

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,

September 21, 2008 – 10:00 a.m. 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

For Reflection

“O give thanks to God, call on God's name
make known God's deeds among the peoples.
Sing to God, sing praises to God;
tell of all God's wonderful works.”
(Psalm 105:1-2)

*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.*

***Children and Youth are welcome to join our
Sunday School and Children Worship & Wonder program!***
After the children's time with Pastor Art, 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 childcare provider, Mrs. Barbara Sanchez

**The asterisk indicates the times when you are invited to stand if the Spirit so moves you.*

GATHERING MUSIC

Albert Mendoza, Pianist

***LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES** Acolyte: Arthur Cribbs
“There Are Some Things I May Not Know” Congregation

***A SONG FOR THE SPIRIT** Congregation
“Rain Down”

***OPENING PRAYER** David Crist

Merciful, Compassionate, and Loving God, Precious is your name. Wonderful are your ways. We praise you and bow humbly before you. Thank you for your showers of blessing. Thank you for this day, a time of rest and renewal; a time when we worship you. Come into this place and fill us with your Holy Spirit. We cry out to you in our time of distress. We call your name when we are weary. In these times we need you, O God. Hear our prayers. Help us to be more faithful. Remove anything that stands between us and you or separates us from one another. Deepen our love for you and all your people. In this hour, O God, heal our hearts and heal this nation. O God, have mercy on us. Grant unto us courage in the struggle for justice and peace. Resolve within us the will to stand in solidarity with our sisters and brothers who suffer and bear the brunt of social, political and economic injustice. Wash our souls and cleanse us of our mistakes. Come, O God, come! Hallelujah. Shalom. Salaam. RIGHT ON! Amen.

***A SONG FROM THE HEART** Congregation
“Lead Us from Death to Life”

The congregation may be seated and the children may come forward.

TIME WITH OUR CHILDREN Pastor Art Cribbs

Story “Have You Ever Been Hungry?”
Our Common Prayer
Music to Bless the Children

***Children & Youth will be dismissed to participate in their own programs.
(Children today with Connie James-Gililand and Youth with Scott Cameron.)***

OUR COMMON LIFE

A Time to Give

David Crist

A Time for our Neighbors in Need

Holly Ann Burns

A Time to Act

Donald Shenk

A Time to Dedicate Ourselves and Our Gifts

Congregation

Thank you, Great Spirit, for all of your blessings. Thank you for these offerings, just a portion of your blessings returned to you. Thank you for your people who have given and those who were unable to give. Thank you for this opportunity to support the ministries of this church and the United Church of Christ. Thank you, O God, for all you do to enable us to dedicate ourselves and our gifts to you. Amen.

A Time to Reflect

“Come, Bring Your Burdens to God”

A Time to Pray

Prayers of the People

SCRIPTURE READING

Exodus 16:2-15

David Crist

CHORAL MUSIC

“What a Friend We Have in Jesus”

The United Voices

Words by J. Scriven, Traditional English tune arranged by Alfred Fedak

REFLECTIONS

“Tensions in the Wilderness”

Pastor Art Cribbs

REFLECTING MUSIC

“Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer”

NCH #18

Congregation

Hughes/Williams

*BENEDICTION

Pastor Cribbs

*CHANGING OF THE LIGHT

David Crist

*GOING FORTH

The United Band

**We express a warm welcome to all who are here today!
Everyone is welcome outside for refreshments and conversation!**

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.

Special thanks to everyone who contributed to the success of our first Public Safety Sunday. We are a blessed people who extended our appreciation and gratitude to public safety personnel in our communities last Sunday. We had representatives from nearly ten local fire and police departments. **Susan Jakubowski Weiner** and **David Crist** talked about communications and relationships during the worship service. These are two areas we can focus on to make our Public Safety Sunday more meaningful beyond the event. Our guest speaker **Tom Anderson** challenged us to learn the names of firefighters, paramedics, animal control officers, and police officers who work in our neighborhoods. We have lit a candle to brighten our cities.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

THIS WEEK:

- **MONDAY 6:45pm – TRUSTEES meet in Pastor's Office**
- **TUESDAY 7:00pm – SOUL FOOD in Fireside Room**
- **WEDS. 6:45pm - THEATRE Adv. Brd. meets in Theatre**
- **THURSDAY 7:00pm – UNITED VOICES choir rehearsal in sanctuary**
- **FRIDAY/SAT Family Camp at Pilgrim Pines (register at www.pilgrimpinescamp.org)**
- **SUNDAY GREAT COMMISSIONING Sunday (comfy shoes recommended)
Children Prepare Spire for distribution**

COMING UP:

- ❖ **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. Have your friends visit our website: www.sanmarinoucc.org and click on CALENDAR.
- ❖ **ALL CHURCH WORK DAY on October 19th.** 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.



