



# The Communitarian

Ocean County Congregation

December 2014

## UUOCC Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday, December 14, 2014

12 noon

### Agenda

President's Report

Election of Officers and Committee Chairs

Approval of 2015 Budget

Update on Building Status at Murray Grove and  
Early Move to Murray Grove

This is an exciting and promising time for  
UUOCC

We want all members and friends to be thoroughly informed and all members to vote.

Please make every effort to join us on  
December 14, 2014

Thank you!

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**UUOCC Annual Congregational Meeting**  
**Sunday, December 14, 2014**  
**Agenda**

**Welcome:** Gail Marsh Saxer, President

President's Report	Gail Marsh Saxer
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Status of New Church Planning and early move to Murray G.	Frank Kowalczyk, Chair Building Committee
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**New Business:** Gail Marsh Saxer

Bylaws Revision	Barb Antolick, Chair
Discussion and Vote	Gail Marsh Saxer

2015 Budget Proposal	Jim McMurray, Treasurer
Discussion and Vote	Gail Marsh Saxer

Slate of Officers/Committee Chairs	Barb Antolick, Chair Nominating
Election of Officers and Board	Gail Marsh Saxer

Photo of 2015 Board Members and Committee Chairs

**Congregational Comments:**

**Adjournment**

## **Nominating Committee**

### **Board:**

President – Barb Antolick  
Vice-President – Nancy Ellson  
Treasurer – Jim McMurray  
Secretary – Kiki Arevalo  
Long Range Planning – Barb Diamantopoulos  
Building Committee – Frank Kowalczyk  
Worship Committee – Jan Hagen/Bonney Parker

### **Non-Board:**

Membership – Eileen Fallon  
Public Relations –  
Social Justice – Elaine McConnell

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## **Changes to UUOCC's Bylaws – December 2014**

- II. (1.) Our mission statement was updated.
- II. (2.) The policy was fixed up to include the old mission statement
- III. (1.a-c) Ways in which you become a member and the minimum amount needed to pledge to become a member.
- VI. (1.) There are now 7 members on the board of trustees instead of 10. The Building Committee is now a permanent committee. There are 4 people needed for a quorum.
- VII. (1.) Building Committee added
- VII. (9.) Building Committee added
- XII. Bylaws need to reviewed every 3 years

Copies of our bylaws are available at UUOCC or by email at [info@UUOCC.org](mailto:info@UUOCC.org)

# UUOCC ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

To be Presented December 14, 2014

## 2015 Budget Summary

<b>SAVINGS:</b>			<b>MINISTRIES:</b>	
PNC Checking	\$21,861.88		Board of Trustees	1,000
PNC CD	30,254.72		Finance	1,300
PIMCO Bonds	19,879.00		Lifespan	350
Raffle	1,275.45		Public Relations	450
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$73,271.05</b>		Social Justice	210
			Worship	5,850
<b>Edward Jones Building Fund</b>				
Account #1	\$158,024.00		<b>Fair Share UUA</b>	1,800
Account #2	\$165,301.00		<b>Fair Share Metro</b>	840
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$323,325.00</b>			
			<b>Fundraisers</b>	510
<b>INCOME:</b>				
Fundraisers	2,550		<b>Insurance:</b>	
Lifespan	1,275		Workers Comp.	1000
Offertory	3,500		Multiperil	1,000
Pledges	28,889	as of 11/22		
			<b>Office supplies</b>	2,375
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>36,214</b>			
			<b>Payroll:</b>	
			Related Expenses	2,790
			Church Administrator	8,000
			Custodian	2,000
<b>EXPENSES:</b>			Music Director	2,500
Custodial Supplies	100		Child care	2,000
Rent	27,735			
Utilities	4,500		<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>72,810</b>
Internet Service	1000			



## YUUR Voice in Trenton

**UULMNJ's 2014 Fall Issues Conference, held Sept 27 at CUC (Paramus)** was a huge success, with over 100 attendees representing sixteen of NJ's UU congregations. Thank you to all who came out to help make the day a success, and a special thanks to our friends at the Paramus Congregation. ACLU-NJ executive director, Udi Ofer was the keynote speaker ([watch it here](#)). Task forces convened and set **this year's priority agenda**:

