

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,**

August 31, 2008 – 10:00 a.m. 22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

***For Reflection***

“O freedom! O freedom!  
O freedom over me!  
An’ befo’ I’d be a slave,  
I’ll be buried in my grave,  
An’ go home to my Lord an’ be free.”  
(African American Spiritual)

*Please stop by the Sound Booth if you wish to use a sound receiver today.  
Childcare for children under age 4 is available in our nursery  
with trained childcare provider, Mrs. Barbara Sanchez.*

*\*The asterisk indicates the times when you are invited to stand if the Spirit so moves you.  
You are invited to watch the screen up front to increase your participation in worship today.*

**GATHERING MUSIC** Miss Carmelia Bell

**\*LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES** Congregation  
“This Little Light of Mine” Acolyte: Faith Van Horsen

**\*A SONG FOR THE SPIRIT** Congregation  
“God of the Bible”

**\*OPENING PRAYER**

Kana Cribbs

O Lord, have mercy!  
Christ, have mercy!  
Wrap us in your protective arms.  
Shelter us from storms.  
Carry us through these terrible times.  
Unchain the bondage of sin that grips us.  
Loosen the ropes tied around our souls.  
Free us, O God, and make us whole.  
Touch our bodies with your healing hand.  
Lift us up so we can see your plan.  
Come now, O Lord, while your children are calling.  
Come now and wipe away every tear from our eyes.  
Thank you, Great Creator, for shaping us like you.  
Thank you for everything you do.  
Fill us with your Holy Spirit.  
Let compassion, love, and forgiveness stream pass our lips.  
We celebrate this day in your name.  
Hallelujah. Shalom. Salaam. Right on! Amen.

**\*A SONG FROM THE HEART** Congregation  
“Let Justice Roll Like a River”

*The congregation may be seated.*

**TIME WITH OUR CHILDREN** Pastor Art Cribbs

Story “What Do You Want to Be When You Grow Up?”  
Or  
“How Will You Be Called?””

Our Common Prayer and Music to Bless the Children

*At this time, children are invited to process downstairs  
for a special Summer Children’s Time.  
Our Children Worship & Wonder program will resume on September 14.*

**OUR COMMON LIFE**

A Time to Give  
A Time to Act  
A Time to Dedicate Ourselves and Our Gifts  
Here is your money, O God, brought to your altar by your people. You have blessed us with abundance. We give back with joy and cheerfulness. We are so glad to have this offering to share in your service. Thank you for all the blessings we have received and given so others will be blessed...as we dedicate ourselves and our gifts. Amen.

Kana Cribbs  
Donald Shenk, Pastoral Assistant

**SPECIAL SUMMER MUSIC**

Miss Carmelia Bell

**SCRIPTURE READING**

Exodus 3:1-15  
Kana Cribbs

**REFLECTIONS**

“Called by Name”  
Pastor Art Cribbs

**TIME OF PRAYER**

Preparation for Prayer  
Prayers of the People  
“God, Fill Me Now”  
Congregation  
Pastor Cribbs

**SENDING HYMN**

“O Freedom”  
Congregation

**\*BENEDICTION**

Pastor Cribbs

**\*CHANGING OF THE LIGHT**

Kana Cribbs

**\*GOING FORTH**

Soloist: Miss Carmelia Bell

We welcome soloist, Miss Carmelia Bell and her accompanist, Mr. Charles Ray, both from San Diego with us today and thank them for sharing their extraordinary music with us.



Everyone is welcome to have some coffee and conversation next door after the service.

Thanks to Connie James-Gililand for providing our treats today.

**We express a warm welcome to all who are here 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 (with nametag so we can greet you by name) and receive information about everything happening here.***

**SOUL FOOD**, the weekly spiritual development and human expression group, looks ahead to the coming Sunday sermons. This is an exciting opportunity to delve deeper into the Scriptures, commentaries and your pastor's sermons. Join us every Tuesday night at 7:00 P.M. in the Fireside Room.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR...**

**NEW MEMBERS & KICK OFF SUNDAY & POTLUCK** next Sunday, September 7<sup>th</sup>. Kick off the new fall season as the choir returns and we begin to prepare for our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations. If you would like to be received into the congregation as a new member, please contact Donald Shenk or Pastor Art in the church office

**PUBLIC SAFETY SUNDAY** on September 14 during morning worship. We'll have an exciting service of worship and commemoration as we honor our friends working in local fire and police departments. Afterwards we'll enjoy an expanded social time on the outdoor patio.

**COMMISSIONING SUNDAY** on September 28. Look for more details on this fun and very unusual service day.

**BLESSING OF THE PETS** on October 5 from 11:30am to 2pm. This is our second annual blessing event and it promises to be a fun one. We need your help to make this a special blessing to our animal companions and friends within our community.

**ALL CHURCH WORK DAY** on October 19<sup>th</sup>. Help us spruce up the church buildings and grounds in preparation for our month of celebration in November.

**60th ANNIVERSARY of SAN MARINO CONGREGATIONAL UCC:** Plan to be part of our history and presence in San Marino. We'll be celebrating our anniversary every

Sunday in November! Plan to be here especially on Nov. 2 to be part of our traditional **big group picture**.



The “official” election season has opened. Political speeches and heated campaigns are flooding our lives. Money is being poured into television and radio commercials to capture our votes. There is no way to escape the mania spreading like wildfire across the homeland. It is exciting and begs our participation.

Of course, there will be cynics who will do everything they can to dissuade our enthusiasm. There will be disappointments and disillusion. But, mostly, there will be an endless flow of debates, pundit commentaries, and public responses to the rhetoric and energy of this historic election year. American voters have a very real choice in the different candidates vying to become president of the United States. This is not a time to wither on the sidelines and only be a spectator. Get involved. Do more than just vote!

