

VISIONS September 2011

After the last two weeks we've had here in New Jersey it seems only appropriate to write about the world around us. A rare earthquake just outside of Washington D.C. that shook us up this far north. Cracks in the Washington Monmument, spires falling off the National Cathedral. And then of course, the much bigger event of Hurricane Irene. Luckily, some of the steam ran out before she got to us, but the affects of this huge and monster storm have been devastating for many and the responsibility now falls to those of us who were spared the worst to help out our neighbors as we can. We seem to be at the mercy of the whims of nature these days.

I will admit to being very shaken up by Hurricane Irene. Our town had a mandatory evacuation, and we were told to expect the bay to inundate the town (and our home is only a block off the bay!). Juan and I packed up our most valued possessions, Sofia packed up her pet rabbit, and we headed away from our home. I spent most of the night of the Hurricane tossing and turning in my sleep, worrying about our home and neighborhood. I am sure I wasn't alone—and that countless other people had very sleepless nights too! We were very lucky to have been spared the worst (only water in the basement), but many around us, even those in our own congregation, have much more signifigant problems in their homes. Like everyone else, I do not enjoy those feelings of being out of control, and not able to protect my own home.

Even though I love all of it, the truth is, my home is just full of stuff. The most important things we were able to get out—Juan, Sofia, her rabbit, Juan's paintings, and our photos. Most of what we "own" in this life, at the end of the day, isn't terribly valuable. The real "things of value" if you get down to it, are really a small percentage of what makes up our accumulated life. There is that verse in the Matthew's gospel: *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."* Perhaps one of the benefits of the last few weeks is that we are reminded to think more clearly about what our

true possessions of value are—and where our true treasures in this life and the next life.

As you all know, I am an avid gardener, and love growing all sorts of flowers and plants in the summer. One of the things that upset me the most when we were leaving our house was the prospect that the brackish bay water was going to inundate our neighborhood and kill my plants. That is one "possession" I'm very tied to! My friend Mieke Vandersall, who many of you have met, was visiting us last weekend when we



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



Telephone: 908-755-2781 / 2775
Email: wapc@verizon.net
Web: www.wapc.net
Fax: 908-756-7981

had to pack up the house. Mieke and Sofia set out to cut all of the flowers and arrange them in vases while Juan and I packed up the house. At least we could enjoy them cut! One of the things we couldn't cut were our rose bushes. They were full of buds but not yet blooms. When we returned home late the next day, grateful our part of town did not flood, our rose bush was in bloom. A reminder that I need to trust a bit more, and that even when things look stormy and gloomy—beautiful new things can emerge. My roses bloomed in the middle of the hurricane!

The other thing that is very much on my mind these days is the 10th anniversary of September 11th. It is a day that is seared into my memory, as I know it is for each of us. We live just outside of New York City, and all of our communities were so deeply affected. Many of us remember friends, neighbors, family who were lost on that day. Others of us mourn the violence of that day and the violence that it has spawned. It changed us. I find myself in a very reflective mood as the anniversary approaches.

When I served the Rumson Church we participated in quite a few funerals post-9/11. One of those was for a man who left behind his wife (a member of the Session) and his two children, one in high school, the other in college. The experience of that funeral, walking the journey of grief with that family made an impression on me that will last forever.

About a year before I left Rumson, the widow of the man who died in the Towers called me. She had begun rebuilding her life and was dating someone. They wanted to get married, would I marry them? Her children and his were in attendance at the wedding, along with her former husband's supportive parents—celebrating her new chapter in life, and also honoring what had been in the past. New life, new beginnings rose out of the ashes and the rubble of life.

A good friend of mine in ministry in this Presbytery wrote a few days ago that the Hurricane is a "reminder that the universe doesn't center around us." As Juan likes to remind me more often than I like to hear it, "we are not in control." But there are enough reminders around us to see that even in the midst of destruction, sadness, anniversaries, and all those things out there in the world that terrify us—that God is in control, making a way, and always in the business of Resurrection, New Life, and Beauty....