**Environmental Protection:** Environmental Sustainability with a goal of 80% renewable energy by 2050, wind energy, and fracking;

**Economic Justice:** Affordable Housing with a focus on container housing and strengthening the partnership with the Anti Poverty Network;

**Immigration:** Partnering with First Friends ; an collaborative congregational film series; wage theft and drivers licenses for documented workers;

**Mass Incarceration:** Advocacy and Education, concerning passing of Ballot Question One, parole reform and marijuana decriminalization;

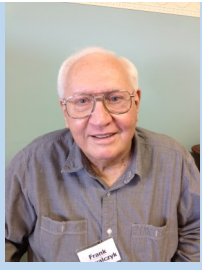
**Healthcare and Reproductive Justice:** Safe Access to Reproductive Health Services through education, buffer zone safety, and Medicaid expansion. Researching intimate partner violence.

**Are you receiving UULMNJ Action Alerts?** If not, send your email address to [admin@uulmnj.org](mailto:admin@uulmnj.org) and we will get you on our UULMNJ list.



Rev. Craig Hirshberg, Exec. Director

Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of NJ



This Month  
In UU History

Frank Kowalczyk

## OUR SEVEN PRINCIPLES – PART 2

In the previous newsletter I discussed the evolution of our Seven Principles from the creation of six principles during the Unitarian Universalist merger in 1961 through the adoption of the seventh principle, the addition of religious sources, the adoption of the children's version of our principles in the 1980s and the addition of Earth-Centered traditions in 1995. Finally, a Commission on Appraisal was created in 2006 to review the principles and determine whether change was necessary.

I have viewed the principles as a basis for our religion and, if I placed "I believe" before each principle, it would be our creed, subject to individual interpretation and not mandated by any church authority. I have an aversion to the statement that we have no dogma. I believe it more positive to state what we believe as individuals (the "elevator speech") rather than state what we are not. We do stand for something, do we not?

Digging deeper in the development of the principles has raised a variety of questions concerning what the principles are and are not. They comprise Article II - Section C.2.1 Principle and Purposes of the UUA By-Laws, right there at the beginning. So, what are they really?

In an in-depth look at the Principles, Rev. Marlin Lavanhar (Senior Minister, All Souls Unitarian Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma) argues what our Principles are: "essentially a section of bylaws that express the least common denominator that connects UUs together in association." Then he adds "They are not an effective or binding covenant; they are not a creed, a credo, a scripture or a theology. In other words, the Principles are widely misunderstood and misused, and their purpose and limitations are generally ill-defined."

A religion's creed sets that denomination apart from others; it tends to exclude other beliefs and believers. When, in the words of Rev. Carl R. Scovel (King's Church Senior Minister 1967-1999) "someone claims to be 'inclusive' and 'creedless' they are refusing to

acknowledge their theological position, a position which necessarily includes some and excludes others."

Although the Principles include the statement that we "covenant to affirm and promote" the Principles, it leaves to our imagination whether the "we" refers to us as individual Unitarian-Universalists or as autonomous UU congregations.

During the 2007 General Assembly, one delegate called the Principles "the world's shortest and most forgettable scripture." But a scripture provides the basis of faith for adherents and gives cause to evangelize on their behalf. Also, the Principles were created on a democratic basis, by a consensus of those voting during an earlier assembly. As the Rev. Barbara Meritt stated: "There is an important place in human society for democratic process.....but not in matters of conscience, not in matters of faith, not in determining what is true and false, right and wrong."

This democratic process and our Unitarian Universalist characteristic of attempting to include all into our union led to watering down the Principles from their inception. A religion that was Protestant and Christian in character from the 16<sup>th</sup> century through the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century filtered down to a humanist organization, devoid even of a deity as heated discussions developed whether "god" should be included in the Principles and Purposes.

So, where do we stand? What do the Principles and Purposes mean for us as individuals, as a congregational community, as a religious denomination? Have we watered down a vibrant, evolving religion into something less? Rev. Lavanhar has some cogent thoughts and relevant suggestions for movement into the future. Look for that in our next installment.







