

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 22, 2007 – 10:00 a.m. Third Sunday of Easter

For Reflection

“A human being is body, but more than body;
mind, but more than mind;
feelings, but more than feelings.

A human being is total; moreover, a person is spirit.
Therefore, it is not surprising that in a person’s spirit
should be found the crucial nexus that connects him/her
with the Creator of Life,
the Spirit of the living God.”
(Disciplines of the Spirit by Howard Thurman)

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

Tanya Samuel

WE WORSHIP GOD

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

Acolyte: Allen King

“Come and Be Light for Our Eyes” by David Haas

*OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Tanya Samuel

Loving God, merciful God, your people are calling you. We offer ourselves in prayer. We breathe in Your Love and breathe out new life. Are you listening to our hearts filled with the human mixture of sadness and joy? Do you feel our experiences? O God, we are here in this moment standing before you. We seek to know you more fully. We want to love you with all our heart, mind, and soul. Do you recognize us? O God, we ask you to draw near to us and pull us closer to you. Remove anything that distracts us from worshipping you. Right now, dear God, we think only of you and seek to honor you. Are you listening? Do you hear the groans of your people? Come now, O God, and breathe anew on us. Come now, O God, breathe your Spirit upon us. Come into this place and speak to us as we give you praise. Amen.

*OPENING HYMN “Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart”
Congregation

NCH #290
Atkinson/Croly

The congregation may be seated.

TIME WITH OUR CHILDREN

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

Story “Do You Know My Friend, Jesus?” Pastor Art Cribbs

Our Common Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Music to Bless the Children

“Children Welcome”

Edwards, arr. Fitch

Refrain: **Children welcome in the name of Jesus.
Children welcome in the name of love.**

**Children offer us gifts for living, with hearts opened wide, clear eyes to see,
Minds full of wonder, hands full of helping, joy as we follow where they lead.**

All children are invited to process to Children Worship & Wonder.

Today’s story is “The Good Shepherd and the Wolf”

and today’s storyteller is Connie James Gililand.

Barbara Sanchez is available to care for the youngest children.

WE EXPERIENCE THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READING

Acts 9:1-20

Tanya Samuel

New Revised Standard Version

Pew Bible page 159

CHORAL ANTHEM

“Here I Am, Lord”

Chancel Choir

Words and Music by Daniel L. Schutte, Harm. by James Snyder

REFLECTIONS

“Meeting Christ”

Pastor Cribbs

CHORAL ANTHEM

“In the Rifted Rock I’m Resting”

Chancel Choir

Text by Mary Dagworthy James (alt.), Music by W. Warren Bentley
arranged by Lee Dengler

WE RESPOND WITH OUR GIFTS, OUR LIVES

OFFERING OUR GIFTS AND OURSELVES

Call for the Offering

Tanya Samuel

Music for Meditation/Offertory

Chip Colvin

***Congregational Response**

NCH #780

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heavenly host:
Creator, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Bourgeois/Ken

***Dedication of Ourselves and Our Gifts (unison)**

Tanya Samuel

**Everything comes from you, O God. From your abundance we share
our gifts. You have called us to be good stewards of your resources,
including your Creation. From you we have been made. To you we
give ourselves. Our hands toil. Our minds imagine. As we are
blessed so now we bless others. Receive what we have brought and
use us in service to all living things in your world. Amen.**

The congregation may be seated.

A TIME OF PRAYER

Preparation for Prayer

“God, Fill Me Now”

Congregation

**God, fill me now, fill me with your Holy Spirit.
You give me life, and you draw me to your presence.
Here before you now; see, my hands are empty.
God, fill me now with you.**

Prayers of the People

Pastor Cribbs

***SENDING HYMN “There Are Some Things I May Not Know”**

NCH #405

Congregation

Morris

***BENEDICTION**

Pastor Cribbs

***CHANGING OF THE LIGHT**

Tanya Samuel

***POSTLUDE**

Chip Colvin

*Everyone is welcome to enjoy food, beverages and conversation
in Crist Hall following the service.*

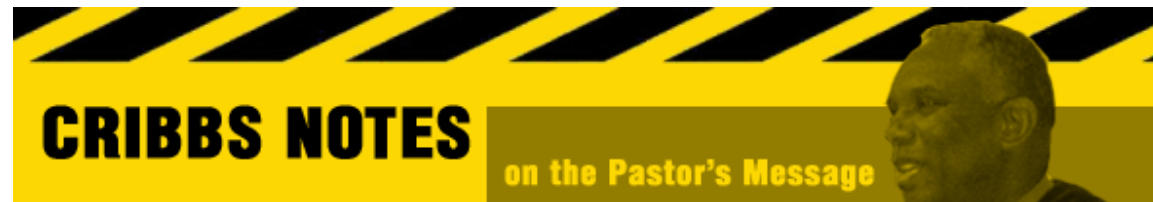
Thanks to Kris and Jacquie Cunz and Jacqui's mom, Bonnie, for the treats today!

