

SAN MARINO CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
2560 HUNTINGTON DRIVE SAN MARINO, CA 91108
Phone: (626) 292-2080 Facsimile: (626) 292-2083
Email: smccucc@sanmarinoucc.org Website: www.sanmarinoucc.org



“Never place a period
Where God has placed a comma”

[Gracie Allen]

God is still speaking,

March 2, 2008 – 10:00 a.m.

Fourth Sunday in Lent

For Reflection

*“For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light.
Live as children of light— for the fruit of the light
Is found in all that is good and right and true.
Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord.
Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness,
But instead expose them.”
(Ephesians 5:8-12)*

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

**The asterisk indicates the times when you are invited to stand if the Spirit so moves you.
You are invited to watch the screen up front to increase your participation in worship today.*

PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

***“Come, Now is the Time to Worship”**

Congregation

Acolyte: Arthur Cribbs

***A SONG FOR THE SPIRIT**

“You Are Holy”

Congregation

***OPENING PRAYER**

Rev. Cathy Kotowski & Mika Cribbs

Good morning, loving, merciful God. Thank you for opening our eyes to this beautiful day. For this is a day you have made and we are rejoicing because we are glad to see it. We are gathered in your House of Prayer to honor and serve you. Thank you for your boundless gift of mercy. Thank you for loving all your people. Thank you for filling us with your Spirit. Help us to see with our hearts and minds as well as our eyes. Remove all blinders that cause us not to notice the beauty of your world and the faces of your children. Take away anything that blocks our view of the wonders of your mystery. Come now, O God, into this place so we will know you better and give you praise. Hallelujah! Shalom. Salaam. RIGHT ON! Amen.

A SONG FROM THE HEART

Congregation

“Come to me, Come to Us”

Music for this new song can be found in your bulletin.

The congregation may be seated.

TIME WITH OUR CHILDREN

My Time at JANboree

Camille Cribbs

Story

“I See You/You See Me”

Pastor Cribbs

Our Common Prayer

Music to Bless the Children

OUR COMMON LIFE

A Time for One Great Hour of Sharing

Holly Ann Burns

A Time to Give

Mika Cribbs

A Time to Act

Rev. Cathy Kotowski

A Time to Dedicate Ourselves and Our Gifts

Mika Cribbs

We have brought to your altar these gifts from your bounty. Bless this offering and use it as a source of ministry and hope. Multiply these gifts to serve your people nearby and far away. Thank you for all that you are and all that you do. We dedicate ourselves and our gifts to you. Amen.

CHORAL ANTHEM *“Beneath His Cross She Watches”* Chancel Choir
Words by Mary Kay Beall, Choral Setting by John Carter

SCRIPTURE READING John 9:1-41 Mika & Rev. Cathy
New Revised Standard Version

REFLECTIONS **“No Limits on Love”** Pastor Cribbs

COMMUNION HYMN **NCH # 190**
“Here, O My Lord, I See You Face to Face” Congregation
Verses 1, 2 and 3 only

WORDS OF INSTITUTION Pastor Cribbs

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

*All are invited to the communion table.
If it is best that you be served in your seat,
please let an usher know, and a Deacon will serve you.*

MUSIC FOR COMMUNION Chip Colvin, Randall Allen & Nathan York

UNISON PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING Pastor Cribbs

We affirm the goodness of life and the openness of the future because our God is a God of life and love. As God comes to us in this act of communion, so let us go out to others in acts which bring healing, reconciliation and hope to our world. Amen.

TIME OF PRAYER
Preparation for Prayer **“How Long, O Lord?”** Congregation
Text by Barbara Woollett, based on Psalm 13, Music by Christopher Norton

Prayers of the People Pastor Cribbs

***SENDING HYMN** *“Beneath the Cross of Jesus”* **NCH #190**
Verses 1 and 2 only Congregation

***BENEDICTION** Pastor Cribbs

***CHANGING OF THE LIGHT** Rev. Cathy Kotowski

***POSTLUDE** Colvin/Allen/York

**Everyone is welcome to have some coffee and conversation next door after the service.
Thanks to Cathy Burkdoll for treating us today!**



We express a warm welcome to all who have joined us this morning!



This Church is affiliated with the United Church of Christ, a denomination dedicated to spiritual growth, faith with action and social transformation.

If you're visiting today, please stop by our Visitor's Center in the Entryway to sign our Guest Book, fill out a visitor card (with nametag so we can greet you by name) and receive information about everything happening here.