For the first time in a very long time, we have the opportunity to work very hard to make the democratic process really mean something. Whatever is your political affiliation, perspective or passion, this election year proclaims a crucial, clarion call for full participation.

Howard Thurmond, the great theologian and mystic, wrote, “We are never able to do anything in quite the way we want to do it. No single experience, however great, is quite able to represent us adequately. Life is essentially dynamic and alive. It’s this aliveness that guarantees and sustains all the particular manifestations of life by which we are surrounded and of which we are a part.” (From *Deep River* and the *Negro Spiritual Speaks of Life and Death*)

This is such a time. While perfection and completeness will, undoubtedly, elude us, we must engage this political process that can liberate us from practices, traditions, behaviors, and attitudes that mire our progress toward improved hu-

man relations. Our thinking is too often clouded by memory and fear. We are afraid of what we suspect will be detrimental to our best interests. Yet, we practice conduct that is unbecoming people of faith. We are not always open to the gifts and possibilities other people possess. We block our blessings because we don’t trust who we don’t know.

Today, we are called to step in to the Public Sphere with confidence of a new outcome. We enter the arena bearing our hopes and offering our vision for a nation and world made better by our commitment to serve generously and give ourselves freely. We do so with the awareness of others joining us in a cause that is just, right, and good. We are not alone.

We have come to the crossroads of politics and religion. At its best, this intersection provides clarity to forge a path of opportunity and salvation. The hungry and those who suffer will find relief. The bewildered and destitute will receive companionship and comfort. The forsaken and abandoned will discover hope and community.

There is an absolute choice laid before us in the two major party candidates and among some of the minor parties. Our votes are not to be taken for granted. Our voices will not be silent. The whole world is watching to see what Americans will do when given the chance to make a change. We have no excuses.

Across the board, conditions created by human error require resolution. We can do better. We do not vote to put the burden of change on the shoulders of one person. We vote to align ourselves with the human and celestial forces of righteousness and justice.

We in the United Church of Christ believe “God is still speaking.” We also know ‘God is still calling’ us to ‘act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly.’ Listen to how God is calling your name, and respond faithfully, cheerfully, and enthusiastically. Then, call your favorite candidate’s campaign office and go to work to make the change that is both needed and desired.

-Pastor Art Cribbs

**Next Sunday † September 7, 2008**

**23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time 10:00 a.m. Morning Worship**

**NEW MEMBER SUNDAY**

**Theme: Remember, Restore, Renew Scripture: Exodus 12: 1-14**

**Preacher: Art Cribbs Our Choir, THE UNITED VOICES, returns!**

## **UCC Calendar of Prayer for Sunday, August 31, 2008**

**Altadena Community Church UCC in Altadena, CA and its members provide support to their community and those in need around the world through volunteer work, donations from our general operating fund, and donations from the congregation targeted to specific organizations supported by our church. The organizations and activities needing support are often brought to our attention by our own members, or by the United Church of Christ national offices. Some of our recent support has gone to: Church World Service, ACTS, a food pantry that provides groceries to the needy in our community, run by the Altadena Congregations Together Serving, of which our church is a member, Global Ministries, Friends Outside, an organization that assists the families of prison inmates, Peppermint Ridge , a non-profit residential facility in Corona, California, for developmentally disabled adults, Friends In Deed of Pasadena, a program of the Ecumenical Council of Pasadena Churches that provides emergency clothing and food to needy families, and Heifer International.**



**We also provide space for use by community organizations, many of them non-religious, such as the Altadena Community Children's Choir, and Y-SPIRIT , a program of the YMCA providing activities to developmentally disabled youth. Giving to a variety of organizations, allows our congregation an opportunity to give in a way that is meaningful to each and every one of us.**

**PRAYER :** *In the flaming bush you promised deliverance to your people, O God, and in the cross of Jesus you embraced our suffering and pain. In times of misery, show us the transforming power of your love that we may know the hope of your glory. Amen.*

## Mission Moment

### ***Money, Money, Money: Can we talk about it in church?***

One recent Saturday, leaders from a number of Ohio United Church of Christ congregations got together with Association and national leaders in the UCC for a day of reflection on the role of money in their lives. Using the video resource, Living with Money, they listened in on a conversation among financial planners, bankers, theologians, and an ethicist about the power of money: the feelings it evokes and the choices it presents. Mixed in were Bible study, prayer, and group sharing. It all added up to a rare opportunity to speak openly about a subject too often neglected in church. What is the relationship of faith to money? Are money matters really spiritual matters? Poverty, debt, and the connection of money with security and self-worth present profoundly spiritual struggles that pastors and church families must address. If not in church, then where? In *Financing American Religion*, Mark Chaves and Sharon L. Miller observe that “individuals are not, in general, helped by churches and clergy when it comes to thinking about their larger economic lives...the disjunction between faith and money is broader than the issue of how much people put in offering plates.” What about a “financial wellness ministry” that would support church members as they think about their economic lives in a faith context? Leaders of such ministries report that when given the opportunity to speak freely in a safe, non-judgmental atmosphere about faith and their financial lives, it can be hard to get people to stop talking!

***August 2008***  
**God is still speaking,**

## CHURCH OFFICERS

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

## STAFF

Pastor..... Art Cribbs  
Pastoral Assistant, Director of Music/Theatre ..... Donald Shenk  
Preschool Director ..... Connie James-Gililand  
Accompanist ..... Albert Mendoza  
Guitarists..... Randall Allen & Nathan York  
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.