

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,

May 17, 2009 – 10:00 a.m.

Sixth Sunday of Easter

For Reflection

Everyone who believes that Jesus
is the Christ has been born of God,
and everyone who loves the parent
loves the child.
(1John 5:1)

***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: Camille Cribbs
Albert Mendoza and Murray Middleman

WELCOME

Pastor Art Cribbs

***SONGS FOR THE SPIRIT**

Congregation

“How Majestic is Your Name”
“God of the Bible”

***OPENING PRAYER**

Carol Barrett

Loving God, you are marvelous beyond words. We stand in awe of you. We are thankful for this time of prayer and worship. In this moment, we turn our attention to you and listen for your still-speaking voice. Speak to us, O God, and guide us through these days. Let your realm rain down on earth where your will is done and justice flows like a mighty river. Come into this place with your Holy Spirit and fill us now, O God, with the precious blessing of your love and mercy. Give us courage to make and be peace in your world. We cry to you, Great Creator, with all our hearts. You are great and magnificent. We give you praise. Hallelujah! Shalom. Salaam. Right on! Amen.

***A SONG FOR THE HEART**

Congregation

“Let Justice Roll Like a River”

The congregation may be seated.

TIME WITH OUR CHILDREN

Pastor Art Cribbs

Story: “Can We Be Friends?”
Our Common Prayer
Music to Bless the Children

SCRIPTURE READING

John 15:9-17

Carol Barrett

CHORAL MUSIC

“O For a Faith”
By William H. Bathurst, Arranged by Nathan Carter

The United Voices

REFLECTIONS "Friends Together" Pastor Art Cribbs

REFLECTING MUSIC "I Am the Bread of Life" by Arnold B. Sherman
Duet by Kira Dills-DeSurra and Adrian Rosales

OUR COMMON LIFE

A Time to Give Carol Barrett
A Time to Act Donald Shenk

A Time to Dedicate Ourselves and Our Gifts Congregation
Receive now these gifts from your bounty, O God. Bless them so they will be used to lift up your name and serve your people. We give back only a portion of what you have provided. Thank you for allowing your blessings to flow through us so others will know you and give you glory. 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 "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" Congregation
Hymnal #506 (words will appear on screen)

*BENEDICTION Pastor Cribbs

*CHANGING OF THE LIGHT Carol Barrett

*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.

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 after worship:

- Adult Bible Study Group meets in the Green Room
- Deacons meet in the Art Room
- 3pm AND THE WINNER IS in the StillSpeaking Theatre
- Mon: 6:45pm TRUSTEES meet in the Pastor's Office.
- Tues.: 7pm SOUL FOOD meets in the Pastor's Office.
- Thursday: 7:00pm First Forum on the Economy is held in the sanctuary: "I've Lost (or it looks like I'm losing) My Job! What Do I Do Now?"
(THE CHOIR WILL NOT MEET FOR REHEARSAL TONIGHT.)
- Friday SPIRE newsletter deadline. Send to: smccucc@sanmarinoucc.org
- Saturday: 8pm AND THE WINNER IS in the StillSpeaking Theatre.

Only THREE more performances of
AND THE WINNER IS
at your StillSpeaking Theatre!
Don't miss the hit comedy, Saturday at 8 & Sundays at 3.

Coming Up...

- Next Sunday: Closing performance of And the Winner Is, Strike & Party.

WORSHIP NEXT SUNDAY
May 24, 2009
Pastor Art's topic: "Guided in Prayer"
Text: John 17:6-19

Important Correction to your May SPIRE newsletter: As Pastor Art's trip to Mexico, originally scheduled for the last two weeks in May, has been postponed, he will continue to pastor and preach for the rest of the month of May.



Many years ago my neighbor and good friend Bill lived in an apartment upstairs and around the corner from me. He used to take pride in sharing stories about his many and varied life experiences, including the time he spent in a Mexican jail for public drunkenness. Bill was philosophical about almost everything and had points of view that were outside the mainstream on many topics. He loved people and never imagined himself better or worse than anyone else. During one of our many extended talks, Bill turned quiet and then slowly phrased, **“You can’t be grateful and resentful at the same time.”**

The physical law of occupation applies to human emotion and reaction. Two opposing sentiments cannot exist in the same space at the same moment. It is a simple truth that Bill realized and offered as wise counsel to a young neighbor. The same can be said about love. It is impossible to love and hate. The extraneous, if not impossible, effort to do both at once will most likely result in a psychiatric diagnosis that could lead to detainment in a mental health institution.

Toward the end of his life, Jesus had a heart-to-heart conversation with his most trusted and intimate disciples. He used his skills as a teacher to give final instructions about the important work they had to perform. The basis of their mission was love. Everything they were supposed to do was predicated on their ability to care for each other and to make a priority of putting others ahead of themselves.

