

SAN MARINO CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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You are invited to use the ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING envelopes in your bulletin to make your OGHS donation today. Please place the envelopes in the offering plates when they are passed during "Our Common Life" later in the service.



"Never place a period
Where God has placed a comma"

[Gracie Allen]

God is still speaking,

March 22, 2009 – 10:00 a.m.

Fourth Sunday of Lent

For Reflection

"For God so loved the world that God
gave God's only Son,
So that everyone who believes
in Him may not perish
But may have eternal life."
(John 3:16)



*Children and Youth are welcome to join our
Sunday School and Children Worship & Wonder program!
After the children's time, children aged 3 through those in 5th grade are invited to
process downstairs to the Wonder Room and those in 6th through 12th grade to the Green
Room. Childcare for children under age 4 is available in our nursery today
with trained and certified childcare provider, Mrs. Barbara Sanchez.
When these programs finish, children and youth will be brought up to social time.*

*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 worship today.*

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

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

Acolyte: Arthur Cribbs

Music by Albert Mendoza

*SONGS FOR THE SPIRIT

Congregation

"This Little Light of Mine"
"Let Justice Roll Like a River"

*OPENING PRAYER

Christine Darwin

Good morning, Loving, Merciful God. We are back in this place to be in your Holy Presence. It's been a long week. Thank you for bringing us through it. There were times when we were not sure we would make it; but you were always there. You carried us and protected us. How can we say, "Thank you?" Now, Great Spirit, we open our mouths in praise. We honor you! We love you, O God. Yet, we know you love us even more. We place our faith in you. Yet, we know you put even more faith in us. You have mercy on us. Yet, we know you expect us to show mercy. Your ways are just. Yet, we know you require us to do justice. Peaceful, loving God, we are your people. Give us courage to be peace; to be peacemakers. Give us the strength we need to stand boldly and unafraid where you have called us to stand. Open our lives to receive the gifts and joy of our sisters and brothers throughout your world. Hallelujah. Shalom. Salaam. Right on! Amen.

*A SONG FROM THE HEART

Congregation

"Amazing Grace"

The congregation may be seated.

TIME WITH OUR CHILDREN

Pastor Art Cribbs

Story: "What Are You Going to Do with What You've Got?"
Our Common Prayer
Music to Bless the Children

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 107:1-3; 17-22

Christine Darwin

CHORAL MUSIC

"No Greater Gift"

The United Voices

Music and Text Adaptation (based on I Corinthians 13) by Ruth Elaine Schram

REFLECTIONS

"No Matter What"

Pastor Art Cribbs

SPECIAL MUSIC

Soloist: Benjamin Cortez

"No Matter What"

by A. L. Weber & J. Steinman

OUR COMMON LIFE

A Time to Give

Christine Darwin

*You are also invited to place your One Great Hour of Sharing
donation envelopes in the offering plates at this time.*

A Time to Act

Donald Shenk

A Time to Dedicate Ourselves and Our Gifts

Congregation

Thank you, O God, for this offering your people have brought to your altar. Thank you for your countless blessings. Receive this money that has been given to support the ministries of this congregation and the United Church of Christ. May it be used as a blessing throughout your world as we dedicate ourselves and our gifts to you. Amen.

A Time to Reflect

"God, Fill Me Now"

A Time to Pray

Prayers of the People

REFLECTING MUSIC

"Give Thanks for Life"

Congregation

#297 in the New Century Hymnal

***BENEDICTION**

Pastor Cribbs

***CHANGING OF THE LIGHT**

Christine Darwin

***GOING FORTH**

Instrumentalists

**We express a warm welcome to all who are here today!
Please stop by next door in the Fellowship Hall
to enjoy some refreshments and fellowship.
Thanks to Carol Barrett for treating us today!**

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 and a nametag and receive information about everything happening here.

What's Happening...

- Today: 11:45am to 1pm - Deacon's Orientation mtg. (open to all)**
- Mon.: 6:45pm TRUSTEES meet in the Pastor's Office.**
- Tues.: 7pm SOUL FOOD meets in the Pastor's Office.**
- Weds: 6pm CHURCH COUNCIL meets in the Pastor's Office.**
- Thurs.: 7pm United Voices Choir rehearsal.**
- Friday: Preschool teachers In-Service Day**
- Saturday: 10am to 5pm – ALL CHURCH RETREAT at Monrovia Cnyn Park**

WORSHIP NEXT SUNDAY
March 29, 2009 – Fifth Sunday in Lent - Recognition of Leadership
Theme: "Deep In Our Hearts" Text: Jeremiah 31:31-34

- **Next Sunday - Theatre Advisory Board meets in Green Rm. after social time**



Have you noticed how many people are being criminalized in our society? In the neighborhood where I grew up, children walked to school during the week and played in the streets on Saturdays. Adults talked over fences and helped each other do different kinds of jobs around their homes. My grandmother, Bessie Gordon, organized a community beautification campaign that planted trees which continue to stand and line our streets. Our neighborhood was a safe haven. For the most part, it remains a community where people look out for each other, but there have been some changes. Many of my neighbors have been criminalized.

There used to be a time when neighbors provided temporary shelter and supplied food and cooking ingredients to tide each other over until they had enough money to go to the store. Then, we depended on our neighbors to check in to make sure everybody was alright. Now, as more people are being criminalized, it is more difficult to knock on doors just to see how our neighbors are getting along.