Elaine McConnell  
Social Justice Committee

### Recap of 2014 and Goals for 2015

The Social Justice Committee currently has four members: Bette Chosak, Nancy Lang, Audrey Maxymuk and Elaine McConnell

UUOCC co-hosted Interfaith Hospitality with St. Paul on four occasions during 2014. (The fourth and final session of the year is scheduled for December 8, 9, and 10.) We couldn't have fulfilled our commitment without the help of many volunteers. To date this year they have included: Barb Antolick, Barb Diamantopoulos, Audrey Maxymuk, Linda Holzbaur, Linda Kay, Nancy Lang, Elaine McConnell, Gail Saxer, Brenda Taylor, Bette Chosak, Hank Douma, Shirl Giles, Bonney Parker, Maureen Price, Annette Bergins, James Ellis and Nancy Ellson. Many thanks to each of you.

The Committee provided two services to the congregation – both in support of UUA goals. The first was for Justice Sunday and the theme was “Planting Seeds for Justice” and food sharing. Bonney Parker participated in the service with us and highlighted Wrangle Brook Community Garden to provide a local focus to this global issue. The second service was entitled “Food for Thought” and supported the annual “Guest at your Table” initiative, a 40 year UU tradition to promote human rights.

With the Board of Trustees approval, special collections were held monthly. Those benefitting from these collections included The Food Bank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties, The Hope Center, Interfaith Hospitality Network and UUA (Justice Sunday and Association Sunday). We also continued our on-going food and toiletries collections for The Hope Center.

UUOCC participated for the first time in the annual Crop Walk as part of The Hope Center contingent. UUOCC representatives included Bette Chosak, Nancy Lang, Audrey Maxymuk and Nancy Ellson. Twenty-five percent of total pledges were earmarked for Interfaith Hospitality.

In support of UULMNJ (Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of NJ) the Committee recommended, and the Board approved, increasing UUOCC's member contribution by \$1.00 (to \$7.00 per member) in 2015.

The Committee's goals for 2015 remain essentially the same:

- Participate in the Interfaith Hospitality Network providing meals , overnight coverage and support for ongoing activities
- Support the Hope Center with ongoing special collections and participation in the Crop Walk
- Make donations to local charities and UUA through monthly monetary collections
- Support and promote the Wrangle Brook Community Garden
- Support the activities and goals of UULMNJ
- Provide two services to the congregation

We would be delighted to welcome anyone interested in joining the committee and/or participating in any committee activities!



# News from Membership: A Tribute to Those to Whom We Bid Farewell in 2014

by Eileen Fallon

This past year brought, at first, sorrow to us in the passing of several long-time members, a feeling eventually tempered by the warmth of memories of their good humor, their kindness, the service to others that was a hallmark of all their lives.

Ethel Gaffen joined UUOCC in its very first year, 1983. She was active in several other organizations, among them the Order of the Amaranth and the Order of the Eastern Star. Those she called her “honorably adopted families”, four couples and their children to whom she was close, gave her the cherished nickname of Grammy Ethel. Many of us at UUOCC remember her for her love of teddy bears. Yet she had made it clear to her two daughters that she wanted to be remembered for her love of baking.



Patricia Patton Robison was a great lover of life, and her joyful spirit could not help but brighten the lives of those around her. She adored many things, chief among them her parents, her son, and music, as well as UUOCC and Murray Grove. In fact, it was her generous gifts to the latter two that will lead to there again being a congregation at the revered Universalist site, and to Murray Grove’s transformation into an even more special, evocative historical and spiritual center. Her love of UUOCC and Murray Grove was reflected in the two overflowing memorial services held for her on the same Sunday, at UUOCC in the morning, and at Murray Grove in the afternoon. We think of Pat often, especially when hearing an exceptionally beautiful soprano voice, or when feeling our own spirits soar when we see birds in flight.



Mary Anne Elliott was possessed of a quiet but whimsical spirit. She imbued her three children with a love of books in general and of poetry in particular, and we know that she must have been especially pleased by the fact that one of her three children, her daughter, is a writer. Her joy in words and reading, and her desire to share that joy, was such that she gave this reporter a book she’ll never forget, and in fact has gone on to give to others. It is Frank Rich’s memoir, *Ghost Light*. In it, the renowned critic writes of the debt he owes to an early mentor, one who gave him emotional support during his difficult teen years. We are sure that Mary Anne holds a similar place in the hearts of many whose lives she touched.