Jesus pointed to himself and the three years of public ministry he had shared with his followers as examples for how he expected and needed his disciples to follow him and lead their lives. Their power came from God's love for them and the world. In order for the disciples to go forward, they had to make love the

fundamental practice of their faith. When we review the record, we read a consistency in the community the disciples formed. They loved one another.

That is the same message given to us for these days. **In our homes, on our streets, across our city, throughout the United States, and around the world we witness a great need for love.** Love is not sentimental and romantic. Love is passionate and built on empathy and compassion. We listen to the voices of people who scream and groan and we attend to the concerns of others who suffer and live with despair. Love pushes us from comfort to engagement in issues that put our own lives at risk.

Jesus said to his disciples, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friend” (John 15:13 NRSV). Love causes us to see the world as a home where all God’s children reside. It propels us to think far beyond ourselves and obey God’s commandments. Love requires dedication and commitment to justice and equity for all people.

We have been entrusted with the care of the earth and every living thing. In these days of tremendous challenges from global warming to an economic meltdown, people of faith are summoned to practice our love. Jesus says to us, “Look at me and do what I have done.” Through God’s grace we have been given the comfort of the Holy Spirit and instructed ‘to go into all the world’ and tell the story of God’s love. Love binds us in courage and provides a clear focus of our purpose.

You and I have been called to stand together in a just cause for the sake of children, elders, families, and individuals who need to know they are loved. The food we collect every Sunday for the poor and the hungry as encouraged by our own Sister Liz Cameron is an expression of love. When we open our doors and facilities to persons in recovery, we demonstrate love. As we leave the sanctuary and go into the streets, we are given chances to love someone. Don’t be afraid. Go and love!.

-Pastor Art Cribbs

Mission Moment

Take the Journey -- Strengthen the Church!

“Life is a spiritual journey, but it can be tough to find time for your soul in the craziness of life. Get out of the fast lane once a week. Come join us. Take the Journey.” This invitation is offered by Journey UCC, Prairieville, Louisiana, a new church start supported by the UCC’s **Strengthen the Church** special offering..

Pastor Malcolm Richard notes, “This (Prairieville/Baton Rouge) is now the largest and most conservative city in Louisiana. Few churches exist that are progressive and evangelical.” Thus the mission statement: “We exist to communicate a caring God to a contemporary culture and establish a practical, optimistic, grace-filled church that focuses on encouraging people.” Here Journey Church is the sole UCC church, with only ten more UCC churches in the whole state. “Faith is a Journey – Not a guilt trip” is something many are eager to hear.

Its vision, “to reach the unchurched, broken and hurting people in our city with God’s unconditional love, acceptance and forgiveness,” is bearing fruit. A bi-racial couple with three children felt ignored or unwelcome in five churches before coming to Journey and feeling loved and accepted. A single mother who never felt accepted in other churches because of her tattoos, former drug use and prison record, is now an involved member. People reached by Journey’s FEMA trailer-park ministry of visitation, listening, and care packets are touched and grateful.

Your gifts to the Strengthen the Church offering make a big difference by starting new churches like Journey UCC, in Louisiana.

**Our *Strengthen the Church* offering will be received
on Sunday, May 31st.**

May 2009 God is still speaking,

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



From the UCC Calendar of Prayer for today: **FRIENDS TOGETHER**

The Still Speaking Cycling Team is a non-competitive group of cyclists who are located all over the United States. On occasion they get together to ride as a team, or you may just spot an individual member riding his or her bike wearing their distinctive jersey.



There are three primary goals of the Still Speaking Cycling Team: networking, evangelism, and fun:

Networking - Or more appropriately "making new friends." In the two years the team has been in existence, over 80 jerseys have been purchased by people from Maine to California; and many of the team members have joined others in specific charity rides.

Evangelism - This is not preaching about why we are right and why you are wrong. Meeting other people opens up the possibility to talk about the inclusive grace of God and the basic beliefs of the United Church of Christ. Wearing a Still Speaking Cycling Team jersey affords them the opportunity to share some ideas of the faith with others as they ask questions about the team.

Fun - While their individual definitions of "fun" are as varied as our definitions of "God"; mixing cycling and sharing the good news about the inclusiveness of the United Church of Christ can be fun. Fun is what we all make it.

As more people join the Still Speaking Cycling Team and participate or organize more rides around the country, more friendships will develop and more networking will take place.

Prayer: *Faithful God, make our hearts bold with love for one another. Pour out your Spirit upon all people, that we may live your justice and sing in praise the new song of your marvelous victory. Amen.*

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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
Keyboard.....Albert Mendoza
Brass..... Murray Middleman
Section LeadersGuylaine Bouchard (alto); 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 Boutwell

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.