Peace,



Rev. Shannan Vance-Ocampo

Disaster Assistance/Hurricane Irene

Was your home affected by Hurricane Irene? NJ has been declared a federal disaster area, and so if your home/apartment was affected, you need help beyond your normal insurance policies, or you were flooded and do not live in a flood zone, you are now eligible for aid from FEMA. Please go to www.disasterassistance.gov or call 800-621-FEMA.

Please contact Pastor Shannan if you need help accessing aid or help putting your home back in order. We want to organize work crews from our congregation to help those in church and community in need.

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



Telephone: 908-755-2781 / 2775
Email: wapc@verizon.net
Web: www.wapc.net
Fax: 908-756-7981

WAPC is very pleased to announce our new Director of Music, Jeremy Messmer.



Jeremy Messmer

Jeremy Messmer holds a Bachelor of Arts in Music Education from Roberts Wesleyan College, and a Master of Arts in Vocal Performance from New York University. He has been leading music in congregations on both coasts since he was 15 years old. He got an early start at his father's church, Caledonia Assembly of God, in Caledonia, NY. There he served as music director for just over ten years. While in that community, Jeremy also led the choir for the Caledonia-Mumford Church Council Choir. Jeremy most recently served as music director at St. John's Lutheran Church in Antioch, CA for the past three years. While in Antioch, Jeremy also music directed and guest directed for the Hapgood Theatre Company, and served as a founding faculty member at Delta Academy for the Performing Arts. Jeremy has also spent time teaching in high school vocal music programs and colleges, and guest conducting for various choirs in Western New York. He has performed in musicals, solo concerts, as well as with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra Chorale. He is featured on several recordings of new American composers with the Roberts Wesleyan College Chorale. A composer himself, Jeremy has produced and performed on a recording of his Oratorio: *Adam & Eve*.

The Music Director Search Committee was Wayne Fabricius (Chair of Personnel/Session), Leslie Hansen (Choir), John Sullivan (Choir), and Monica Boleyn (Handbells). After face-to-face candidate interviews, the committee brought our top two candidates during the week of July 20th to audition with our adult voice and handbell choirs. After each audition, the committee met with the choirs to solicit their feedback and help guide our recommendation to the Session. The Session voted unanimously to engage Jeremy Messmer as our new Director of Music on Sunday July 26th and to dismiss the Search Committee with their thanks for a job well done. The search committee will continue to work with Jeremy during his transition to WAPC over the next few months.

**We welcome Jeremy to the WAPC Family and
pray for God's blessings to be with Jeremy and
our congregation as we begin a new chapter of ministry together!**

September Worship

September 4th: **Labor Day/Christian Vocation Sunday**

Sacrament: Communion

Scripture: Ezekiel 33: 1-11 &
Matthew 18: 15-20

Sermon: "Agreeing to Disagree"

September 11: **Church School Kick-Off Sunday
September 11th Remembrance
North Plainfield Community 9/11 Service 3pm
(Vermule Mansion)**

Sacrament: Communion

Scripture: Psalm 114, Romans 14: 1-12 &
Matthew 18: 21-35

Sermon: "Remembering, Release, and
Resurrection"

September 18th: **Blessing of Prayer Shawls,
Student Pastor, Chris Bailey, first Sunday**

Scripture: Exodus 16: 2-15 &
Philippians 1: 21-30

Sermon: "Real Food and Fuel for the
Journey"

September 25th:

Scripture: Exodus 17: 1-7 &
Matthew 21: 23-32

Sermon: "No Whining Allowed"

Mission: Visitors from El Centro
Hispanomerica in Plainfield

September 11th

This month we mark the 10th anniversary of September 11th. For so many of us it is a solemn day of remembrance. The 10th anniversary also falls on a Sunday, and so we will be having a special worship service at 10AM to commemorate the day. Please also join the entire North Plainfield community at 3PM at Vermule Mansion (see initiation in Visions for more information for a service led by clergy in town. Pastor Shannan will be participating in this service.