Next Sunday † March 9, 2008

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS

10:00 a.m. Morning Worship

Fifth Sunday in LENT

“Are You the One or Should We Look for Another?”

Guest Preacher: The Reverend Paula L. McGee

Text: Luke 7: 18-30

Liturgist: Kris Cunz

TODAY'S OPPORTUNITIES:

-At 11:30 am the Board of Deacons will meet in the Art Room

-After Social Time, the children will meet in the Green Rm. to fold The Spire

Our Church in Action:

Tuesday: 7:00 pm - SOUL FOOD will convene in Fireside Room.

Thursday: 7:00 pm - Choir Rehearsal

Saturday: 10am to Noon – “Every Food Has a Story to Tell” meets in Crist Hall Kitchen. Please sign up with Kana Cribbs.

10am to 3pm – So CA/NV Conference Board meets here.

Next Sunday: The YOUTH GROUP resumes with a Pizza Party at 11:30am



Can America be saved? Do we even know we are in trouble? Depending on where you are and what you are doing, life in America may appear wonderful and lovely or

desperate and disastrous. But appearances can be deceiving.

Recently, Michelle Obama, wife of Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama, was quoted, “For the first time in my adult lifetime I am really proud of my country.” That excerpt from her complete statement made its way around the nation with numerous commentaries, judgments, and distortions. Her words were taken out of context to suggest she was slamming America.

Ms. Obama was talking about hope and a spirit of change that is “uniting farmers in Iowa with urban residents on the Southside of Chicago.” She was making a point about her own frustration and disappointment with politics that divide and leave people with feelings of despair. She also said, “I’ve seen people who are hungry to be unified around some basic common issues, and it makes me proud.”

That is very different from what has been reported. Her comment was twisted into something that was created by the minds of opinion makers for the American consumer to cast a shadow over her and her husband.

Last year, another one of her statements was used to falsely accuse her of criticizing the Clintons. While talking about her husband, Ms. Obama said, “One of the most important things that we need to know about the next President of the United States is, is he somebody that shares our values? Is he somebody that respects family? Is (he) a good and decent person? So our view was that, if you can't run your own house, you certainly can't run the White House.”

That's all that was broadcast. Media personalities ran with that quip as if that was all she said, and proceeded to design a fictionalized scenario that suggested a barb leveled against Bill and Hillary Clinton.

On that occasion, Ms. Obama was talking about her own family and the roles she and her husband play in the lives of their children during the campaign. She went on to say, "So, we've adjusted our schedules to make sure that our girls are first, so while he's traveling around, I do day trips. That means I get up in the morning, I get the girls ready, I get them off, I go and do trips, I'm home before bedtime."

This week the focus on Cuba continued a long established narrative about Fidel Castro and his brother, Raul. While listening to a story about the change in leadership there, my son turned to me and asked, "What is a dictator?" For many of us, 'dictator' is synonymous with President of that island nation since 1959. But, what do we really know about Cuba?

Are we told about the two highest priorities in that country: first, the care and welfare of children and second, participatory democracy? While we hear a lot about the National Assembly and Castro's 49 year reign, do we also know that governance and the true power rests with what is called the "Committee for the Defense of the Revolution," local community groups set up in every neighborhood?

Do we know that Cuba is a dynamic country of 11 million people; an estimated 7 million reside in Havana; and, the country is constantly changing based on social, economic, and political conditions and needs? And, do we know about the economic boycott imposed by our government that prevents food and medicine from going to the people of that country?

What is the point? We see and know what is presented to us. Too often we believe what others tell us...even about ourselves. We accept the facts as they are given. Beyond the facts however is the truth. That is not always so easy to see. We frame our positions and attitudes on what we read, hear, and are led to believe. Politicians and pundits lie on the one hand, and omit the truth on the other hand. We are left to figure out what is going on.

We are in trouble, but many of us don't know it or believe it. We have been distracted by trivia while serious conditions go unreported. As one religious leader in Cuba put it, "We aren't in heaven and we're not in hell. We are somewhere in between."

What do you do when you don't know you are blind? How can we be saved?

