

# VISIONS



January 2010

When New Year's Eve for 2000 arrived, Juan and I were in Chicago. We were six months away from our wedding, and Juan was on his last visit to the States before emigrating a few months later. We went with some friends to downtown Chicago to ring in the New Year, New Decade, and New Century. I remember it not being a particularly enjoyable evening. First of all, it was freezing cold—it was Chicago after all! We were also in the middle of the Chicago-version of the crowd that comes together in NYC in Times Square. Too many people, hard to get home, and way too cold! But I do remember that night, and remember that sense of anticipation so many of us had back in 2000.

This New Year's Eve we will ring in 2010, the last year of the decade. Already the media is busy at work trying to find a "name" to encompass what this decade meant. Everything has to have a title, a catchphrase today! *What would you call this decade? This last year?*

The turning of the New Year is also a time that many of us focus on our resolutions or things we'd like to accomplish. Many times we get to the end of the year and realize that we haven't gotten to everything we set out to do! There is something about the turning of the New Year that gets us into a reflective mood, gets us thinking about the passage of time, and our place in the world.

If we think about the New Year as the time right after the Season of Christmas, we must think about it from the point of view of the time after the Christ Child has come to be among us. One of the things I really wish was in the Bible was a little bit more information about the childhood and adolescence of Jesus. We have one story from the childhood of Jesus. Then the biblical history jumps to his baptism and ministry that takes up the last few years of his life (all of this happens by the time he is in his early 30's). As we move through worship in January, our scripture readings will tell some of these early stories that set the tone for the ministry of Jesus and the message that God is speaking through him. Just like us, the people around Jesus have different reactions to his early ministry. Some are joyful, some are distrustful, some resonate with the prophetic tone he uses, and some begin right away to plot a way to stop him.

As you think about all of these things along with me during this turning of the New Year I invite you to reflect on what the New Year means to you now that the Christ Child is among us. What does it mean to begin the New Year right after the joy and promise of Christmas? What do our many reactions and the ones that are catalogued for us in the Bible to the ministry of Jesus mean? **How can these things guide your New Year, your resolutions, and your life for 2010?**

We have lots of great things going on in January at the church—a family movie and potluck afternoon, the PW retreat, our ongoing Bible studies, ACTS, a eco-ministry group that will have its first organizational meeting, a confirmation class trip to NYC and of course...worship! We are also for the first time after many years, hosting a meeting of Elizabeth Presbytery on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, an opportunity for us to extend hospitality and welcome to the larger ministry group of which we are a part. As we begin this New Year at Watchung Avenue we have our own set of joys and challenges before us—just as you do in your own life, home, and workplace. That is the blessing of a community. We have so much around us to be thankful for and to grow into in this New Year. God also reminds us of our need for the in-breaking of the Spirit of the Christ Child as we reflect on those things that cause us worry or concern.

As we begin 2010 I invite you to entrust in prayer not just your life, but the life of your family, and of our shared community to Jesus. It may not mean we have an easy ride, but it *will* mean that have a transformative journey that will take us to into New Life we could never imagine.

Peace and Blessings in this New Year!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shannan".

Rev. Shannan Vance-Ocampo

Watchung Avenue Presbyterian Church  
170 Watchung Avenue  
North Plainfield, NJ 07060

Telephone: 908-755-2781 / 2775  
Email: [wapc@verizon.net](mailto:wapc@verizon.net)  
Web: [www.wapc.net](http://www.wapc.net)  
Fax: 908-756-7981

## ***JANUARY WORSHIP***

December 27<sup>th</sup>: **1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas**

**Rev. Leslie Foltz-Morrison, Guest Preacher**

Scripture: I Samuel 2:18-12, 26,  
Colossians 3:12-17

Sermon: "Clothed with Love"

January 3<sup>rd</sup> **Epiphany(Three Kings)**

*Sacrament: Communion*

**Seminarian Andrew Scales Preaching**

Scripture: Jeremiah 31:7-14 & John 1:1-13

Sermon: "New Beginning with Jesus"

January 10<sup>th</sup>: **Baptism of the Lord**

Scripture: Isaiah 43:1-7 & Luke 3:15-22

Sermon: "We Were Made for Glory"

January 17<sup>th</sup>

Scripture: Isaiah 62:1-5 & John 2:1-11

Sermon: "A Joyful New Beginning"