Beverly Burozski also had a strong influence on young people. As a mother of four children, she went back to school, eventually becoming a therapist. At her memorial service, a friend of one of her sons spoke of how striking it was to him to see an adult sitting at her own kitchen table surrounded by textbooks, working away on her homework. But she’d inspired this young man not just by her example, but by the encouraging words she gave him. He was talented in music, and it was Beverly who first emphasized to him that he could have a career in music, which indeed he now does. She truly loved life and had tremendous energy, whether she was singing opera, fossil hunting with her grandchildren, marching in Washington and New York on behalf of causes she believed in, or earning renown for her career in social work. She lived the belief that one person could better the lives of many.



# Two Founding Members Retire to a New Life In North Carolina

by Eileen Fallon

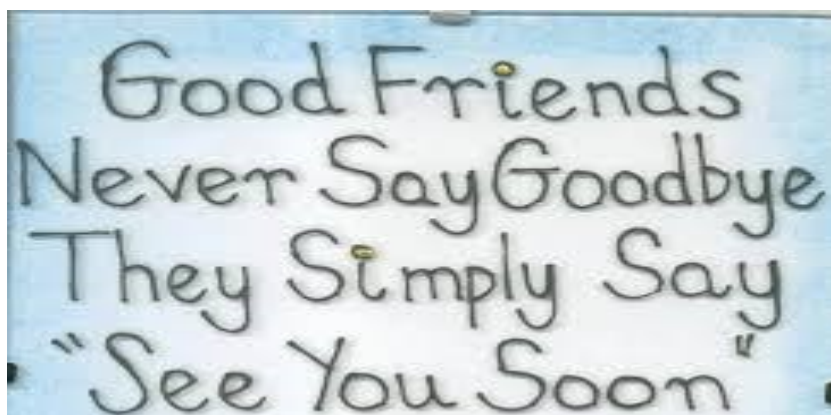
UUOCC witnessed a significant change in the lives of two of its founding members this past year, due to a promise made decades ago. Joe and Annette Swain met one summer while working at the Jersey Shore. She was a



native daughter, a graduate of Douglass, while Joe, born and raised in North Carolina, and a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, came north to be near his parents who had moved here.

The rest, as they say, was history. They agreed to raise their two sons and spend their work lives in Ocean County, then to relocate to his home state when both of them retired from their teaching jobs. And that's what happened this past year. Due to Annette's work as a

French teacher, the traditional cake served at their going away party at UUOCC bore an inscription in French, "On ne dit jamais au revoir, on dit a bien tot"—"One never says goodbye, one says see you soon." We miss them and think of them often, and know they think of us.



# New Member Profile: Noreen Brennan

by Eileen Fallon

Shortly after interviewing Noreen Brennan for this piece, this reporter heard the following joke about religion: a young comedian notes that he's religious only on airplanes. When there's a lot of turbulence, he finds himself taking rights away from gay people.



It's easy to believe that Noreen would not only like this joke, but that she'd see it as reinforcing the view of religion she drew from her early experiences. She saw church as rigid and structured. In fact, when she first discussed her background at UUOCC, she explained that her early life was full of Catholicism. "So," she continued, "of course, when I was thirteen, I became an atheist." She later explained that that radical turn was actually brought about by conversations with boys from the very Catholic Iona College, who used their studies of logic to convince her of her new-held belief—and that she found herself moving to agnosticism over the years.

Her eyes were opened to a different kind of church when she was an adult and two friends told her what they experienced at a UU congregation. He was from a Greek Orthodox background, and his wife was an Episcopalian. They were very pleasantly surprised when, at the UU church they were visiting, it was announced that, "the pro-choice group meets in this room, the pro-life one in that room." A church in which two such opposite views could be held? It was that welcome thought that led her to her first UU congregation. She was relieved to find a tradition in which the spiritual could be acknowledged without the requirement of belief in a single, divine being.