WAPC Online

Don't forget to visit our church online! The website is updated weekly with new blog posts, news articles, worship recordings and other updates! www.wapc.net
Follow us on Twitter and Facebook (click the links at the top of the WAPC website to join us on Social Media!)

Changes at WAPC this Fall

We have many things that are new at the church this fall!

- We welcome Jeremy Messmer, our new Director of Music!!!
- We celebrate the new life for our After School Program as the [Plainfield YMCA](#) takes over operations. You will see their new sign on our front lawn. We are very excited about our partnership with the YMCA!
- The Session and Trustees have also negotiated an exciting contract with the help of [GreenFaith](#) for solar panels on the roof of our building which will begin in November to supply at least 1/3 of our electric energy needs. We will be putting out more information about this project over the next month, but we are very excited to be saving \$\$\$ for WAPC, to be the very first congregation to "go solar" in North Plainfield, and to be a small part of the larger movement to care for the Creation with renewable energy sources.

Lots of changes—but change is good—and together we're moving in some great new directions!

Circle Of Hope

Circle of Hope will meet **September 11th**, 7:30pm, at the home of Cathy Lyttle.

Circle Of Joy

Circle of Joy will meet **September 8th**, 7:30pm, at the home of Beverly Krausse.

PW Meeting

There will be a brief **PW meeting Sunday September 25th**, after worship in the sanctuary.

Dollars Destroying the Deficit!

If every WAPC member gave an additional \$1/day all year—we would eliminate 100% of the church deficit! We would have more funds for mission & ministry. Put your \$ in the DDD envelope found in your pew rack and then the offering plate each week.

Mission Project—Help a Child

School Kits are desperately needed in many parts of the world. School Kits give children in impoverished schools, refugee camps, or other difficult settings some of the basic tools for learning. As you buy school supplies for your children or grandchildren this fall, please pick up a few extra items to donate.

PW will be collecting the following items to be assembled into School Kits for Church World Service.

Blunt scissors (rounded tip)
70-count spiral notebooks
30-centimeter (12") rulers
Hand-held pencil sharpeners
New pencils with erasers (not sharpened)
Large erasers
24 count boxes of crayons.

Baskets will be placed at the Sanctuary doors all four Sundays in September for collection of school items. Thank you for helping a child to learn.

Mission Opportunities

Local Mission

WAPC has been partnering with Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church on the third Thursday of each month to serve meals at the Plainfield YMCA shelter. Members of CAPC prepare the meals, and Pastor Rob and Barbara Martin transport and serve the meals. They can use help to load the food and drive it to the Y and to serve the dinner. This is a great way for families to participate in mission together. Upcoming dates are: **September 15th and October 20th**. If you are interested in helping out, contact Gwyn Gronlund of the Mission Committee for details at 908-754-1251.

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!

Ship Needs Your Help

We at SHIP hope that you all made it through the hurricane safely with minimal damage and inconvenience.

SHIP (Samaritan Homeless Interim Program) HQ in Somerville was flooded during the hurricane and lost all of the supplies they store in the basement (everything contaminated) as well as some of their food pantry on the first floor (first 4 feet high totally destroyed). We are in need of new clothing: socks, underwear, pants, shirts; and also canned goods and toiletries that we hand out to the needy that come to SHIP for assistance on a daily basis. If you can help call us at 908-393-9545 and leave a message as the phone system was also knocked out. I can retrieve the messages from my computer and return your call by cell. Let me know if you can help in any way or have questions.

I pray that you and your families are safe and make it through this difficult time.

Tom O'Leary, SHIP's Captain

Prayer Shawl Ministry Fall Meetings

Hearts, Hands & Stitches, the Prayer Shawl Ministry of WAPC, continues to meet monthly. We stitch at our meetings and on our own time to create comforting shawls. Our Fall meetings are scheduled as follows:

Tuesday, September 20th, at the home of Fran Young

Tuesday, October 18th, at the home of Cathy Boleyn

Tuesday, November 15th, at the home of Gail Smith

We will not hold an evening meeting in December. All evening meetings are held from 7:15 to 9:30 pm. We have a time of quiet, prayerful stitching, plan our projects, and have refreshments, of course. All are welcome to join.