January 24<sup>th</sup>: **Ecumenical Sunday**

**Father George Farrell, Preaching from  
St. Joseph's (across the street)**

**Pastor Shannan Preaching @ 11:00 Mass at  
St. Joseph's**

Scripture: Nehemiah 8:1-10 & Luke 4:14-21

Sermon: "A Prophetic New Beginning"

January 31<sup>st</sup> :

Scripture: Jeremiah 1:4-9 & Luke 4:21-30

Sermon: "A Fearful New Beginning"

## ***NEW GROUP AT WAPC***

We are forming a group for adults (and any youth who also want to join us) that wants to focus on environmental ministry at WAPC and our community. We will be working on greater energy efficiency for our building, a joint community garden for 2010 to support FISH with the Church of the Holy Cross (Episcopal) in North Plainfield, and other projects and ministries to help us connect to our Creator God. **We will be holding our first organizational meeting on Wednesday January 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm.** Please let Shannan know if you will be joining us by calling the church office or sending her an email at

[svanceocampo@yahoo.com](mailto:svanceocampo@yahoo.com)

## ***HOLIDAY CHURCH HOURS***

- ❖ Pastor Shannan will be on vacation December 26-31, 2009. Rev. Rob Martin at Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church is on call for pastoral care emergencies. Please contact Rev. Martin at 908-756-2468.
- ❖ Kathleen Golmont is on vacation the week between Christmas and New Year's Day. Please leave Kathleen a voicemail at the church or an email and she will get back to you after the New Year.
- ❖ There is no After School Program the week between Christmas and New Year's Day and Head Start is also on vacation.
- ❖ Both Bible study classes are "off" for the remainder of December and will resume the first week of January.

***Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!***

## ***END OF YEAR GIVING***

Please remember to make any gifts or pledges to WAPC by year's end for your tax statements. They must be received in the church office or postmarked no later than December 31<sup>st</sup> to receive tax credit. Anything received after that date will be credited for 2010.

## ***2010 PER CAPITA AMOUNT***

Our assessment from the **PCUSA** for 2010 is \$30.00 per member. If each member pays their share, it will free up money for other purposes. Place your \$30 in the per capita envelope in your envelope packet.

## ***LET'S GET TOGETHER!***

The Fellowship Committee under the WAPC Session has plans for some wonderful happenings in the coming months. To name a few:

- ❖ A Pancake Supper in the spring
- ❖ Recognition of our 50 year members

We are looking for people who want to help put these events together. If you are able to help with plans already under way, or if you have an idea that will give congregation members a chance to join together outside of worship, please let us know.

Dianne Ledder, Fellowship Elder

Peg Bunnell

Fay Steineau

***NORTH PLAINFIELD YOUTH AND  
YOUNG ADULT  
COFFEE HOUSE***

**Friday January 8<sup>th</sup>**, 6-10pm. Parish Hall. For more information, contact Edwin Estevez @ [Edwin.estevezr@hotmail.com](mailto:Edwin.estevezr@hotmail.com)

***ACT***

***Active Christians Together***

Join us Saturday, **January 9<sup>th</sup>**, in the Parish Hall for **“REMEMBER WHEN”**. Please bring a photo of yourself from the past. Dinner served at 6pm.

***CONFIRMATION/YOUTH  
GROUP***

**January 3**, The confirmation class will meet from 12-1:30pm in Pastor Shannan's office.

**January 10**, The youth group will help out with hosting the Movie Afternoon. Meet at 2:30pm and plan to be finished by 7pm for a day of lots of fun! Bring a friend!!!!

**January 17**, The confirmation class will travel to worship at the Riverside Church ([www.theriversidechurchny.org](http://www.theriversidechurchny.org)) in NYC to learn about how Christian worship happens at a church VERY different from our own! After worship, they will have lunch together near the church, and then walk a few blocks to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine ([www.stjohndivine.org](http://www.stjohndivine.org)) to see this magnificent structure. The day will be led by our Seminarian Andrew Scales. Cost for the day: \$20/person. Scholarships available (see Pastor Shannan). Any parents who might want to join us on this day are welcome to!

**January 24**, The Youth Group will meet from 11:30-1:30pm to begin work on cleaning up and organizing the youth group as a space we can use long-term. We'll have lunch together too!

