

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,

May 24, 2009 – 10:00 a.m.

Seventh Sunday of Easter

For Reflection

Clap your hands, all you peoples;
shout to God with loud songs of joy.
For God, the Most High, is awesome,
a great ruler over all the earth.
(Psalm 47:1-2)

***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

“What a Friend We Have in Jesus”
“Rain Down”

***OPENING PRAYER**

Kris Cunz

Gracious God, your love and mercy draw us into your presence. You are forever faithful and your Word is trustworthy and true. Your ways are mysterious. Your peace is beyond our understanding. Oh, how we praise your Holy Name. You have made us one human family; we are designed in your Divine Image. Oh God, we hunger and thirst for you; we seek you. We stand humbly in this place as we call to you right now. We open our hearts and minds to receive you into our lives. Great Spirit come into this place where your people are gathered. Help us to be peace makers who stand with courage where you need us to be. Sustain us with your Holy Spirit. Hallelujah! Shalom. Salaam. Right on! Amen.

***A SONG FOR THE HEART**

Congregation

“I’ve Got Peace Like a River”

The congregation may be seated.

TIME WITH OUR CHILDREN

Pastor Art Cribbs

Story: “What Do You See Up There?”
Our Common Prayer
Music to Bless the Children

SCRIPTURE READING

John 17:6-19

Kris Cunz

CHORAL MUSIC

“*Blest Are They*”
Words and Music by David Haas

The United Voices

REFLECTIONS

“Guided in Prayer”

Pastor Art Cribbs

REFLECTING MUSIC

“Trusting in Thee”
by Claude L. Fichthorn

Soloist: Guylaine Bouchard

OUR COMMON LIFE

A Time to Give
A Time to Act

Kris Cunz
Donald Shenk

A Time to Dedicate Ourselves and Our Gifts
Loving God, we bring our offering to your altar. Receive these gifts from your people and let it be used as a blessing to the ministries of this congregation and the United Church of Christ. Thank you for your blessings and all the ways you allow us to be a blessing to others. We dedicate ourselves and our gifts to you. Amen.

A Time to Reflect
A Time to Pray

“God, Fill Me Now”
Prayers of the People

REFLECTING MUSIC

“Over My Head”
Hymnal #514 (words will appear on screen)

Congregation

***BENEDICTION**

Pastor Cribbs

***CHANGING OF THE LIGHT**

Kris Cunz

***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:

3pm CLOSING performance of AND THE WINNER IS in the StillSpeaking Theatre. Everyone is invited to the STRIKE afterwards and then PARTY!

- **Mon: HAPPY MEMORIAL DAY. Pastor Art will be leading the Invocation for the City of San Marino Memorial Day service beginning at 9am by the War Memorial in Lacy Park.**
- **Tues.: 7pm SOUL FOOD meets in the Pastor’s Office.**
- **Weds: Donald on vacation – OFFICE CLOSED.**
- **Thursday: Eric Stimes 3-year anniversary as our Sound Tech – Congrats!**
Donald on vacation (during the day) – OFFICE CLOSED.
7pm The United Voices choir rehearses in the sanctuary.
- **Friday Preschool International Day**

Coming Up...

- **Next Sunday: Our STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH offering will be received.**

**WORSHIP NEXT SUNDAY
May 31, 2009 - PENTECOST SUNDAY
Pastor Art’s topic: “Spirit for All”
Text: Acts 2:1-21**

- **Thursday, 6/4 at 7pm: Another Forum on the Economy in our sanctuary. This one will center on the topic, “Protecting Your Home.”**

- **Friday/Saturday, 6/5,6:** SoCalNV Conference of the UCC's **Annual Gathering** will take place at Claremont UCC (233 West Harrison Ave, Claremont CA 91711).
- **Thursday, 6/25 at 7pm:** Another Forum on the Economy in our sanctuary. This one will center on the topic, "**Securing Your Future Retirement.**"



How often do you find yourself looking up? Gazing skyward on a bright, clear day you might notice a flock of birds soaring above your head. On a dark, star-filled night you may follow the trail of milky lights. Momentary events can cause us to look up and ponder deeply the meaning of things. We ask, "Why?" Our questions flow freely without assurance an answer will follow. Yet, we continue to quiz ourselves about things beyond our knowledge. We turn to the sky and look up.

When a person faces great challenges that overwhelm the human soul, we may attempt to elevate one's spirit as we encourage the weary sojourner "to look up." It is more than a mere expression or cliché. It has meaning with a precise intention to urge each of us to never give up or give in to anything that could bring us down. Looking up is more than a physical exercise of turning our heads or straining our necks. It is an attitude that can transform a single occurrence into a life decision to do something differently.

