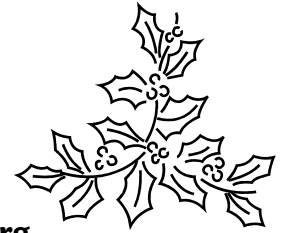




**SAN MARINO CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
2560 HUNTINGTON DRIVE
SAN MARINO, CA 91108**



(626) 292-2080

www.sanmarinoucc.org

**“Never place a period where God has placed a COMMA,
God is STILL SPEAKING!”**

November 29, 2009 – 10:00 a.m. FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

For Reflection

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: “The Lord is our righteousness.” (Jeremiah 33:14-16)

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 today’s service of worship.

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

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

Music provided by Albert Mendoza & Murray Middleman

WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Art Cribbs, Pastor

***SONGS FOR THE SPIRIT**

“God Came Down” and “God of the Bible”

***OPENING PRAYER**

Keith Dillon

Liturgist: Good morning, God, Creator of the Universe. We have come to celebrate your mercy and goodness. We bow before you in humble submission to your Word, your Way, and your Will.

People: **We call out your name in times of trial and despair. You make our hearts glad with surprising joy.**

Liturgist: We give you thanks for your constant presence. Thank you for the gift of Christ who comes to us as one of us and advocates on our behalf.

People: **When we stumble you lift us up. Thank you, O God, for your blessings.**

Liturgist: As we stand in this place made sacred by your people and the Holy Spirit, help us to know what you want us to do.

People: **Give us courage to go boldly into the world and proclaim Good News to a desperate people.**

Liturgist: Grant unto us a spirit of compassion, a vision of hope, and a will to be makers of peace.

People: **We ask this in the name of Jesus. Hallelujah. Shalom. Salaam. Right on! Amen.**

The Congregation may be seated.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES

please see insert

“Come, Lord Jesus “

TIME WITH OUR CHILDREN “A New Year Before the End of the Year?”

Pastor Art Cribbs

OUR COMMON PRAYER

“O God, who art in heaven...”

MUSIC TO BLESS THE CHILDREN

“The Friendly Beasts”

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.

SCRIPTURE READING	Luke 21:25-36	Keith Dillon
HYMN OF PREPARATION	<i>“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”</i>	Congregation
REFLECTIONS	<i>“Sign of Things to Come”</i>	The Rev. Dr. Art Cribbs
MUSIC FOR REFLECTION	<i>“All Good Gifts”</i> Words and Music by Stephen Schwartz	Soloist: Keith Dillon
A TIME TO GIVE	<i>Including an introduction to our Christmas Fund Drive</i>	Keith Dillon
A TIME TO ACT		Donald Shenk
A TIME TO DEDICATE OURSELVES & OUR GIFTS		Keith Dillon
We give you thanks, O God, for these gifts from your people. Help us to give generously so we can continue to support the ministries of this congregation and the United Church of Christ. Allow us to use this money as you have intended, honoring the donations of each one who has given. Be with us as we dedicate ourselves and our gifts to you. Amen.		
A TIME FOR PRAYER	<i>“God Fill Me Now”</i>	Prayer time led by Pastor Cribbs
*SENDING HYMN	<i>“Amen, Amen”</i>	Congregation
*BENEDICTION		Pastor Cribbs
*CHANGING OF THE LIGHT		Keith Dillon
*GOING FORTH		Instrumentalists

Everyone is welcome to the SOCIAL TIME next door in Crist Hall after the service.

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.

You are welcome to contribute to the Liz Cameron Memorial Fund by using one of the envelopes provided at the Visitor's Center. Proceeds from this fund go toward helping those in need in our community with gifts of food and clothing.

Please note: In an effort to control the spread of any germs - as we approach what we're told is a highly likely virulent flu season - we invite you to utilize the hand sanitizer provided for you at the Nametag table. Thanks to our concerned members who have provided this opportunity.



CRIBBS NOTES

Walking along Huntington Drive, I notice the changing colors among trees that line the median. Rust, red, gold, and yellow blend with fading greens as leaves turn in seasonal fashion. Our community

reflects the time of year when old passes and gives way to something new.

Of course, in Southern California we enjoy this visual treat a few weeks and even months after our fellow citizens in the Northeast spied the transition from summer to fall and fall into winter. Here, we are a tad late with lingering warm weather and longer hours of sunlight that delay the climatic announcement of winter's arrival.

By now, our sisters and brothers back East have already raked leaves off their lawns and shoveled snow from sidewalks and driveways. The changing colors of trees have long since given way to bare branches and frozen tundra that signal the end of the year is near. This ending also means the beginning of long, cold, dark nights that bring blasts of arctic air over regions and will settle into deep drafts of ice and snow.