**January 31**, No youth group/confirmation class  
**Reminder**, The Confirmation Retreat is March 12-14 at Camp Johnsonburg! Don't forget to send in your \$20 for the retreat to the church office no later than January 3<sup>rd</sup>. Scholarships are available.

***CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE***

Faye Steinau, Al Smith, and Peggy Bunnell want to thank all the people who donated generously to the Giving Tree. You all helped 30 families have a Merry Christmas!

***NORTH PLAINFIELD WEEK OF  
CHRISTIAN UNITY***

Every year in January, Christians across the world celebrate the *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity* from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup>. This is an observance celebrated across the Christian religious spectrum (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, etc.), and more information can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/2nzega>. The scripture focus for this year is Luke 24:48, "You are witnesses of these things." **Our North Plainfield Ministerium group will be hosting a gathering of our churches on Monday January 25<sup>th</sup> from 7-9pm at St. Luke's Roman Catholic Church 300 Clinton Avenue in North Plainfield for a light dinner, discussion, and worship service. I want to encourage as many members of our congregation as possible to join us for a spirit-filled and educational event.** Our church is responsible for the main dish portion of the potluck meal. If you would like to attend, please RSVP by calling the church office by January 15<sup>th</sup>. Also, in observance of this week of Christian Unity, Father George Farrell and I will be doing a pulpit exchange on January 24<sup>th</sup>! -Pastor Shannan

***JANUARY WOMEN'S RETREAT***

The Presbyterian Women's Retreat for Watchung Avenue Presbyterian Church will be on Saturday **January 30<sup>th</sup> at Mount Saint Mary's House of Prayer in Watchung** <http://www.msmhope.org/>. The theme for the retreat is "**Biblical Sabbath: Personal Renewal**" and will be led by Pastor Shannan. All women of the church are invited to attend the retreat whether or not they are active in PW. All are welcome!!!!

- To sign up for the retreat, please contact Gwyn Gronlund at 908-754-1251. The cost for the retreat is \$15 and Gwyn will also give you an assignment of an ingredient to bring for soup.
- The retreat begins at 9am and ends at 3pm. It will include morning and afternoon sessions, time for silent retreat, walking the grounds, a visit to the Mt. St. Mary bookstore, lunch, and worship with communion.

**Please join us! We're looking forward to a wonderful day together of fellowship, renewal, and friendship!**

## ***CONGREGATIONAL MEETING***

The Session has set the date for our 2010 Congregational Meeting for **Sunday February 7<sup>th</sup>**. We will share lunch in the Parish Hall immediately after worship followed by our meeting. Childcare will be provided free of charge during the congregational meeting (kids have lunch first up in the Parish Hall). If you are in need of childcare during the congregational meeting, please **RSVP** to Kathleen, in the church office by **February 1<sup>st</sup>**.

## ***PANCAKE SUPPER***

Save the date - Tuesday, **February 16, 2010**.  
Shrove Tuesday supper for the family.  
Tickets will go on sale in January.  
More information later.

## ***PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY***

The Prayer Shawl Ministry is stitching along. Our first six shawls were blessed in worship on November 22. We are meeting monthly, and plan another knitting and crochet workshop for February. Evening meetings are planned for **January 19**, at the home of Louise Thul, and **February 26**, location to be announced.

The next workshop will take place in the lounge after worship on **February 21<sup>st</sup>**. If you would like to learn to knit or crochet, please join us at the workshop.

You may speak to Gwyn Gronlund for more information (908) 754-1251

## ***SOUP-A-THON***

Sunday, **March 7<sup>th</sup>** @ 12 Noon, Parish Hall  
Enjoy a variety of soups and dessert too! Tickets are \$ 6 for adults and \$3 for children 10 & under.

If you would like to donate a soup, call Estelle at 908-756-2077. If you would like to donate a dessert call Peggy 908-668-0051 or Faye 908-755-8413.

Get your appetite ready and join us for great food and a great time.

## ***TEMPORARY HOUSING***

Longtime member of Congregation (male) needs a small efficiency or large room with access to refrigerator/cooler, microwave/stove. For the months of January and February. The person is healthy, quiet and reliable. Please contact Pastor Shannan for more information or if you can be of assistance.