“In times like these we need an anchor,” is the opening line of an old hymn we sang in our church when I was a child. Those words are very true today. With news of banks failing, investment firms tumbling, and Wall Street reeling, these are difficult and challenging times. But, as the Chinese remind us, these are times of opportunity. According to Chinese folk wisdom, “crisis” means challenge and opportunity. Let there be no doubt, America is in crisis.

The crisis did not begin with the recent economic downturn. Events are catching up with practices and behaviors that could only result in disappointment and failure. As bad as things may seem, this is only the beginning. Perhaps that is not the kind of news anyone wants to receive. Often our desire is to have only good news delivered at our door. But, these times require truth.

When the Hebrew people fled Egypt and had to sustain under a scorching sun without food, they began to complain against Moses. They were hungry without any means to feed themselves. They could no longer rely on their wits and skills. The situation was beyond their control. They faced the harshness of life. Everything they thought was possible through self reliance was disproved. They had to believe and trust only God.

Lessons are learned when options are reduced. The false veil of deception is unmasked and the truth of circumstances stands naked without pretense. The results of lies, greed, misappropriation, and behaviors unbecoming a civil society culminate in a series of bad news based on failed enterprises. When we put our trust in materiality at some point we will reap the outcome of our commitment to idolatry. That is bad news.

Innocent victims are trapped in the mire of economic demise. A society that refused to correct its course finds itself on the verge of disaster. Pride, arrogance, and a stubborn determination to forge on without regard for human consequences places the nation and everyone affiliated with it in peril. What do we do? Where do we turn?

Experts and financial professionals rely on the wizardry of their unscientific calculations and projections. Their theories do not provide satisfactory remedies to bail out once formidable institutions or protect them from bankruptcy. The bad news is nearly unbearable as lives and livelihoods are re-arranged and diminished.

The practice of idol worship presents dire realities for those who give themselves faithfully to its cause. Kneeling at the altar of Baal leads to a predictable, terrible end.

The United States of America bills itself as a bastion of capitalism, individualism, consumerism, and materiality. Like the pharaoh of old, the overseers of this contemporary, modern-day system expect and insist their minions toil without sufficient rest as a sign of their loyalty. The Sabbath is disregarded. God is dismissed. Community is disintegrated.

There is tension in the wilderness across America. Storms along the Gulf Coast signify a Greater Power has ultimate charge, and exposes our frail infrastructure; the result of years of neglect and lack of vision. Tragic accidents emphasize our perennial state of tiredness. Failed financial establishments highlight cannibalistic tendencies that devour lesser, weaker entities. "In times like these we need an anchor."

We have a spiritual legacy that informs how we are to be present in these days. Our reliance on God is the anchor we need through storms and difficult times. Our faith in Christ is the anchor that sustains us when things go terribly wrong. Our understanding of covenant, solidarity, and community drives us to extend supporting hands to those who suffer. We are called to walk in righteousness and truth as living testaments of God's love, mercy, and compassion.

The road may be long and the way hard, but with God's grace, we will make it through the wilderness. We will overcome the tension. We must turn our lives over to God, confess our mistakes, repent, and change our ways. We must apologize and offer reparations to persons whose lives have been trampled under the feet of oppressors. There is much that must be done to correct the course of this nation and return it to the international community and human family. Now is a very good time to get started.