On Sunday, September 18th, we will have a Blessing of Shawls in the worship service.

Call Gwyn Gronlund for more information: (908) 754-1251.

*The Abbott Society
(The WAPC Legacy Leaders League)*

The Abbott Society, formed by a Session vote in 2007, is now the permanent name for the organization of folks who have named WAPC in their will and/or who have already left a bequest.

It is a pleasure to report that the roster of members has grown significantly as more members have been added.

The current members are:

- Alice Abbott
- Doris Abbot
- Wayne Fabricius
- Dorothy Fenz
- Robert Goellner
- Harry & Beverly Krausse
- Al Smith
- Dick & Gail McKenna
- Brooks & Gail Smith
- Al Christ
- Dot Gannon

These folks have mentioned WAPC in their Wills and WAPC wants to make sure that they receive every ones thanks and appreciation for their long range planning and their generosity!

If **YOU** know of anyone else that has done this, or left WAPC a legacy please contact Shannan or Bob Goellner... **Bob's number is 908-510-5458** and his email is mr.bobg@yahoo.com. Shannan can of course be reached through the office.

Flowers For The Sanctuary

There are many opportunities to provide flowers for the sanctuary. **The 2011 Flower Chart** is posted through **December** on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall. Please sign the chart for the Sunday of your choice and complete all required information on the sign-up sheet. It is the responsibility of the donor to contact a florist (or bring flowers from your garden)

If you do not have a florist, **Gray's**, Rte. 22, in Watchung has been a good source (908 757-0400). If you want Grays' to deliver, make sure you instruct them to do so.

Leslie Hansen is also interested in doing flower arrangements; she may be called at 908 604-0337. Leslie will place your flowers in the Sanctuary on Sunday morning when she comes for choir.
Gail Smith, PW Flower Chairperson
(908-753-1249)

Upcoming Events for Presbyterian Women

All women of the church, of all ages, and their guests are always invited!

Sunday, September 25, 2011

Meeting to elect officers and approve 2011-2012 budget, in sanctuary following worship.

Saturday, October 15, 2011

WAPC hosts Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery for continental breakfast and program, 9:30 a.m. until about noon.

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Women's Christmas covered dish dinner and worship service, beginning with punch bowl at 6:15 p.m.

Sunday, December 18, 2011

Annual Cookie Walk, in Parish Hall, following worship. Everyone invited!

Saturday, January 28, 2012

Day Retreat at Mount St. Mary House of Prayer, 9 am to 3 pm

Sunday, March 4, 2012

Annual Soup Luncheon, in Parish Hall, beginning about noon. Everyone invited!

Sunday, March 18, 2012

Basket weaving learning experience, all ages welcome, after worship, Bring bag lunch; dessert and beverages provided

Friday, April 13 to Saturday, April 14, 2012

Spring Retreat at Stony Point:

"How to be a Caring Congregation"

Stay overnight in a beautiful Victorian mansion and enjoy delicious meals.

Sunday, May 20, 2012

Tea for women and their children, grandchildren or young friends, In Parish Hall after worship

Sunday, June 3, 2012

Old Fashioned Strawberry Festival

PLEASE JOIN US FOR AS MANY EVENTS AS YOU CAN!

**WORKSHOP ON THE NEW FORM OF
GOVERNMENT!**

Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Many of you have been asking for guidance about implementing the new Form of Government. In response,

I will be leading a workshop during the Consultation Hour at the Stated Meeting of presbytery on **September 27, 2011.**

This will be at 4:00 pm at the Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church, 716 Watchung Avenue, Plainfield.

Please come with your questions!