## ***WOMEN'S CRAFT GROUP***

Bring your scrapbooking, knitting, or other projects and come enjoy each other's company, plus get a break from your busy week. We meet on Friday evenings from 7:30 – 9:30 PM - sometimes in the church library and sometimes at someone's house. We even go on field trips occasionally! Come join us whenever you can – just call Gwyn Gronlund (908-754-1251) or Marilyn Cortright (home: 908-753-2859, cell: 908-295-4754) to find out where we will be meeting that week!

## ***THANK YOU***

I would like to thank everyone for all their thoughts and prayers during Heidi's pregnancy and delivery. I believe wholeheartedly in the power of prayer and feel that all the prayers lifted up for Heidi and the babies during the pregnancy helped keep them safe and well.

Chase Michael Rapach was born at 8:22 pm on Saturday, November 28, 2009 weighing in at 5 pounds and 18 ½ inches long, he was followed by his little sister Lyla Anne who was born at 8:30 pm weighing in at 4 pounds 14 ounces and 18 inches long.

Heidi and Shawn are adjusting to parenthood and lack of sleep! The babies are growing and doing well and we hope in the next couple of months that they will make their first visit to WAPC.

Thanks again for all the well wishes and prayers,  
Cathy Boleyn

A thank you to the congregation for their well wishes, cards, and prayers during Shannan's unexpected surgery last month. It was appreciated by all of us! -Juan, Shannan, and Sofia Ocampo

Thank you to all for accompanying me at my mother's memorial service. -Sandra Hernandez

## ***CHURCH USAGE UPDATE***

Beginning this October, Cristo mi Rey, the Latino Congregation that utilizes our space on Tuesday and Saturday evenings has moved their rental location in our building from the Sanctuary to the Parish Hall for their worship services. We realize that there are some nights that we have WAPC activities that use the Parish Hall. We have been able to make Cristo mi Rey aware of the conflicts through the end of 2009. **But, we need your help. We need to give them 30 days notice about**

**conflicts, so if you know of one, or are scheduling an activity, please let Kathleen in the church office know ASAP.** If you have any questions, please be in touch with the Trustees.

### ***PRAYER LIST***

Prayers of healing and comfort for *The Fenz Family*.

*Harry Krausse*, who is at home.

*Chase Michael & Lyla Anne Rapach*, prayers of thanksgiving for their birth on November 28<sup>th</sup>.

*JP Watters*, recovering from hip replacement surgery.

*Mary Wirth*, Frank Dell Bene's mother and Pat's grandmother.

*Beker Ixim*, Michele Wallace-Ixim's husband detained in Guatemala.

*Amanda Lake*, prayers of strength and courage.

*Graciela Garcia*, for her health, Erika Marano's mother.

*Agnes Marinelli*, JoAnn Hoppe's Mother.

*Frank Dell Bene*, at home.

*Helen Stagg*, at home.

*Vi Krieg*, at home.

*Alberta Vosburgh*, at Arbor Glenn Continuing Care, Rm. 636.

*Helen Miller*, at home.

*Edwin Estevez, Jr.*, our Seminarian.

*Andrew Scales*, Our Seminary Intern.

### ***iGIVE.com***

Would you like to help the church with some extra income while you shop online? Follow these easy steps:

1. Go to [www.igive.com](http://www.igive.com)
2. Create a free account for yourself
3. Designate Watchung Ave Presbyterian Church as your charity (using their navigation menu, go to NJ and then Religious/Spiritual Institutions)
4. Every time to shop online, first go to iGive.com and then go to your shopping sites FROM their website
5. Donations are automatically generated at NO cost to you (what this means is that vendors like LLBean, Amazon.com, etc. then give a % to us)
6. You can watch your shopping history and donations generated by your shopping on their calculator

Take a look at iGive's list of vendors! They have over 700 and counting—and almost all are popular websites you are probably already using. Ask your family and friends to sign up and help out our church! Thanks!

### ***ASP NEWS***

Somewhere through the course of history, someone said something like, "It's the small things in life that matter." At the After School Program, I am reminded of this everyday; on many levels. There is the literal meaning of the statement, that kids (who are smaller in size) matter the most; that they should be your number one priority while at work. On the other hand, there is the more common symbolic meaning. Yet still, the Program reminds me of that too. It reminds me of all the little things that happen throughout the crazy, stressful, hectic work day. The little things that make the day bearable, enjoyable, and ultimately grateful. Small things like not finding anything to listen to on the bus' radio, but then finding an old Christmas carol that all the kids start signing to. Little things, like the smile on a Kindergartener's face when they receive a gift. Tiny things, like the look of relief on a parent's face when the WAPC donates gifts to their family; making their life and holidays more endurable. It is these small things that make Christmas the celebration of life, love, and grace. Merry Christmas from all at the Program and accept our appreciation for letting us be a small part of your lives.