There is a saying, "The sky's the limit." Nothing can keep us from flying past our dreams and attaining unimaginable possibilities. Unseen doors open in front of us and we walk into paths never-before explored. There is no stopping our will to go farther than we've ever gone before. We look up and see new ventures. Just when we thought there was nothing more to do, we realize the great bounty of opportunity is infinite.

Looking up gives us another vantage point. Sometimes it means having to seek higher ground without obstacles so our view is unobstructed. It may take the voice of someone else to get us to turn our attention upward. We may be 'down-in-the-dumps' without a desire to rise, but a whisper of hope breezes over us and we look up. Immediately, we feel a sensation of 'what if' that fills the cavities of once voided crevices within us. "Yes, we can!" screams madly inside our minds. There is a way we can do what is required in the exact moment of need. We look up and see there is no limit to the imagination we possess.

A few years ago when I quit my broadcast job in San Francisco and moved to Mississippi, unexpected experiences turned my life around. I smelled fresh cut grass in the morning and looked up at night to witness the glory of sparkling stars in the sky. I felt the force of life and was humbled by God's unconditional love. Looking up gave me a new perspective and helped me appreciate being totally alive. In the open spaces of rural Mississippi without the interruption of fast-paced urban distractions, I looked up and observed the vast expanse of a celestial sea. There, I knew God's Realm is inside us as near as our very breath.

As Jesus spoke his final and parting words to his devout followers, they looked up and watched as a cloud descended and carried Christ out of their sight. They had new found power and they were filled with joy. They looked up and the world around them was forever changed. They looked up and could never look backward again. Their destiny was sealed in the promise that they would receive the Holy Spirit as the Source of Comfort and Peace. Life would never be the same again.

Each of us is given that same promise. No matter what life tosses at us, we can always look up.

-Pastor Art Cribbs

Mission Moment

Faith and Economics

Economics has been called the "dismal science." Why? Well, what could be more dreary than the idea that human beings, as understood by classical economics, are creatures motivated by nothing more than material self-interest? What a contrast with the Christian idea of human beings: people who aspire to love God by serving others with hope and charity.

Classical economic theory assumes a world of scarce resources in which individuals have no choice but to compete with each other in order to survive. The Christian faith, on the other hand, teaches that in God's world there is more than enough to go around.

But are religion and economics really as irreconcilable as all that? Sure, Jesus threw the money-changers out of the temple. But he also praised the servants who profitably invested their master's money, and punished the one who only tried to conserve it. And

some of today's economists have a more generous perspective on economic behavior than that found in classic theory. Take Ben Stein and Phil DeMuth. In their book, *Yes, You Can Still Retire Comfortably!* they offer some surprising advice to retirees in their seventies and beyond:

"Do your children know that you love them? If not, when were you planning on telling them?"

"Whom do you need to set things right with? Now might be a good time."

Christian faith and economics are not so irreconcilable after all. What does your faith say to you about your financial life?

May 2009 God is still speaking,



From the UCC Calendar of Prayer for today: **GUIDED IN PRAYER**



Bruce Van Voorhis, missionary with the Asian Human Rights Commission in Hong Kong, believes in the power of prayer to unite our world. These are excerpts from his Prayer of Intercession.

We ask you today, God, for respect for those who are different than we are in our world that constantly creates walls of separation, a world where we never cease to find ways to divide ourselves by our race, our ethnicity, our nationality, our religion, a world where we regularly strive to find the differences in our identities instead of how much we are alike.

We ask you today, God, for sanity in our world that consumes the environment you created to support us, a world where we defile the pristine water and the pure air and call it development.

We ask you today, God, for nourishment in our world fighting for food, a world where we can afford to go to the moon but far too many people cannot afford to go to the market, a world where immense wealth can reside next to immense poverty.

In this world of our making, God, our world of war, discrimination, environmental degradation and hunger and poverty, we ask you to guide us out of our present state of confusion with its misguided priorities and values. Teach us again, God, the lessons of love and compassion that we continue to stubbornly reject.

It is in this spirit that we pray today, God, for the Burmese asylum-seekers ...for the asylum-seekers detained in Hong Kong and for the asylum-seekers in our midst...Be present in their lives, Lord, and quiet the anxiety that they feel.

It is in the spirit of love and compassion that we pray today, God, for China's farmers, for the elderly and the poor, for our brothers and sisters in Eritrea and Ethiopia, people who have known too much war and too much poverty. May we discern your will from that of our own. Now in silence we lift up to you the joys and concerns in our hearts. **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
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.