We who live in Southern California have almost no knowledge of such transitions. We are exposed to the constant presence of sunshine, warmth, and dry lands.

Changes still come here although they are subtle. The bright spray of wintry hues provides a delightful and appealing sense that something new is happening. We can see the misty cloud of our breath in the chilled air as we take early morning walks or jog. It is crisp, fresh, and clean. We feel ourselves touching the elements and becoming more aware of Nature's fragile and awesome gentleness surrounding us. We have a sense of something different taking place. It excites us.

While our eyes experience the transformation of scenery, we are quite mindful the holidays are coming. Our moods turn toward pleasant thoughts and familial ties. Sounds of the season fill our ears as melodious backdrops in shopping malls and civic centers. Christmas music flows throughout the land. Change is coming.

What are we to make of these things that shift our understanding and call our attention to the dynamic intrusions into our lives? Even amid the predictable activities that always take place during this time of year, there are unexpected events that disturb us or bring surprising joy. We are changed.

In this immediate moment, we exist in the brief and fleeting in-between time after Thanksgiving and before Christmas. On the Christian calendar, this is Advent, a period of great anticipation. It is the in-between time when we leave the past behind us and look toward a new beginning.

Advent allows us to imagine possibilities for peace and justice. We still believe in miracles that surpass magic or immature wishes. We gaze skyward in search of a lone star to guide us in the right direction. It is the same star the Magi used more than two thousand years ago to lead them to a stark barn in Bethlehem where an infant awaited their arrival.

Right now we are living in a precise time of Thanksgiving and imprecise expectation. We are a people of faith and hope. The colors of change remind us of life's continual motion toward renewing energy and clarifying vision. This is when we slow down and pay closer attention to the environment as we concentrate more fully on human relationships.

We reflect and examine events that have broken bonds and violated our Covenant with God. We stop long enough to imagine another world is possible. "Peace on Earth" can come in real time...even in our time. Just as the leaves turn brilliant colors before they fall from the trees, we, too, can change to brighten our futures and improve the way of the world for our children and those yet unborn.

-Pastor Art Cribbs

What's Happening...

TODAY: ALL GOD'S FAMILY CHOIR REHEARSAL and GREENING OF THE GROUNDS!
Please plan on staying after church today to help decorate the sanctuary as well as hang lights outside. The short choir rehearsal will happen immediately following worship, and the GREENING will take place after the social time (around 11:20am).

• **TUES. 7pm SOUL FOOD** will meet in the Green Room.

• **THURS:** 7pm **UNITED VOICES** rehearse in the sanctuary.

• **SATURDAY: 9am** **ADVENT WORKSHOPS** will be held at First Congregational Church, UCC, in Pasadena (464 E. Walnut St @ Los Robles). The workshops include: ***The Presents of Presence: Spiritual Practice When We Are Hurting***, ***Yuletide Yoga: Restorative yoga for busy people***, ***How to Write a Christmas Letter People Will Actually Read***, and ***Christmas Shopping on \$0 a Day***. Pastor Art and Rev. Anne are two of the leaders.



6:45pm **THE SPIRIT AND THE SCREEN** film club presents ***ELF*** along with a White Elephant Gift Exchange at the home of Susan Jakubowski and Bruce Weiner. RSVP to Susan at susanjinla@sbcglobal.net

NEXT SUNDAY:

A CONGREGATIONAL CONVERSATION ON OUR CHANGING CHURCH – Plan now to attend this very important meeting to give your input on important issues facing our church and its lay leadership for 2010. Everyone is encouraged to attend **NEXT SUNDAY** after our service of worship.

THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION will meet on Sunday, December 13th at 9am.

THE REV. FELIX CARRION will be our guest speaker on Sunday, December 13th (Pastor Art will also participate in the service). Rev. Carrion is the Stillspeaking Coordinator for Proclamation, Identity, And Communication with the Office Of General Ministries of the United Church of Christ headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio.

THE BOARD OF DEACONS will meet on Sunday, December 13th after the social time.

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE helps to advance the ministries of San Marino Congregational UCC and improves communications between our congregation and Pastor Art. It is our conduit to insure everyone has an opportunity to share ideas, concerns and suggestions to strengthen our church. Please feel free to talk with any member of the Pastoral Relations Committee: Carol Barrett, Holly Burns, David Crist, Charlotte Cunz, and Bret Naylor. Moderator Susan Jakubowski Weiner and Pastor Art Cribbs, ex-official members, also are available to answer questions or assist you with matters pertaining to our congregational life together.