**James Winston**, Director  
Embracing Change Through Character  
**170 Watchung Avenue**  
**North Plainfield, New Jersey 07060**  
**908-755-8202**

### ***NEEDED***

A volunteer is needed to dust the library once a month. Cleaning supplies are provided. If you can do this, call Beverly Krausse at 908-757-6654.

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A volunteer is needed to dust the library once a month. Cleaning supplies are provided. If you can do this, call Beverly Krausse at 908-757-6654.

## *February Birthdays*

Andrew Lake	2-Feb
Katy Strasko	6-Feb
Faye Steinau	7-Feb
Harry Krausse	10-Feb
Miguel A. Ramirez	12-Feb
Harriet Stambaugh	14-Feb
Leslie Hansen	17-Feb
Evelyn LaMaire	21-Feb
Helen Bradley	22-Feb
Emilio Peleaz	23-Feb
Patricia Taylor	25-Feb
Ethan Gottshall	25-Feb
Debbie Borberly	26-Feb
Autumn Rodriguez	27-Feb

## *Worship Services & Regular Meetings*

### *Regular Sunday Schedule:*

9:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal  
10:00 a.m. Worship  
10:20 a.m. Church School  
11:00 a.m. Coffee/Fellowship

### *Weekly*

Tuesday Bible Study 10 a.m. in Lounge  
Wednesday Choir Rehearsal 7:30 p.m.  
Thursday Bible Study 7:30 p.m.-Lounge

### *Monthly*

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Holy Communion  
1<sup>st</sup> Sunday FISH (Food Bank) Collection  
1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Confirmation Class(12-1:30)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Healing Service  
2<sup>nd</sup> Monday Session meets at 7:30 p.m.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Monday Trustee's Meeting at 7:30 p.m.  
2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Youth Group 11:30-1p.m.  
4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Men's Breakfast  
4<sup>th</sup> Monday CHATS - 7:15 p.m. in Library

## **NEWSLETTERS EMAILED**

The church can save money on postage every month by emailing the newsletter to you rather than regular mail. You will receive your newsletter Thursday or Friday of that week "hot off the press". Please consider this option and email the church office at: [wapc@verizon.net](mailto:wapc@verizon.net) with your email address.

## *WAPC Schedule of Regular Events*

### Sunday Schedule:

9:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal  
10:00 am Worship  
10:20 am Church School  
10:55 am Coffee/Fellowship

### Monday Schedule

8:15 am Head Start  
2:30 pm ASP  
7:15 pm CHATS (4th Monday)  
7:30 pm Boy Scouts Parish Hall

### Tuesday Schedule

8:15 am Head Start  
9:30 am WIC (Tuesday)  
10:00 am Bible Study  
2:30 pm ASP 1  
7-10 pm Iglesia Cristo Mi Rey  
Parish Hall & classroom

### Wednesday Schedule

8:15 am Head Start  
2:30 pm ASP  
7:30 pm Chancel Choir

### Thursday Schedule

8:15 am Head Start  
2:30 pm ASP  
7:30 pm Bible Study

### Friday Schedule

8:15 am Head Start  
2:30 pm ASP

### Saturday Schedule

7-10 pm - Iglesia Cristo Mi Rey  
Parish Hall & classroom

*Visions* is published monthly.

The due date for articles for the February newsletter is: ***Monday, January 25, 2010***

Pastor: *Shannan Vance-Ocampo*  
Pastor Emeritus: *Brooks Smith*  
Student Pastor: *Andrew Scales*  
Director of Music: *Sam Chapin*  
WAPC After School Program – 908-755-8202  
Interim ASP Director: *James Winston*  
Visions Editor: *Kathleen Golmont*

## *Key Cards*

We have a new policy for replacement of key cards. Due to the cost of the cards we will need to collect a fee of \$10.00 for replacement of lost key cards.

