

CRIBB<S> NOTE – OCTOBER 19, 2008

It is our great joy to welcome Sharon and Gary Roberts. They have dedicated their lives to the ministries of the United Church of Christ through the Southern California Nevada Conference. Sharon volunteers and supports the UCC through their church, our sisters and brothers of Altadena UCC; and various activities and commitments through the Central Association of the Conference. Gary serves on the Conference staff as Associate for Church Development and Renewal. They moved to Southern California from Cleveland, where Gary worked with our National Ministries in church development. Both are dedicated servants of our Savior Jesus Christ. We are so pleased to have them with us this morning.

There has been a series of disasters that blanketed the news this past week. Fires ravaged several areas across the Greater Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and San Diego counties. It happens every year about this time as the weather turns dry and windy. The drought continues to reduce natural resources that could buffer some of the threats. Some very disturbed people take advantage of the adverse conditions and ignite fires that too often turn deadly. At the same time, the delicate balance of the national economy keeps tilting toward recession or perhaps depression. When the front pages of newspapers are split between devastating blazes raging across the Southland and the economy going into the tank, there is every indication we are living through a very special period. What are we supposed to do?

As people of faith, this is a perfect moment to demonstrate what Jesus taught his disciples. This is a time to re-form community and inject ourselves in the lives of our neighbors. We are called to be a Pentecost People who concern ourselves with the welfare of the defenseless and most vulnerable. We mix the macroscopic events with our personal concerns.

At the intersection of Headlines News and Inconsequential Events we discover our peace and security are intertwined with whatever is happening around us. We are all connected in the global human reality. Bottom line: we are connected to each other.

This is one of the most exciting times I can remember. There are challenges of every magnitude presented to us. Each one of us has something to contribute to help move us forward. Within our congregation, we have the best resources to increase our growth and enhance our ministerial presence. This is our time.

My most fervent prayer is that we will harness our gifts and talents, direct them toward a common need, and expose God's intent. We begin with prayer for one another and expand to see ourselves working toward improving life for others. Based on God's love and Christ's compassion, we can go beyond the obstacles that tend to slow us down and we can forge a path that brings people closer together. Let us imagine the possibilities of the Realm of God being realized in our time. Let us do what we can where we are as the people of God.

Pray. Imagine. Plan. Act.

We can do it with God's grace and guidance.

-Pastor Art Cribbs