In Christ,
Paul F. Rack
Stated Clerk

September Birthdays

Monica Boleyn	1-Sep
JoAnn Hoppe	1-Sep
Justin Lake	2-Sep
Joseph Steinau	9-Sep
Gary Young	12-Sep
Deborah Hooker	13-Sep
Shannan Vance-Ocampo	16-Sep
Larry Griffin	17-Sep
Jeanine Burke	17-Sep
Brian Burke	19-Sep
Sarellen Hogan	21-Sep
Tom Imperato	23-Sep
Tom Mullen	23-Sep
Sofia Ocampo-Vance	23-Sep
David Krausse	25-Sep
Nancy Burke	25-Sep
Julie Mullen	30-Sep
Christopher Piel	30-Sep
Ellen Velasquez Billard	30-Sep

Prayer List

- Prayers of guidance and thanksgiving for *Jeremy Messmer* as he begins his ministry at WAPC
- Prayers of healing for *Tom Ledder*, having shoulder surgery this week.
- Prayers of thanksgiving for *Gail Brown* who received word that she is now cancer free after surgery.
- Prayers of healing for *Mateo Pua*, 7-years old with leukemia. Mateo is the son of a Presbyterian pastor in Colombia.
- Prayers for those facing famine and hunger in the Horn of Africa and for the relief agencies working to save them.
- Prayers of healing for *Colleen Parliman*, recovering from surgery.
- Prayers of healing for *Luis Lugo*.
- Prayers of strength for *the people of Libya, Syria, and Bahrain*.
- Prayers of healing for *all of those affected by natural disasters*.
- Prayers of healing for the *City of Plainfield* and for the end of gun violence.
- *Alberta Vosburgh*, at Arbor Glenn Continuing Care, Rm. 636.
- *Helen Miller, Joan Brown & Estelle Kennedy*, at home.

Did You Know!

The Bereavement Hospitality Committee was set up by Dot Fenz in 1996, to be of assistance to members of the church at the time of a death in the family. The purpose of this committee is to coordinate an informal luncheon or dessert to be served in the Parish Hall following a funeral or memorial service. Members of the committee set up, serve and cleanup in addition to supplying coffee, tea and dessert. The family of the deceased is responsible for the main course and paper products. If in need of this service or you would like to serve on this committee, please call Faye Steinau.

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

Monthly

1st Sunday Holy Communion
1st Sunday FISH (Food Bank) Collection
2nd Sunday Healing Service
2nd Monday Session meets at 7:30 p.m.
3rd Monday Trustee's Meeting at 7:30 p.m.
2nd & 4th Sunday Youth Group 11:30-1p.m.
4th Sunday Men's Breakfast
3rd Tuesday Prayer Shawl Meeting 7:15 p.m.

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
7-10 pm Iglesia Cristo Mi Rey
Parish Hall

Monday Schedule

8:15 am Head Start
2:30 pm ASP
7:30 pm Boy Scouts Parish Hall

Tuesday Schedule

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

Wednesday Schedule

8:15 am Head Start
10:00 am Bible Study
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
6-8 pm Girl Scouts Parish Hall

Saturday Schedule

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

Visions is published monthly.

The due date for articles for the

October newsletter is:

Monday, September 26, 2011

Pastor: *Shannan Vance-Ocampo*

Pastor Emeritus: *Brooks Smith*

Director of Music: *Jeremy Messmer*

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.

Save The Date



Blessing of the Pets Sunday October 9th

Pets on leashes/cages welcome to join us for worship, and then blessing outside the church on the front lawn after worship!
Treats for pets will be served during the blessing!



CHURCH SCHOOL

Calling all parents and friends of children at WAPC! Please reach out to Elder Cori Peloso at coriandsteve@hotmail.com to sign up to be a part of church school and the crib room this year. We have an exciting new curriculum for our children, [Feasting on the Word](#), which we are very excited about—we we need everyone to sign up to be a part of leading our children in learning about God this year!

Sunday September 4, 2011	No Church School, Childcare Room open		
Sunday September 11, 2011	Rachel Weissenburger	Craft Sunday	
Sunday September 18, 2011		Matthew 20: 1-6	Rejoicing in God's Generous Love
Sunday September 25, 2011		Matthew 21: 23- 32	The Parable of the Two Sons

North Plainfield Remembers

September 11th...