# MOVIE, DISCUSSION, AND POTLUCK DINNER AFTERNOON!!!!

We're bringing back a "tradition" and making it new again!

Sunday January 10, 2010, 3-6:30pm

Screening of the "No  
Impact Man"  
documentary, eco-  
activities for children,  
eco-discussion for  
adults, and a light  
potluck meal to share!

*Everyone is welcome—all ages, all  
family types, whether you are a  
member or not of our church! Free  
childcare for the littlest children so  
that anyone who would like to can  
participate!*



RSVP to [wapc@verizon.net](mailto:wapc@verizon.net) or 908.755.2781 by **January 8<sup>th</sup>** (and let us know a simple dish you are bringing for the potluck!) Please bring \$2 to help defray costs (free will offering) **Event Location:** Watchung Avenue Presbyterian Church • 170 Watchung Avenue • North Plainfield, NJ 07060 (Corner of Fairview and Watchung Avenues)

# The Meaning of Church Membership

By Susan Andrews

## Meeting Our Members

- Anna is a thirty-year-old single woman who is a successful lawyer in a large metropolitan area. She lives a comfortable and busy life, but finds herself restless and unfocused much of the time. She has started attending worship at a local Presbyterian Church, drifting back to the congregation where she was confirmed fifteen years earlier. She is looking for something to give meaning to her life and a way to serve others beyond her small, private world.
- Doug has never attended church or found anything attractive about religion. But recently he married Beth, who is a practicing Christian, and he finds something deep and compelling about her life of faith. He has started reading the Bible and exploring theological ideas, and finds himself opening up to the presence of God through the weekly ritual of worship. Doug feels drawn to Jesus Christ and yearns to make a commitment. But he still has intellectual doubts about some of the traditional doctrines of the faith.
- Sheila is married to Don, an Air Force officer who moves around every two or three years. Such constant mobility is hard on the family, but Sheila has learned that the church welcomes her wherever she goes. Her faith is strong and simple and nourishing, and she quickly finds a congregation in each new community where her gifts and talents are warmly welcomed.

Anna, Doug, and Sheila represent different kinds of members in our congregations today—approaching church membership from a variety of places on their spiritual journeys. Anna will join a church by reaffirmation of faith—returning to an active life of faith after a long period of inactivity. Doug will make a profession of faith—claiming Jesus as Lord for the first time in his life, not out of intellectual certainty but out of a heart yearning for a personal relationship with God. And Sheila will join by transfer of letter—easily moving from one community of faith to another, finding a common story and a spiritual family wherever she goes.

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## The Three Cs of Church Membership

There are three central values or ideas that shape our understanding of church membership:

1. **Covenant.** As with all aspects of the Christian life, church membership begins with God—with God's covenant made with each one of us through baptism. From the beginning of the Bible to the end, God says to us, "I will be your God and you will be my people—no matter what." And God fulfills this covenant promise again and again by forgiving us and re-creating us and encouraging us through all the failures and all the struggles and all the perplexities of life. The ultimate expression of God's tenacity and love for us comes through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus—where God's Word becomes flesh and dwells among us—taking every moment of human living and transforming it into the likeness of God. Such extraordinary love and faithfulness is the heart of God's covenant with us. And this holy covenant becomes the model for our human covenants, our human promises to be loving and faithful and constant in all the relationships of our living. Church membership is our primary covenant response to God's dependable presence in our lives.
2. **Commitment.** Just as God stays connected to us no matter what, we are called through church membership to stay connected to God faithfully, regularly, permanently—in good times and in bad. Loyalty and fidelity are becoming rare values in our fast-paced and novelty-oriented world. But it is only through long-term commitment and disciplined participation that church membership can change us and root us in what is really important. Every member of a church is a "minister"—one who serves God. And commitment is the fuel that energizes our ministry, year in and year out.

3. **Community.** In his letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul offers an organic image of the church. We are the body of Christ, an interconnected, interdependent, integrated community of believers, dependent on one another to make the church whole. Our covenant commitment is not just with God but with one another. And so as church members we admit our need for others and their need for us.

