

SAN MARINO CONGREGATIONAL UNITED
CHURCH

O F C H R I S T



God is still
speaking...

Pastoral Search Team



Rev. Arthur (“Art”) Lawrence Cribbs, Jr.

Rev. Cribbs comes to us from the Christian Fellowship Congregational Church, UCC, where he has been pastor since March, 1999. While there, Rev. Cribbs founded the Community Outreach Foundation, started refugee and immigrant outreach for Sudanese and Somali families, and produced and hosted the television special, “Stories of the Soul: Life after 9/11”, for which he received an Emmy award.

From his own Statement on Ministry, Rev. Cribbs shares the following with us:

The call to ministry has been exciting, challenging, daunting, and extremely satisfying. The call to pastoral ministry in a local church has opened my eyes, heart, and life to a new appreciation of human trials and errors. Pastoral ministry is humbling. People trust their most intimate selves to my care. The fragility of trust makes it necessary to carefully honor the confidence given by persons during times of great vulnerability and tenderness. Being a pastor provides numerous opportunities to encourage people to seek their passions and engage their gifts. It allows for a broadening of life experiences by participating in activities within and beyond the congregation. Ultimately, it is a call to connect with God and explore the presence of Christ among family members, friends, and strangers. Pastoral ministry is a wonderful path on which a great many others have traveled and more will follow.

Almost every college, university and seminary I have attended has a historical tie to the UCC. My wife, Kana, attended UCC-related institutions in Japan and Mississippi before we met. The UCC is an integral part of my life and has helped to shape and define my understanding of ministry. One of my closest and dearest friends, the Rev. Ed Evans, pastor of First Congregational Church, UCC, in Vancouver, Washington, and I shared desks as young news reporters in Seattle. We discovered we were both members of the UCC. Separately, we gradually moved away from broadcast news, entered seminaries, and began our ministries in a glorious and mysterious twinned journey.

Rev. Cribbs’ statement continues:

As a pastor, I realize the call to a local congregation means being present and available. It means challenging congregants to face difficult decisions and go courageously into the world to serve God and humanity. The pastor is teacher and prophet at times. The pastor encourages all members to be ministers and exhibit leadership within the congregation and the community. The pastor provides a vision and makes it plain for everyone to see and share. The pastor is a listener who is trustworthy and honest. The pastor is a seeker of Truth and remains open to the Spirit and other people.

Life is a journey with twists and turns at various times. It is filled with joy, surprise, disappointment and heartache. Through it all, God remains faithful and steadfast with us. Every breath is a renewal of our Covenant with God. We breathe in new life and God's love. We exhale expressions of gratitude and adoration. Each living moment is a new opportunity to re-connect and re-commit our self to God. Through the teachings of Jesus Christ, we are given a model of how to live with each other and serve God. I have learned the remarkable truth about the power of prayer as a constant tie to God and source of encouragement and confidence. Corporate worship brings people of faith together in sacred community.

Recent events reveal the necessity to build and advance a greater sense of awareness and friendship across borders that can divide and separate people. We truly are one human family temporarily sharing this planet. Our habits, needs, and resources make us all the more interdependent. We are reminded of the repeated instruction by Jesus "to love one another." This is not an option. We must take time and care to know each other and give each other sufficient room for error and recovery. The power of prayer includes confession, repentance, and renewal of life and relationships. At its best, the church provides a safe space where we are given a place to share our gifts and receive the gifts of others. It is the formation of community where God is revered and Christ is the head. In these times, the church performs as an alternative presence to the oft-overwhelming distractions that clutter our lives and knock us off balance. Just as we need God we also need each other. The pastor helps to bring us into communion.

My model of ministry puts me in the Public Square. Joined by people of many different faith traditions, I participate in public liturgy where prayers are spoken openly. I have discovered while listening to the prayers of others I hear my own prayers. We pray on the steps of the U.S. Federal Building in downtown San Diego for an end to the war and to memorialize those who have died. We pray at city hall, courthouses, and state office buildings for renewed ethics in government. We pray on the city concourse for people living with and/or affected by HIV/AIDS. We pray at the International Border between Mexico and the United States for persons who traversed treacherous terrain and died. Public prayer puts the church before people who never suspect faith communities will get involved in practical aspects of life and society. That too is the role of pastor.

(Rev. Cribbs's full Statement on Ministry is available from the church office.)

Before becoming a full time pastor, Art was the Executive Director at the national offices of the United Church of Christ in the Department of Communications. While there he restructured the department through cross-discipline training and redesigned the UCC's national newspaper. He also re-constituted the television production studio; launched a weekly television program on national TV and created a high profile presence at General Synod while increasing video production and improving relations with other instrumentalities.

Art's first career was as a newscaster. In the mid-1990's, he was employed by KPIX TV in San Francisco, where he was appointed the Bureau Chief for East Bay and was a special commentator

during the OJ Simpson trial. He also founded a weekly spiritual support group for non-traditional church persons and produced a weekly focus piece on persons Making a Difference.

Currently, Rev. Cribbs serves as a Trustee for the UCC Pension Boards, is a Board Member for the UCC Office of Communications, Inc. and is a member of the National Task Force on Public Education and the Southern California Nevada Conference Immigration Rights Committee. Ecumenical activities include membership in the California Council of Churches and the Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights. He's been a Board Member for Sojourners Magazine and on the Chula Vista Police Chief's Advisory Board.

Art's hobbies include performance art; jazz; poetry; playwrighting; and acting. He's into softball and table tennis and enjoys sports car driving.

A clergy colleague who has known Art for over seven years says of him, "Art is first of all a warm, well-spoken, intelligent, genuine, and open human being who is a pleasure to be around. His deep faith shines through him; in his preaching, in his presence, in his passion for social justice and peace. He is very creative in coming up with new ideas and possibilities for worship, service and fun! He laughs easily and has a good sense of humor."

A church member who has also known Rev. Cribbs for over seven years says, "I have observed Rev. Cribbs in many leadership roles as he serves his family, his congregation, the city, state and the world. From the pulpit he continues to lead his congregation spiritually and educationally with well thought out and well delivered sermons. His moments with the children are age appropriate and insightful...This community is enriched because Rev. Cribbs provides much needed county wide leadership in addressing social issues that have great impact and implications in our society."

The Search Team

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