Mayor Michael Giordano, Jr.

North Plainfield Borough Council

North Plainfield Clergy

Members of the North Plainfield Forum

Invite the Residents of North Plainfield

to attend an

Interfaith Community Service

In Commemoration of the 10th Anniversary

of the Tragic Events of 9/11/01

On

Sunday, September 11, 2011

At 3 o'clock PM

The service will take place on the Community Center Lawn
located on Vermeule Place.

*In the event of bad weather, the service will be conducted in Saint
Luke's Church, directly across the street from the Community Center.*

PEACEWORKS' WORK DAY SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

Please help PeaceWorks
prepare for our October 15 aid shipment to Nicaragua — Our 60th!
Sunday, September 11 from 1 to 6pm
United Presbyterian Church, 525 East Front Street, Plainfield, NJ



*No, Jim
this is no time
to do laundry!*

It's time to
inventory, sort, pack,
and clean-up the
items that have been
collecting with each
passing shipment in
the two storage
rooms at the United
Presbyterian Church
in Plainfield.

PeaceWorks has been deeply grateful to the United Presbyterian Church in Plainfield for hosting our biannual aid shipments to the people of Nicaragua. They have even allowed us to use two rooms in which to store items that don't make it into the 45 foot cargo containers into which we pack over 1100 items each shipment. At times our leap of faith jumps a bit too far, but our last shipment on May 7 broke the record as we had to fill each room with materials that did not get aboard for the container.

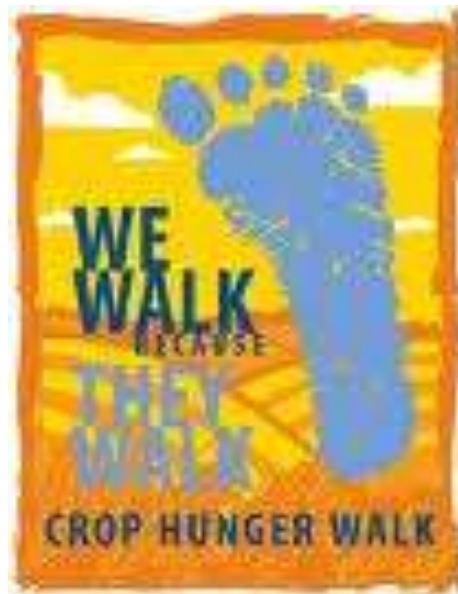
So now we need to assess just what we have in those rooms in order to determine how hard we have to press to gather enough materials to fill our October 15 cargo container.

We need enough volunteers so we can have two teams of 6 to 7 people who will remove, inventory, inspect, and repack all the stuff crammed into those two rooms. We plan to start at 1pm and work until 6 at the latest. We'll take volunteers out for Salvadoran food at Tia Rosa's afterwards. We need people of all sizes but especially those who will work hard and doggedly until the task is done.

Please let PeaceWorks' Jim Burchell know asap if you can help on Sept. 11. Call Jim at (973) 765-9102, send him an email to jburchell@peaceworks.org, or send up smoke signals under appropriate weather conditions.

WAPC HOSTS THE ANNUAL CROP WALK-- SUNDAY OCTOBER 23, 2011

12:45PM--Rain or Shine!!!



Join us for our annual CROP walk where we will walk to end hunger, bring awareness to the needs in our community, and support our Church World Service partners.

The walk kicks off on the front steps of Watchung Avenue Presbyterian Church. ([Click here for directions](#)). We begin with a little bit of music and a prayer, and then head out for the walk. This is a great time to get to know others in the Plainfield/North Plainfield community and to be a part of the solution to hunger!

All ages and abilities are welcome, the walk also ends at Watchung Avenue where we will have some goodies, photographic memories from walks in years past, more music, and fellowship.