-Pastor Art Cribbs

From our UCC Calendar of Prayer for today: "Ashira"

Seeing the sacred in what we think of as ordinary transforms us in profound ways. Jeff Wright, a mission volunteer with Global Ministries, found the sacred in the ordinary during his time in Palestine, particularly when he witnessed the ancient practice of Ashira between two Arab families. Ashira began in Bedouin communities where families were left to settle their disagreements in the absence of police or magistrates. It is a way to restore broken relationships. The discord in this case involved two school age boys who had brawled, causing one boy to get stitches and the other to be arrested. Both families went to the jail and secured the boy's release because they agreed to practice Ashira in settling the dispute. Both families valued the history of friendship between them and would do whatever was necessary to reconcile. Whatever was necessary turned out to be sharing a cup of coffee – Arabic coffee with no sugar. The absence of sugar signaled brokenness, a sign that something grave had happened. Sharing the bitter coffee was an act of mutual grief and longing, Jeff said. He also found that the families shared sweetened coffee that night before they parted, celebrating the return of a healthy relationship, which is at the center of Ashira and of life's meaning and purpose. This coming together reminded Jeff of the many tables God spreads for us day by day – each holding the possibility of becoming a table of reconciliation. As we approach the Lord's Table we can give thanks for the cost of Jesus' gift of Ashira.

Ways YOU Can Get Involved:



Your help is needed to **PREPARE EASTER BASKETS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN NEED** – We have been asked to gather canned protein such as peanut butter, beef stew, tuna, spam, etc. along with baby diapers and formula, and canned coffee to be served every morning at the Bad Weather Shelter in Pasadena. We need to collect baskets,

Easter grass, candy, little goodies such as lip gloss, small stuffed animals, little toys like cars, cellophane wrapping paper. Please bring your donations to the church office prior to Saturday, March 15th.

On Saturday, March 15 from 9:00 A.M. till 11:00 A.M. we will assemble Easter baskets at the Church of the Lighted Window United Church of Christ in La Cañada.

- **Saturday, March 15, at 7:00 P.M. THE SPIRIT AND THE SCREEN** will feature *Lilies of the Field* with Academy Award winner Sydney Portier. This is a movie for the whole family.
- **Sunday, March 16: THE EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME/RADICAL HOSPITALITY...BUT, WHAT IF?** workshop will be held following worship. The Reverend Geoffrey Black, New York Conference Minister, will lead a conversation about how congregations in New York have addressed issues involving sex offenders. This event is part of our continuing discussion about how to create and maintain ‘church as a safe space.’ Copies of the book, *A Time to Heal*, are available in the church office.
- **Saturday, March 29, at 7:30 P.M. FAITH & FAMILY NIGHT** at the Staples Center with **The LOS ANGELES CLIPPERS BASKETBALL TEAM**. The Clippers will play against the Memphis Grizzlies. Tickets are \$17.50 per person. We need to let the Clippers know how many tickets we will need for this game. If you are interested, **contact Pastor Art** for more information.



CHURCH OFFICERS

Moderator..... Connie James-Gililand
 Treasurer Scott Cameron
 Clerk..... Susan Jakubowski-Weiner
 Financial Secretary Dick Lashley
 Historian Virginia Lashley
 Past Moderator Holly Ann Burns

STAFF

Pastor..... Art Cribbs
 Pastoral Assistant, Director of Music/Theatre Donald Shenk
 Preschool Director Connie James-Gililand
 Accompanist Chip Colvin
 Guitarists..... Randall Allen & Nathan York
 Section Leaders Sarah Parnicky (sop); Alexandra Loutsion (mez)
 Guylaine Bouchard (alto); Andrew Martinez (ten)
 Director of Christian Education Cathy Kotowski
 Childcare Provider Barbara Sanchez
 Ceremony Coordinator..... Donald Shenk
 Sound Technician Eric Stimes
 Usher Team John Stanley & Gary Henville
 Webperson..... Holly Ann Burns
 Interim Conference MinistersRevs. Jane Hoffman & June Botwell

Our Mission: “In response to God’s all-encompassing presence and unconditional love, we at San Marino Congregational United Church of Christ, a worship-centered community, are spreading the Good News of God’s love to all, working to heal human divisions, and striving for peace and justice.”

We are an Open and Affirming (“ONA”) church. We affirm the rich complexity of God's creation, which includes every person and many forms of family. We welcome into our open communion and community God's beloved children of all ethnicities, nationalities, ages, genders, sexual orientations, physical or mental limitations, economic and family circumstances, and faith backgrounds. We affirm and celebrate all loving and committed relationships. We commit ourselves to the defense of the spiritual, civic, and human rights of all people, and to the promotion of their well being in our Church and communities.