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## Conclusion

And so, becoming a church member is a commitment to a covenant relationship—a relationship with a living and risen Jesus, and a relationship with a vulnerable and growing community of faith. Or, as the *Book of Order* says: “One becomes an active member of the church through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and acceptance of his Lordship in all of life.” (G-5.0101)

Profession of faith in Jesus Christ is first of all a matter of *trust*—not intellectual certainty or moral perfection. In the Presbyterian Church, we do not have to understand or know all the doctrines of the faith. Neither do we have to master all the disciplines of a mature spiritual life. Profession of faith is the beginning of a journey toward the knowledge and certainty of God, and it will take the rest of our lives to complete this journey. To trust is the key.

But trust in Jesus Christ only comes alive through **discipleship**—through obedient living, loving service, and daily disciplines of faith. The *Book of Order* is explicit about what faithful church membership requires:

- a. proclaiming the good news,
- b. taking part in the common life and worship of a particular church,
- c. praying and studying Scripture and the faith of the Christian Church,
- d. supporting the work of the church through the giving of money, time, and talents,
- e. participating in the governing responsibilities of the church,
- f. demonstrating a new quality of life within and through the church,
- g. responding to God’s activity in the world through service to others,
- h. living responsibly in the personal, family, vocational, political, cultural, and social responsibilities of life,
- i. working in the world for peace, justice, freedom, and human fulfillment.

—(G-5.0102)

Active church membership calls us and equips us to be God’s yeast and salt and light in the unfinished cathedral of the world.

May it be so!

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**About the Writer:** Rev. Susan Andrews is the General Presbyter of Hudson River Presbytery, after serving over thirty years as a parish pastor. She also served as the Moderator of the 215th General Assembly in 2003.

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December 9, 2009

### Building a world of interfaith cooperation

*Teaching respect for other faiths is vital, says Grawemeyer winner*

BY MICHELLE MELTON  
LOUISVILLE PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



Eboo Patel

**LOUISVILLE** — Teaching young people how to appreciate and engage in religious diversity is critical to achieving peace and security in the world, says the winner of the prestigious 2010 Louisville Grawemeyer Award in Religion, presented jointly by [Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary](#) (LPTS) and the University of Louisville.

Eboo Patel, founder and executive director of Interfaith Youth Core, won the prize for his 2007 autobiography, *Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim, the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation*. He was selected from among 67 nominations worldwide.

Eboo Patel's dream is to build a world where interfaith cooperation is the norm.

Patel's organization, based in Chicago, encourages young people of different religions to perform community service, explore common values, and build bridges among diverse faiths, which he says is vital to the world's future. The organization is now active on about 75 college campuses.

Patel was born in India to a Muslim family and immigrated to Chicago as a child. As a teenager, he struggled with what he saw as a lack of religious pluralism in America. In *Acts of Faith*, Patel, now 34, tells his own life story of how he first felt his different identities as Indian, Muslim, and American clashed with one another, but later realized that appreciating the common value of pluralism among all three was the key to finding peace.

In his book, Patel notes that some of the most devastating acts of terrorism over the past two decades were perpetrated by people between the ages of 15 and 30 who had been nurtured by the teaching of violent religious radicals: The Atlanta Olympic bombings in 1993; the attacks on September 11, 2001; the London bombings in 2005; the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin; the Midwest shooting rampage targeting Jews, Asians, and African Americans in 1997; the religious violence in India, Sri Lanka, West Africa, and other places.

"Every time we see a teenager kill someone in the name of God," Patel writes, "we should picture a pair of shadowy hands behind him, showing him how to make the bomb or point the gun...and then we should ask: 'Why weren't the hands of people who care about pluralism shaping that kid instead of the hands of religious totalitarians?'"

"Religious extremists all over the world are harnessing adolescent angst for their own ends," said

Susan Garrett, LPTS professor of New Testament, who directs the religion award. “Patel urges us to take advantage of the short window of time in a young person’s life to teach the universal values of cooperation, compassion, and mercy.”

Patel’s own experiences prompted him to launch a movement to build interfaith cooperation by inspiring college students to champion the cause for unity and peace. He formed [Interfaith Youth Core](#) in 1998.

A Rhodes Scholar, Patel is now a member of President Obama’s Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships and the Religious Advisory Committee of the Council on Foreign Relations. In October, *U.S. News & World Report* named him one of America’s Best Leaders in 2009. Earlier this year, Patel won the Roosevelt Institute’s Freedom of Worship Medal. Previously, he was named by *Islamica Magazine* as “one of 10 young Muslim visionaries shaping Islam in America” and chosen by Harvard’s *Kennedy School Review* as one of “five future policy leaders to watch.”