Money raised in the walk supports the ministry of [Church World Service](#) and projects directly in our home community. Want to help out? Contact Tom Ledder or Al Smith via the church office (908-755-2781 or wapc@verizon.net)

[Sign up for the walk here](#)

[Download the form for walk here](#))

Latin American Protestant leaders criticize U.S. budget decisions

*Presbyterian News Service
by Jerry L. Van Marter*

LOUISVILLE — More than 100 Protestant leaders from 12 countries in Latin America, representing diverse denominations and ministries, have written an open letter expressing their concern over the economic crisis in the United States and the decisions being made by the U.S. Congress to address it.

In their letter addressed to Christians in the United States, the Latin American leaders urge them to “lift up the voice of the millions of people who do not have a part in the major economic decisions being made in Washington, D.C.”

They call upon U.S. government officials to recognize that the actions they take have consequences not only in the U.S. but also on the economies of other nations, and therefore in both the short and long terms, they will be affect millions of people in the countries of the global south.

Congress recently raised the debt limit of the U.S. by \$2 billion in exchange for budget cuts that will affect social programs that benefit the poor, not only in the U.S., but also in other countries, the letter states.

Expressing solidarity with the poor in the U.S., the Latin American leaders express their surprise and indignation at how the economic crisis has been addressed, and criticize politicians who “only embrace the interests of the rich, while preferring cuts to social programs that serve those in greatest need.”

“Paying more taxes will not bankrupt the rich. Cutting social benefits for retired people, the sick, and others puts the lives of such persons at risk. Is this not brutally unjust?” they exclaim.

The Latin American evangelical leaders encourage U.S. Christians to join the efforts already undertaken by various churches and Christian organizations, such as those leading the “Circle of Protection” movement, among others.

“Do not falter in your efforts, even though these may be lonely times for those whose prophetic voice does not appear to be heard by the politicians,” the letter concludes.

The letter is signed by a broad array of Latin American Protestant leaders: the presidents of the Protestant Councils and Alliances in countries such as Peru, Ecuador, Honduras, Argentina, Brasil and Uruguay, as well as directors of humanitarian aid and social action organizations.

It is also signed by such international bodies as the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI), Fellowship of Evangelical Churches (CONELA), the Association of Reformed and Presbyterian Churches of Latin America (AIPRAL), the Micah Network, Red del Camino (the Network of the Way) , the Movement Together for Children and others.

Denominational leaders who are signers include the Assembly of God, Baptists, Church of God, Free Brothers, Pentecostals, Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans, Reformed, Episcopalians. Other signers include seminary rectors and presidents, directors of national Bible societies, professors of theology, and leaders of other professional Christian networks.

The full text of the letter, dated Aug. 18:

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We are fellow believers with you in the God who has never ceased reaching out to defend the poor and the excluded. We view with deep concern recent decisions in the United States that will add to the suffering of the most vulnerable members of U.S. society.

As people of faith who have ourselves lived through economic and political turbulence in recent decades, we join with U.S. religious leaders from all Christian faith traditions who are fulfilling their prophetic role by standing in solidarity with the poor. In such times, faith leaders must be true to their vocation and amplify the voices of the vulnerable millions that have been excluded from the heated political debates that have raged in Washington.

Those who govern should know that the decisions made in your country have consequences for the economies of other nations around the world. In the medium and long term, they will affect the lives of millions of people in the countries of the Global South. It seems to us immoral that politicians, with some exceptions, embrace only the interests of the wealthy, preferring to cut social assistance to those in greatest need.

We know the generosity and solidarity of the American people and the assistance programs to the poor that operate through churches and civil society organizations in Latin America.

It is therefore inconceivable to us that the wealthy make no effort to take responsibility for the debt generated by the country as a whole. Paying more taxes will not bankrupt them. Cutting social benefits jeopardizes the lives of the retired, the sick and others who are in need. Is this not brutally unjust?

Therefore we, the undersigned Christian leaders of Latin America, write to express our solidarity with the people of the United States, especially those who embrace Christianity, who call for a true and just resolution to this crisis — a crisis that is not only economic, but also, and above all, moral.

