

October 9, 2018
7:00 PM - 8:00 PM



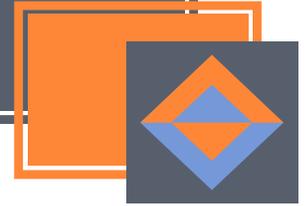
St. Bartholomew the Apostle Church
2032 Westfield Avenue
Scotch Plains, NJ 07076



*Working to facilitate the building of bonds within the interfaith community,
promoting the respect, inclusion and welcoming of others.*

Methodist

**By: William M. Williams III, Senior Pastor
First United Methodist Church, Westfield, NJ**



The Wesleyan General Rule of Discipleship teaches that Christians are called to participate in both works of piety and works of mercy. That is to mean, our reading the Bible, going to church, receiving communion, attending small groups, and/or singing songs must move us to acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As United Methodists, we teach that our witness to Jesus Christ in the world requires us to live a type of holiness that actively expresses love of God and love of neighbor. We are growing in discipleship when we put our faith into action.

In the same way, our prayers move us to do something. John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, wrote in *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*:

“Whether we think of or speak to God, whether we act or suffer for him, all is prayer, when we have no other object than his love, and the desire of pleasing him. All that a Christian does, even in eating and sleeping, is prayer, when it is done in simplicity, according to the order of God, without either adding to or diminishing from it by his own choice,” (*A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, Q 38, 5).

Wesley taught that the ideal Christian has a well-rounded spiritual life, sometimes tending to his or her own soul and other times serving others. He called these “acts of piety” and “acts of mercy.”

Acts of piety include things like reading the Bible, going to church, and receiving communion. Acts of mercy are things like offering comfort to others, visiting those who are sick or in prison, and working to change systems that hurt and victimize people.

For United Methodists, acts of both piety and mercy are part of a life of prayer. “In souls filled with love,” Wesley continues, “the desire to please God is a continual prayer.”

Prayers move us to embody social holiness. Again, John Wesley wrote:

Solitary religion is not to be found there. “Holy Solitaries” is a phrase no more consistent with the gospel than Holy Adulterers. The gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social; no holiness but social holiness. Faith working by love, is the length and breadth and depth and height of Christian perfection.”

Holiness is social because God is social. He created human beings in the Divine image to be relational creatures. We become fully human when we share in the relationships God initiates with us through the people he places in our way. The writer of 1 John describes the social nature of holiness:

“We love because he first loved us. Those who say, ‘I love God’, and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also,” (1 John 4:19-21).

Our prayers will always lead us to be in community and in relationship. If we truly love God then we must love our brother and sister in Christ and our neighbor. This requires us to be in relationships with the people God places alongside of us in the church, in the community, and in the world. We are all diverse and as we make the beloved community, our prayers lead us to embrace, embody, affirm, and love the diversity of the created order.

Grace, Peace, & Wisdom



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. openings. Community Access Unlimited is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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.

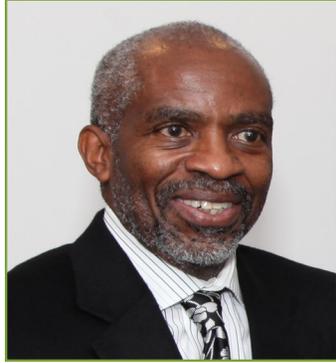
* Documents and interview are required to qualify.

Contact Gene Tavera X 4272.

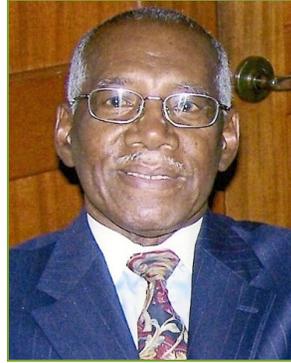
UCICC Outreach Coordinating Team



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



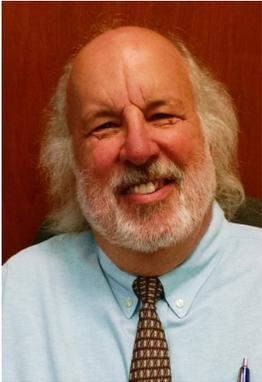
*Roderick (Rod) Spearman
UCICC Interfaith Coordinator
rspearman@caunj.org*



*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



NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
**U.S. POSTAGE
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

October 4, 2018 at 10:00am
80 W Grand St
Elizabeth NJ 07202

See Right side →

UCICC Steering Committee

November 1, 2018 at 10am
80 W. Grand Street
Elizabeth, NJ 07202

See Right side →

UCICC Steering Committee

December 6, 2018 at 10:00am
80 W Grand St
Elizabeth NJ 07202
See Right side →

Full UCICC Event

5th Annual Day of Prayer
"Striving to Make a Beloved Community"
October 9, 2018 from 7pm to 8:00pm
St. Bartholomew the Apostle Church
2032 Westfield Ave. Scotch Plains, NJ 07076

NO UCICC EVENT

Be on the lookout for E-mail Blasts to support
UCICC Network Events

NO UCICC EVENT



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