**The Pastoral Relations Committee will meet
today at 11:30 in the Pastor's Office.**

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!



The inscription on the grave of baseball great Casey Stangle reads, "There comes a time in every man's life, and I've had a few." Stangle's words captured an unusual twist on a common phrase, but he offers an eloquent refrain about his various adventures both on and off the field. He lived a complete life that left an indelible image in the minds of those who watched, heard, or experienced him as one of baseball's premiere managers. He embodied the game and created a mythical persona.

Events take place in all of our lives. This past week's horrific shooting spree on the campus of Virginia Tech University brought home the extreme harm violence causes. Often, we feel removed from such tragedies, but when it happens in the tranquil environment of an academy, it becomes surreal and knocks us off balance. The most incredible reaction is also the most predictable: "How could that have happened?" "Can it happen here?"

It is unbelievable to realize there is a sweeping sense of surprise that an individual would act out so brutally with such finality when we share a near callous attitude toward the proliferation of weapons in private hands. In fact, the sacred status of guns in American society provides a protective shield from removing small arms and assault weapons out of our homes, cars, and personal possession. To even suggest the eradication of handguns borders on treachery. As a nation, we hold to a religious-like creed that guarantees our right to bear arms. There is the mantra, "Guns don't kill people. People kill people."

Rooted in the rampage that rocked Virginia Tech's campus was the failure to intervene in the life of a troubled youth. That, too, is not unusual. All around us are people, young and old, who live desperately neglected. They are ignored and left alone. No matter how many signals they give in their cries for "Help!" too many times we do not respond. Instead, we wait until it is too late.

Among the students who knew 23 year old Cho Seung-Hui, the man identified as the shooter, several said once they knew who did it, they were not surprised. Others presented his writings, including a play that projected a deeply disturbed person living among them. Yet, he did not attract the attention he needed to prevent the carnage. We know Cho Seung-Hui is not alone. Others are crying out right now.

"There comes a time in every person's life," as Casey Stangle reminded us. This is a moment that requires serious consideration about how we treat each other. We can ill-afford to not care about people who may be quiet, different, abandoned, or left alone. We must love everyone so much that we make ourselves available to be with them and share our time and resources. Unfortunately, the long season of human neglect has resulted in an almost incalculable number of people with broken spirits and heartaches. But even with this overwhelming challenge, we must call upon the instruction, "The labor is great but the laborers are few," and forge on with a commitment to touch as many lives as possible.

We have been given another opportunity to pay close attention to what is happening around us. The map is dotted with sacred sites where suffering saturates every pore of wretched human beings. Perhaps, now is the time for us to determine how we will combine our resources and efforts to be the positive presence that makes the difference between life and death. It is not up to just one person to act. This special period in human history requires a collective, compassionate response. There comes a time in every person's life and this moment is one of them. What will we do with it?

This Week...

Monday: SPIRE newsletter deadline
Tuesday: Church Council meets at 6:45 p.m. in the Green Room
Thursday: Chancel Choir Rehearsal 7:30 p.m.

Looking Ahead...

Sunday, May 6: ALL CHURCH WORK DAY – preparation for Installation
Oneonta Congregational Church's 2nd Annual
HANDBELL RECITAL 3:00 p.m. in their sanctuary
1515 Garfield Ave., So. Pasadena (1 blk n. of Huntington)
Sunday, May 20: Installation of Pastor Art Cribbs @ 3:00pm
(catered dinner to follow service)

Next Sunday * April 29, 2007

Sermon: GOD'S BUSINESS - Text: Acts 9:36-43

Liturgist: Tanya Samuels Acolyte: Faith Van Horsen



GROWTH OPPORTUNITY FOR OUR CHURCH:

Saturday, April 28 10am – 3pm

A day for discovering what's working to make ministry grow and thrive in a variety of congregations. We'd like to take a group of at least five to this exciting day at Claremont School of Theology. Pastor John Farley will be exploring with us what ways congregations are growing in vitality, welcome, service and justice. Clergy and laity will consider together what contributes to healthy ministry and how the strengths in our congregations can contribute to realizing God's hope for human lives and communities.

Free registration – please see Donald TODAY if you can attend!

San Marino Congregational UCC 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.