

SAN MARINO CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
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“Never place a period  
Where God has placed a comma”  
[Gracie Allen]  
**God is still speaking,**

April 15, 2007 – 10:00 a.m. Second Sunday of Easter

*For Reflection*

“We must obey God rather than any human authority.”  
(Acts 5:29b NRSV)



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.*

**WE GATHER**

PRELUDE Chip Colvin

WELCOME & OUR COMMON LIFE Kris Cunz

**WE WORSHIP GOD**

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES Acolyte: Faith Van Horsen  
“Come and Be Light for Our Eyes” by David Haas

\*OPENING PRAYER (unison) Kris Cunz

Good morning, God. We greet you with words of praise and glory. Thank you for waking us up and giving us enough energy to come into your House. You have provided everything we need; plus, you threw in a few extra things to make life more meaningful, fun, and a chance for us to grow. Help us this morning to appreciate all you do. Help us right now to be more aware of all your people in various nations who live under many different conditions. Inspire us to be peaceful. Create within us a spirit of kindness, forgiveness, and loving toward all living things. We hope this is a good day for you, O God. We pray our lives will bring you joy. Lead us now as we enter into worship. We are mindful of you. Give us courage to be obedient to your Word and to live without apology for our humanity and without shame for our faith. Thank you. Amen.

\*OPENING HYMN “God is Here! As We Your People Meet” NCH #70  
Congregation Taylor/Green

*The congregation may be seated.*

**TIME WITH OUR CHILDREN**

Offering (the children’s plate is passed to collect their offerings)

Story Pastor Art Cribbs



**\*BENEDICTION**

**\*CHANGING OF THE LIGHT**

**\*POSTLUDE**

Pastor Cribbs

Kris Cunz

Chip Colvin

*Everyone is welcome to enjoy food, beverages and conversation  
in Crist Hall following the service. Thanks to Elsie Stanley for the treats 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.

**VISITORS: 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 the exciting things happening here!

Under whose authority do we live? Who do we believe? Who will we follow?  
Whose voice will we obey?

These are piercing questions that govern our entire lives. Look at each one carefully and think deeply about your answers. Who has rule over your life? Is it God, your job, your stomach, or the government? Is your decision to act or not act based on what God requires of you or do you follow the instruction of a political leader? Who has authority over your life? Think about these questions as you consider your daily activities. Your answer is completely up to you. How you answer each question can determine how you live your life. Perhaps, your answer is not as abstract as the Unknown, Unnamed, Unmentionable Source of Life. Maybe your existence is based on the practical aspects of work, bodily needs, or personal desire.

If you make decisions based on how you feel, what you want, or in reaction to immediate circumstances, then you may discover you are led by the temporal experiences of human senses. If so, you are following the way of the least reliable informant of truth, power, and your own best interests.

Likewise, walking in step with the dictates of political and religious leaders can toss you into arenas of guaranteed conflict and disappointment. Human history is replete with episodes when societies blindly followed the orders of demagogues who used their charisma and position to persuade citizens to do dastardly deeds, resulting in the slaughter of innocent people. Unquestioned allegiance to political leaders is dangerous and too often leads to catastrophic outcomes.

Currently, we are exposed to facts and perspectives about global issues that have been narrowly constructed and disseminated broadly, creating a "reality" that is unfamiliar with actual impact on humanity and ecology. Resounding denials of negative effects join a litany of dismissed disasters that leave false impressions about what is actually taking place to us, near us, and far from us. Without a doubt, people are affected and a wailing Creation goes unattended in time to reverse the ultimate consequences.

It is important for us to seriously take into account what we do, whom we obey, and what is happening around us. There is an end product to our action or passivity.

In the immediate aftermath of Jesus' crucifixion, his devout followers were questioned by religious authorities and ordered to cease their proclamation of Jesus as Messiah. They did not stop! They continued to tell the story in the temple and on the streets. They would not be silent. Civil disobedience was their response. They knew the truth of God's presence with them. Earthly powers were insufficient to deter them. They stood up, spoke out, and shared the story of Jesus' Resurrection even under the threat of arrest and death. The apostles preached to the people about the Way of Christ. They did so because of their faith and witness to Christ's glory. .

Today, we are in the midst of tremendous turmoil and corruption in high places. Efforts are made to recruit and coax us into submitting to the will of political operatives who have an agenda to control world events. Yet, there is another, better way. We must decide our response. We must determine the path we will follow. It is up to you to choose God or something else. How will you answer the questions?

**San Marino Congregational United Church of Christ  
is 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.