We encourage you to join the efforts of various churches, including those called "Circle of Protection." Our prayers are with you, dear brothers and sisters in the faith. Do not falter in your efforts, although these may be lonely times for people whose prophetic voice the politicians seem not to want to hear.

God is watching the politicians and will not stop telling them: "Give justice to the poor!" (Psalm 82:3)

El Centro Hispanoamericano

Announces:

English as a Second Language (ESL)

Courses for 2011-2012

Four levels of English as a Second Language (ESL) Instruction:

Beginner to Advanced

Plus -

An English Conversation Class

In 2011-2012, El Centro Hispanoamericano will offer ESL instruction geared to students' English-language skills. Whether you are just beginning or you are well along in developing your skills, classes will be presented at your proficiency level.

Our brand-new English Conversation Class will also give students an opportunity to practice what they learn in class in an informal and relaxed setting.

Classes begin:

September 10, 2100

10:00am for registration

Each course is 18 weeks long

Courses offered during the Fall and Spring

Be sure to sign up today to reserve your place in class

\$25 for each 18 week course

The English Conversation Class is free to all those who register for an ESL course

For more information or to sign up, please call:

(908) 753-8730

Classes will be held at:

El Centro Hispanoamericano

525 East Front St.

Plainfield, NJ

We are located in the

United Presbyterian Church of Plainfield

Our entrance is at the rear of the church.

Look for our blue and white sign just off the parking lot

NORTH PLAINFIELD COMMUNITY GARDEN

A Joint Mission Project of Watchung Avenue Presbyterian Church and the Catholic Community of St. Joseph's

Cucumbers	109
Rutgers Jersey Tomatoes	40
Summer Squash	9
Zucchini	21
Broccoli	54
Cabbage	5
Eggplant (Italian)	28
Eggplant (Japanese)	11
Peppers (Bell)	29
Peppers (Jalapeño)	171

Our garden has gone crazy (in a good way!) this summer! We'll let the pictures speak for themselves, but the harvest has been plentiful, many of our sisters and brothers in



our community have been fed, and everyone has loved spending time in the garden. Here's the data on the garden as of August 31, 2011 (and remember, these numbers only represent what we remembered to count!). We are still harvesting into the fall, and then the plans are on for more expansion next summer! Thank you to all our wonderful gardeners!!!!





North Plainfield

Health & Wellness Information Expo!!!

This is a **FREE** community event for all ages

DATE: September 21, 2011

VENUE: North Plainfield Library, 6 Rockview Avenue

TIME: 5:00p.m. to 6:30p.m.

Exhibitors:

- Somerset County Department of Health
- Somerset County Office on Aging & Disability Services
- EmPoWER Somerset

A wide range of information will be available; Examples include:

- Nutrition
- Substance abuse prevention
 - Cancer awareness
- Emergency/Disaster preparedness
- Other health and wellness programs available for FREE through the participating agencies

The event will offer something for the entire family with activity booklets for kids on hand healthy habits, preparing for emergencies etc

All members of the community are encouraged to be there!!!!



Celebrating over 60 years and still growing

Watchung Avenue Presbyterian Church
PETALS FOR PROFIT FUNDRAISER

*We grow the plants to help your organization grow
their funds!*

Shop at Parker Gardens between
September 1st and December 30th and
we will donate **10%** of all the proceeds directly to
Watchung Avenue Presbyterian Church

Just in time for all your fall plantings.

Whether you're looking for annuals, perennials, trees or
shrubs, water gardens, furniture and accessories, or landscaping
service, Parker's 14 acres of greenhouses & garden center
presents the area's **largest** selection of top quality plants and
services with **expert advice** that is second to none!

Voted Top 100 Revolutionary Garden Center 5 years in a row.

Just mention that you are from **Watchung Avenue Presbyterian Church** at the time of sale and
we will log the sale into your organization's account. At the end of the fundraiser, **10%** of the total
proceeds will be forwarded to your organization.

Parker Gardens

1325 Terrill Road Scotch Plains, NJ

(908) 322-5552

www.parkergardens.com

Offer cannot be combined with other offers or sales.