-Pastor Art Cribbs

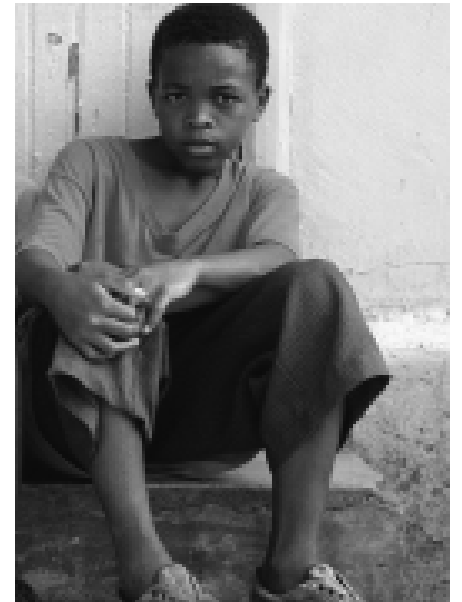
Next Sunday † September 28, 2008
26th Sunday in Ordinary Time 10:00 a.m. Morning Worship
Sermon by Pastor Art Cribbs – "God's Sustaining Presence"

UCC Calendar of Prayer:
For Sunday, September 21, 2008

Tensions in the Wilderness

"A heinous crime is going on in the Sudan, even as we're talking now. And it's a blot on the conscience of the world and particularly on the African continent, especially so soon after the Rwanda memory still haunts us on that continent and should haunt the entire world as well... it's about time, I think, that the international community accepted its full responsibilities in the Sudan." - Wole Soyinka, Nigerian playwright and Nobel Prize laureate.

For the people of Darfur, it must seem as if God has abandoned them in the wilderness of poverty, violence and genocide. According to estimates from the Judgment On Genocide website, the violence has left over 400,000 people dead, 2 million internally displaced, countless women raped and over 300,000 in refugee camps across the border in Chad. The International Campaign for Justice in Sudan was in attendance at the 2007 General Synod in Hartford to educate and inform Synod delegates and suggest ways in which the international community can help. Clergy and lay persons from the Northern California-Nevada Conference and the Central Atlantic Conference helped build awareness at General Synod about the campaign and many congregations are continuing to become involved in the effort to bring justice to Sudan. The Hague-based International Criminal Court (ICC) is pursuing efforts to hold the perpetrators of genocide in Darfur accountable for their crimes. One way for congregations to educate their members and support the ICC case is by screening the DVD, Judgment on Genocide, available from www.judgmentongenocide.org.



“In Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others”

ROMANS 12:5

Partners in Christ’s Service

Last year, Gede Suarna was one of about 30 community leaders from Asia and Africa who participated in a 10 month program in organic agriculture and community organizing through the Asian Rural Institute (ARI) in Japan. Since graduating, Gede has returned to his home in far west Bali, Indonesia. He works with his wife at Maha Boga Marga (MBM), the outreach arm of The Protestant Christian Church in Bali (GKPB). MBM helps to put into action Jesus’ commandments to feed the poor, heal the sick, and take care of the needy.



The MBM office houses a bank that makes small loans, most under \$100, to family businesses. A small loan may be granted for something as simple as a sewing machine so that a mother may begin a small business from her own home. MBM gives group training and helps monitor the success of each person. Currently some 1,000 are being served this way, regardless of their faith.

Gede is also a Veterinarian, and after MBM office hours he grabs his bag of tools and makes visits to the patients who need him. At one village farm he treated a sick cow. At the same time, he showed the farmer how to produce organic fertilizer by mixing the cow manure with coconut shells and rice husks, sharing some of the agricultural practices he learned at the Asian Rural Institute.

Gede is also leading a group of farmers on a project to build a pit for pig manure. Many kitchens use kerosene or propane for cooking. However, the world demand for oil has caused these fuels to become much more expensive. Pig manure is a practical alternative, close under foot, and a simple answer for the family’s cooking needs.

As workers and farmers face new challenges, the church must also change and respond. Partnerships between churches and other organizations equip people like Gede Suarna for ministry, and remind us that we do not engage in ministry alone, but as one Body of Christ that reaches around the world.

The Protestant Christian Church in Bali (GKPB) and the Asian Rural Institute (ARI) in Japan are just two of the many partners of Global Ministries.



You make the difference . . .

The prayers and help you provide through your local congregations make possible the work and witness of GLOBAL MINISTRIES, which is supported by Disciples Mission Fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM) of the United Church of Christ.

WWW.GLOBALMINISTRIES.ORG

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
 Section Leaders Alexandra Loutsion (Mez); Guylaine Bouchard (alto);
 Benjamin Cortez (ten); 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 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.