A board member of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and member of the national committee of the Aga Khan Foundation USA, he also is a Young Global Leader in the World Economic Forum and an Ashoka Fellow, a distinction awarded to a select group of social entrepreneurs.

He has spoken at the Nobel Peace Prize Forum in Minnesota, the Clinton Global Initiative in New York City, and the Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Lecture at Westminster Abbey in London.

He will speak about his award-winning book at LPTS on April 14, 2010.

Besides writing a religion blog for the *Washington Post*, “The Faith Divide,” Patel has written for the *Chicago Tribune* and *Sunday Times of India*. He is a regular guest on *CNN* and *National Public Radio*.

## January 2010 Church School Activities

### STARTING OUT NEW: A NEW YEAR AND JESUS STARTS HIS MINISTRY!

	January 3 <sup>rd</sup>	January 10 <sup>th</sup>	January 17 <sup>th</sup>	January 24 <sup>th</sup>	January 31 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Scripture and Theme of the Day</b>	The Wise Men Visit the Baby Jesus Matthew 2: 1-12	Jesus Gets Baptized Luke 3: 15-22	Jesus Goes to a Wedding John 2: 1-11	Jesus Tells People What He’s Going to Do Luke 4: 14-21	Some People do not like Jesus Luke 4: 21-30
<b>Lesson and Activities to Connect us to Scripture</b>	<b>COOKING AND ART</b> Children to make Epiphany Star Cookies and Ornaments	<b>STORYTELLING</b> A dramatic storytelling of Jesus and John the Baptist with some really cool props!	<b>COOKING</b> Make a wedding “feast” of grape juice and cupcakes. Learn about food and celebrations during the time of Jesus.	<b>ART</b> Making scrolls to remember that Jesus reads from Isaiah and saw himself as a prophet	<b>DRAMA</b> Acting out Jesus’ encounter with people who didn’t like him and talking about how we can do the same thing
<b>Special Activity</b>	Communion Sunday	Family Movie Afternoon at the Church and Eco-Activities for Kids	Martin Luther King Jr. Weekend	Children’s Sermon with Father George from St. Joseph’s	

# WAPC Activities--January 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 New Year's Day <b>Church Office Closed</b> , No HS or ASP	2 7-10pm—CR, PH
3 10am-Worship & Church School 12-1:30pm-Confirmation Class (Pastor's Study)	4	5 10-11:30am Bible Study  7-10pm—CR, PH	6  7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	7  7-9pm Bible Study	8  6-10pm-North Plainfield Youth and Young Adult Coffee House, PH	9  6-9pm—ACT Meeting, Parish Hall 7-10pm—CR in Sanctuary
10 10am-Worship, Church School & Healing Service  3-6:30pm Family Movie Night and Dinner	11  7:30pm Session and Trustees Meetings	12 10-11:30am Bible Study  7-10pm—CR, PH	13  7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	14  7-9pm Bible Study	15	16  7-10pm—CR, PH
17 10am-Worship & Church School Confirmation Day trip to NYC	18 Martin Luther King Day, <b>Church Office Closed</b> , No HS ASP Training 9-5pm, PH	19 10-11:30am Bible Study  7-10pm—CR, PH	20  6pm—Eco-Ministry Meeting 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	21  7-9pm Bible Study	22	23 9am-3pm Elizabeth Presbytery Meeting 7-10pm—CR, PH
24 10am-Worship & Church School 11:30am-Youth Group	25 7-9pm—Christian Unity Event at St. Luke's 7:15pm, Library C.H.A.T.S. 7:30-9pm--BS	26 10-11:30am Bible Study  7-10pm—CR, PH	27  7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	28  7-9pm Bible Study	29	30 9am-3pm Women's (PW) Retreat, Mt. St. Mary House of Prayer 7-10pm-CR, PH
31 10am-Worship & Church School						

### December

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

### Notes:

CR: Cristo mi Rey Rental (evenings)—In Parish Hall unless otherwise noted  
 HS: Head Start Rental, M-F 7am-3pm  
 ASP: After School Program, M-F 2:45-6pm  
 ACT: Adult Christians Together  
 WIC: Women, Infants and Children Rental  
 C.H.A.T.S.: Adoption Support Group  
 BS—Boy Scouts

### February

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

