

**SAN MARINO CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
2560 HUNTINGTON DRIVE
SAN MARINO, CA 91108**

(626) 292-2080

www.sanmarinoucc.org

**“Never place a period where God has placed a COMMA,
God is STILL SPEAKING!”**



January 31, 2010 – 10:00 a.m. **ANNUAL MEETING SUNDAY** 4th Sunday after Epiphany

For Reflection

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because God has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.”
(Luke 4:18a)

Please stop by the Sound Booth if you wish to use a sound receiver today.

You are invited to watch the screen up front to increase your participation in today’s service of worship.

** The asterisk indicates the times when you are invited to stand if the Spirit so moves you.*

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

Music provided by Albert Mendoza & Murray Middleman

WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Art Cribbs, Pastor

***SONGS FOR THE SPIRIT**

“God Came Down” and “You Are Holy”

***OPENING PRAYER**

Susan Jakubowski-Weiner

Liturgist: Holy God, we praise you and give you thanks.
You are with us in our time of trouble. You respond to our calls for help.

People: Christ, have mercy.

Liturgist: You are faithful and your mercy endures forever.
Thank you for loving your people and keeping us close to you.

People: Christ, have mercy.

Liturgist: Through it all, you never fail or forsake us.
Thank you for the mystery and wonder of your ways.

People: Christ, have mercy.

Liturgist: Your gift of the Holy Spirit is a Source of Comfort and Peace.
We need you now, O God, in these times of uncertainty and pain.

People: Christ, have mercy.

Liturgist: O God, we are helpless without you. You give us strength to carry on.

People: Come now, Holy One, come and fill us with your Spirit.

Hallelujah! Shalom. Salaam. Right on! Amen.

***A SONG FOR THE HEART**

“So Glad”

The Congregation may be seated.

TIME WITH OUR CHILDREN “Have You Heard Any Good News Lately?”

Pastor Art

OUR COMMON PRAYER

“O God, who art in heaven...”

MUSIC TO BLESS THE CHILDREN

“Children, Welcome”

Most people like to hear about nice things. We want to be appreciated and told how wonderful we are. We enjoy sharing a good story and watching beautiful sunsets. We want to believe good endings are always possible. But, there are times when we need to know the truth.

The poet Oscar Wilde wrote, “If you want to tell people the truth, make them laugh, otherwise they'll kill you.”

As Jesus was starting his ministry, he went home to Galilee and stood in the temple to read the Scripture. He turned to the Book of Isaiah and when he finished reading, the people were amazed at his power and command of the text. Then, Jesus began to teach from the reading. The people were inspired and pleased to hear what he was saying. It did not take long however for the mood of the audience to change and turn against him.

Jesus discovered the hazard of telling the truth. Unfortunately for him, Oscar Wilde was still nearly two millennia away from being born. Wilde's warning about truth had not been penned. Jesus' failure to make the people laugh as he told the truth almost got him killed on the spot. Perhaps he learned an important lesson that day, and that may explain his continuous use of stories and parables throughout the rest of his brief, three-year ministry.

The Gospel is the Good News. It is laced with hope and optimism. At its core is the message of God's love and grace. But, when the Gospel is delivered from the perspective of people in the under belly of society, it takes a dangerous twist.

Our Tuesday night Soul Food Bible study is examining a difficult but profound question: “Can we worship God without practicing justice?” We are reading the Book of Amos, one of the so-called ‘minor prophets’ in the Hebrew Text. There is nothing funny in Amos. The “truth” is harsh and disturbing.

Nations are judged and punished because they declare wars and slaughter neighbors and enemies. Judges take bribes before rendering decisions; widows and orphans are cheated; their sandals are stolen while corrupt business leaders make profits.

Religious people follow the rituals of worship and place sacrifices on the altar as offerings to God, but they say and do nothing to uphold justice. When the prophets tell the truth, they are threatened or suffer worst.

That was then. What about now? Can we handle the truth? Do we need to laugh in order to receive pure and honest reports about people who live in the margins of society?

The Gospel only has significance when we hear it within the context of the speaker and from our proximity to the message. Jesus used stories to illustrate connections between God's expectation and human behavior. There is good news to be found when we are able to identify with people who are on the edge of life. They need us and we need them to give us purpose and to have meaning. We are tied together. We are interdependent and form community.

Compassion and sensitivity come when we are in touch with the social conditions that create reality without illusion or denial. Realizing we have the ability to inspire others gives us courage to make decisions that will improve the quality of life.

Laughter is a source of strength that can open our minds to experience a depth of diversity that broadens our capacity to be fully human. It helps us help hear people whose voices are often muted. We learn to care about them. We discover new ways to advance our own development. We are able to receive the Gospel without being offended. That is when the Good News really is good news.

What's Happening...

TODAY: **OUR ANNUAL MEETING & POTLUCK** will take place after our service of worship.
4pm – LEE DOMANN folk concert. Nashville recording artist, Lee Domann, will present a concert of his amazing music. A Love Offering will be received in lieu of selling tickets.

- **TUES. 7pm – SOUL FOOD** will meet in the Green Room downstairs.
- **THURS. 7pm – THE UNITED VOICES** will rehearse in the sanctuary.
- **SAT. 10am “Every Food Has a Story To Tell” cooking class** meets in our kitchen with Sunny Kim teaching us how to make a French dish. Everyone is welcome to cook and EAT!

Next Sunday: All God's Family (all ages) worship service

After social time: **“Have a Little Tea With Us”** – a new Sunday School adventure

COMING UP:

Feb. 21 – Sacred Writing Workshop with Ray McGinnis – RSVP to donaldshenk@sanmarinoucc.org

Feb. 28 – Joint worship service with Refiner's Fire congregation.