Noreen had had an interesting life up to that point. She was born in New Jersey, where her father was teaching at Seton Hall. Six months later her parents took her to Ireland when her father, who held a degree in math and physics, decided he wanted to learn Gaelic. For four years, they lived on a farm in a Gaelic speaking enclave. It was to be her father's fourth language, after English, French, and German. Clearly a very intelligent man, he spoke not only the language of words but that of numbers. An American, he'd originally gone to England to work as a cryptographer there during World War II. It was during the war years in London that her parents met, Noreen's mother having moved there from her native Ireland as a teenager. It was a war-time romance out of a novel, with her mother's friends saving their ration coupons to be able to chip in and get the ingredients for a wedding cake for the young couple.

Her father greatly influenced Noreen, notably with his views on race, which were ahead of his time. The family had relocated to Queens, New York, when Noreen was four. As an older child, she'd take the bus to a public pool called The Aquataine (entrance fee: .15). One day she was roughed up there by several slightly older black children from Corona. When, due to the incident, she mentioned not liking blacks, her father quickly intervened. "Now Noreen," he told her, "Don't judge a whole race by a few kids." She notes that these views were amazing for that time and place.

While, as noted earlier, Noreen is agnostic, she recognizes that there is mystery in the universe. She was struck by the fact that, as she and her now-late husband were reaching mid-life, he constantly urged her to go back to school and to learn to drive (as a New Yorker, she never had). So she did, earning a nursing degree. With her typical humor, Noreen notes that, while he'd wanted her to return to school, she thinks he was quite surprised by

(Continued on page 13)

# Book Club in 2014: Great Books, Great Friends, Great Year

By Eileen Fallon

Those of us who love books are indeed fortunate to be in Ocean County, which boasts both a fabulous library and a heck of a lot of book clubs. UUOCC Book Club is only one of the 141 served by the Ocean County Library. In fact, a librarian there works just with the book clubs. With such numbers, a lot of organization is needed. Late in the previous year, book club members peruse the library's long list of titles and descriptions of those books, both non-fiction and novels, available in the numbers needed. These copies are not in the library's general circulating collection (though, of course, non-book club copies of these books are available there), but are reserved solely for the use of the clubs.

The book club experienced a smooth change of hands when its exemplary 2013 leader, Meretta Baxter, handed the reins to the equally talented Brenda Taylor. Book club members acknowledge that the club functions only because of the work done by the leader: picking up the month's books, tracking them, making sure they all are returned; preparing a list of questions about a particular book for the group; and sometimes going well beyond the call of duty. For instance, this past year, when the selection was the delightful epistolary novel, *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*, Brenda prepared an American version of the title pie for all to enjoy.

These are just some examples of the range of books members chose for 2014: *Unbroken*, Laura Hillenbrand's telling of the true story of Louis Zamperini, Olympic distance runner and survivor of two years in a Japanese prison camp; *Zeitoun*, by Dave Eggers, another true narrative about a man's survival of difficult-to-believe circumstances in the wake of Hurricane Katrina; Ivan Doig's novel of settlers in the American West, *Whistling Season*; and *The All-Girl Filling Station's Last Reunion* by Fannie Flagg, which gave insight into the lives of American women in World War II, especially of those who joined the WASPS (Women Airforce Service Pilots).

Meretta Baxter discussed some of the books read in 2014. She noted that *Infidel*, by Ayaan Hirsi Ali, provided a new slant on the muslim religion, but she was especially struck by *Zeitoun*. She found it absolutely shocking that what happened to this Syrian immigrant in the days after Katrina could happen here in America, that the police "could become thugs." Lorraine Talbert mentioned Bernard Malamud's novel, *The Assistant*, as "the best of the lot," and she's now reading another of his novels. Hank Douma really like both the Malamud novel and, from an earlier year, Philip Roth's *American Pastoral*. He noted that there was a lot of drama in the tension in the relationship between the two lead characters in *The Assistant*. He also found himself fascinated by the plot of the Roth novel.

The club looks forward to another great year of reading and discussion in 2015. And they'd love to share the joy they take in good books and good conversation with even more readers.





# Murray Grove

By Bonney Parker

On Saturday, October 25 I attended the Murray Grove Association Board as liaison from UUOCC. I told the Board that we are focusing on an early move to Murray Grove, before the church is built, and we would be discussing our needs and wants for that move. The Board is supportive of an early move and wants to be as accommodating as possible.