Once upon a time, if someone got sick, the doctor made house calls. Dr. George Sealey used to come to our home in the middle of night with his black bag in hand ready to determine what was ailing us. More than once, he entered our bedrooms and ministered his medical care to bring us back to health.

It was not unusual in our home for the telephone to ring at weird hours. After the call, we could hear my father and mother whispering. Within minutes they would be up, out of bed, dressed, and heading out the door in response to someone in trouble. It happened so often, it almost felt routine. My grandmother remained behind to take care of my two sisters and me. When my grandmother was away working as a domestic in a house far across town, my

live-in cousin, Odessa, would attend to us children. With the criminalization of people becoming so prevalent, such calls occur more often across the country.

For example, people with severe mental illness are often treated like criminals rather than patients. In fact, the largest psychiatric unit in Los Angeles County is housed in the county jail.

According to a Los Angeles Times article on November 20, 2001, “The Los Angeles County Jail spends \$10 million per year on psychiatric medications.” Instead of providing mental health institutions to treat severely mentally ill patients, “America’s jails and prisons are now surrogate psychiatric hospitals for thousands of individuals with the severest brain diseases.” (Criminalization of the Severely Mentally Ill. Arlington, VA: Treatment Advocacy Center)

Impoverished immigrants who arrive in the United States are viewed as suspects upon entry and handled as criminals during their stay. Persons without legal documentation are hunted, labeled, and subjected to the criminal justice system. They are separated from their families and deported back to their countries. Instead of receiving the welcoming hand of hospitality as posted on the Statue of Liberty, criminalized immigrants are caught up in raids at work places and corralled into holding pens.

Criminalization of the poor is not limited to immigrants. Once self-sufficient citizens who lose their jobs and ability to pay their bills are cast among the lot of ‘criminals’ as they slip into the homeless population.

Denizens of urban streets, they too get swept up in police actions that are mandated by merchants who want “undesirable elements” kept away from their businesses. Sections of downtown are transformed into upscale habitats that forcibly remove homeless people out of single-resident rooms in shabby hotels.

Stories about criminalizing America’s most vulnerable people overrun nearly every sector of our society. We in the church are placed among the criminalized as an alternative presence to retain their humanity. We are called to be a ‘healing witness’ to those whose lives have been displaced and rearranged.

We must stop the criminalization of our brothers and sisters during this period of great stress and profound needs. We must help our country find a better way to address prevailing conditions that lead to the deterioration of persons, families and communities.

-Pastor Art Cribbs

You Are Invited to Participate!

Member congregations of the Central Association of the Southern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ are invited to participate in our first **Congregation Exchange Sunday** on April 26, 2009.

This is an easy, exciting way for sisters and brothers to experience the rich diversity of the Central Association, Conference, and the UCC. Five to ten members from each congregation would simply carpool to the selected church for Sunday morning worship.

The locations of congregation exchange will be determined by pulling names of participating churches out of a hat.

If you would like to visit another church as part of Congregation Exchange Sunday on April 26th, please notify Pastor Art

Lenten Services Planned with our Sister Churches (Montebello & Arcadia):

April 9th at 7pm – Maundy Thursday Service at Arcadia UCC

CENTRAL ASSOCIATION SPRING MEETING is coming up on Saturday, May 2, 2009, at the Seaside Community United Church of Christ in Torrance. It would be great to have as many from San Marino UCC going to that meeting. Your pastor is ending his term as moderator of the Association. Also, it is an excellent opportunity to learn about the Conference and meet other members of the UCC.

From the UCC Calendar of Prayer for Today
March 22, 2009

No Matter What



The UCC in Hawai'i is like other places around the country in the breadth of worship styles and music—songs, hymns, instruments, and gifted musicians and congregations! We face the challenges of churches in other parts of the country, as well, with the need to create "blended" worship services that speak to all of our people. We need to find ways to invite all of our generations to worship together.

The Praise Song Advisory Team (PSAT) is a diverse group of musicians and theologians from all around the UCC. We have been charged with bringing to life the United Church of Christ's new praise and worship music song book, *Sing! Prayer and Praise*. Being a member of the PSAT has been such an enjoyable experience! My faith and horizon has been expanded and deepened!

"As a church musician and pastor," writes Kekapa Lee, "my desire is to shape worship that nurtures the Body of Christ into that community of faith that not only cares for one another, but also embodies and teams with each other for justice, peace, and aloha of all God's creation."

Prayer: Steadfast God, you reach out to us in mercy even when we rebel against your holy call and prefer to walk in disobedience rather than in the way of your divine truth. Soften our hearts with the warmth of your love, that we may know your Son is alive within us, redeeming us and raising us up into your eternal presence. Amen.

CHURCH OFFICERS

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

STAFF

Pastor..... Art Cribbs
Pastoral Assistant, Director of Music/Theatre Donald Shenk
Preschool Director Connie James-Gililand
Accompanist Albert Mendoza
Section Leaders Alexandra Loutsion (Mez); Guylaine Bouchard (alto);
Ann Simon, (sop); Benjamin Cortez (ten); Adrian Rosales (bass)
Director of Christian Education Cathy Kotowski
Childcare Provider Barbara Sanchez
Ceremony Coordinator..... Donald Shenk
Sound Technician Eric Stimes
Usher Team Gary Henville & John Stanley
Webperson..... Holly Ann Burns
Interim Conference Ministers Rev. Jane Hoffman
Rev. 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.