After my report I decided to take a walk into the woods just east of the campus. It was a beautiful day, so I grabbed my camera and headed down the sandy path adjoining the campus to the east. This property was once owned by Murray Grove but was sold off several years ago in order to keep Murray Grove afloat. It is 200 acres of the Edwin B. Forsythe Wildlife Preserve, with nature trails leading through woods to the wetlands on Barnegat Bay, encompassing several ecosystems.

The minute I stepped onto the trail I could smell the aroma of wet leaves and pine needles, taking me back to my childhood when I lived in the Pinewald section of Berkeley Township, just a few miles west of here. Sixty years ago the woods of Pinewald surrounded my home and I spent many hours of many days exploring and immersing myself in some of the very same ecosystems as I was now walking.

My thoughts from the Board meeting were all of inspiration and enthusiasm and these woods seemed like a cathedral containing all of that excitement. But as I walked along, my thoughts quieted and I just let the presence of nature surround me. I listened to the birds, like a choir of call and response as the hum of the highway, not far away, receded into the background.

I found a little pond a few feet off the path with what appeared to be the remnants of a dock. It was so peaceful and serene I might have stayed longer if I had had a lunch with me, but my stomach was getting louder than the bird calls so after walking about a half mile further I turned around and headed back to my car.

I hope you will take the time to explore Murray Grove and this beautiful wildlife sanctuary. You won't be able to resist falling in love with this sacred place.





## UUOCC's First Annual Chili Cook-Off A Success

Kudos to member Nancy Ellson for putting together our first ever chili competition, which was held on Sunday, November 30th. Who wasn't in the mood for a dish like chili after days of traditional Thanksgiving foods? And the mood was further underscored by the performances of Colombian folk music by the Reverend Phil Passantino and Hugo Lascarro Senior and

Junior during the service. Jim McMurray's chili won the day, with his victory captured in photos by Nicole Obenshine. Thanks, Nicole!



### Noreen Brennan (continued from page 10)

the fact that she did so well in her studies. She also got her driver's license. Sometime after she'd achieved the two goals he'd instilled in her, her husband passed away. To this day she thinks that making sure she'd be able to support herself was his way of taking care of her, as if he knew on some level that he would not be around, a presentiment that makes a nod to knowledge beyond what we can see and touch. . She also got her driver's license. Sometime after she'd achieved the two goals he'd instilled in her, her husband passed away. To this day she thinks that making sure she'd be able to support herself was his way of taking care of her, as if he knew on some level that he would not be around, a presentiment that makes a nod to knowledge beyond what we can see and touch.

Noreen relocated to Ocean County early in 2014, and as soon as the cold winter was over, she made her way to UUOCC, where she became our newest member this past August. She's very happy to have found a group of people to whom she can relate, those who follow politics (by the facts, not by Fox) and who read. She's begun to play Scrabble with fellow member Lorraine Talbert, saying that Lorraine "will make a good Scrabble player out of her." (Lorraine graciously states that Noreen is already a good player, a fact for which she, Lorraine, deserves no credit.) Theirs is but one of the rich relationships that develop among UUOCC members, who are all very glad that Noreen has joined us.



# Upcoming Services

**Dec 7th** - "Anticipation" by Barb Antolick

Now that Thanksgiving is over and Christmas is less than three weeks away, many people start to anticipate the holiday season even more. In many Christian churches this is the time of advent. Join us this Sunday as Barb A talks about her family's personal holiday traditions and how they get ready for the holiday season.

**December 14<sup>th</sup>** – Rev Julie Newhall

**December 21<sup>st</sup>** – Mitten Tree and Holiday Song Fest

**December 28<sup>th</sup>** – Fire Communion—Our last service of 2014

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## What's Happening ?

### Interfaith Hospitality Network

Our Social Justice Committee will be providing meals and overnight coverage at St. Pauls from Dec. 8th - Dec. 10th

**January 1st, 2015**

**New Years Day Brunch**



**We are steadily improving our online presence.**

**Please check us out online !**

Our website [www.UUOCC.org](http://www.UUOCC.org)

Our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/uuocc>

Our Twitter page <https://twitter.com/UUOCC>

Our Instagram page <http://instagram.com/uuocc>