

First Congregational Church
of
Fresno

The Big Red Church



First Sunday of Lent
March 9, 2025

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi, Pastor

Our Gathering

(* Congregation may stand | Responses: Liturgist/**Congregation/all**)

Prelude

Scott Horton, organ

Welcome

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

Centering Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

Justin Larson, cantor

(The Congregation sings the *Response with the Choir*)

Response Antiphon: David Hurd, 1994

Unison



My ref - uge and my for - tress, my God in whom I trust.

You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to God, "My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust."

Sung Response: My refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust.

Because you have made God your refuge, the Most High your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent.

For God will command God's angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.

On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.

Sung Response: My refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust.

You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.

Those who love me, I will deliver; I will protect those who know my name.

When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble,

I will rescue them and honor them.

With long life, I will satisfy them, and show them my salvation.

Sung Response: My refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust.

***Call to Worship (Inspired by Psalm 1)**

Peter Wall, liturgist

One: Are you restless and unsettled? This place is for you.

Many: Let us worship God!

One: Are you hungry for love and hope? This place is for you.

Many: Let us worship God!

One: Are you searching for direction? This place is for you.

Many: Let us worship God!

One: Do you have love to share? This place is for you.

Many: Let us worship God together!

***Hymn**

“Sing Praise to God, Our Highest Good”

#6, pew hymnal

Prayer for Transformation

Peter Wall

Gracious God, you hold us, but in times of stress, we fear that we are all alone. We hunger for easy comfort, even knowing that our appetite will return. We aim for power over uncertainty, forgetting that control is an illusion. Forgive us for choosing distraction to escape from chaos. Bring our focus back to you, to your word, your presence, and your child Jesus. Amen.

Words of Grace

Passing of the Peace of Christ

Greeting: The Peace of Christ be with you.

Response: *And also with you.*

***Response of Praise (Sung)**

Gloria Patri

**Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit Three in One;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen. Amen.**

Choral Anthem

“To Dust” - K. Marrolli

Chancel Choir

Time for Discovery [*children are invited to the chancel steps*]

Vanessa Valdez-Johnson

**Draw the circle wide, draw it wider still;
let this be our song — no one stands alone,
standing side by side. Draw the circle wide.**

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***For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
forever. Amen.***

The Lord's Prayer

*Our Creator, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.*

*Hymn

"Surely No One Can Be Safer "

#487, pew hymnal

Scripture

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

Peter Wall

"When you have come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess and you possess it and settle in it, you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time and say to him, 'Today I declare to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our ancestors to give us.' When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the LORD your God, you shall make this response before the LORD your God: 'A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me.' You shall set it down before the LORD your God and bow down before the LORD your God. Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house.

Liturgist: For the Word of God in Scripture, for the Word of God within us, and for the Word of God amongst us.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

Sung Call to Prayer

Lord, listen to your children praying:

Lord send your Spirit in this place.

Lord, listen to your children praying:

Send us love, send us power, send us grace.

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Prayers of the Church

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

Invitation to Generosity

Peter Wall



Here at the Big Red Church, everyone counts, and every gift counts!

- ⇒ *There are two donation boxes and giving envelopes for your gifts in the Narthex (the area where an usher handed you an Order of Worship).*
- ⇒ *You can also give through the Givelify App by scanning the QR code.*
- ⇒ *BigRedChurch.org/giving/ has more instructions, links, and information about giving to the church. Thank you for supporting and joining in the ministry of this church.*

Offertory

“Call To Lent” - arr. J. Jerome Williams

Chancel Choir

***Doxology and Dedication**

We give You but Your own, whate'er the gift may be;

All that we have is Yours alone, we give it gratefully. Amen

***Closing Hymn**

“God Will Take Care of You ”

#460, pew hymnal

***Benediction**

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

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***Blessing Song**

“Go Now in Peace”

***Go now in peace, never be afraid;
God will go with you each hour of ev’ry day.
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true;
know God will guide you in all you do.
Go now in love and show you believe.
Reach out to others so all the world will see
God will be there, watching from above.
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.
Amen. Amen. Amen.***

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Postlude

“Psalm XX” - B. Marcello

Scott Horton, organ

It is our tradition to be seated for the Postlude.

Sing Praise to God, Our Highest Good

Ps. 105; 1 Chron. 16:9; 1 Pet. 1:3-7

Johann J. Schütz, 1675

Transl. Madeleine Forell Marshall, 1993

1 Sing praise to God, our high-est good, pro - found re - spect ex -
 2 Cre - a - tion thanks you, Ho - ly One: you made us and re -
 3 What God has made, God will pre-serve, with righ-teous-ness un -
 4 I cry to God, in pain and grief, "Please, God of mer - cy,

press - ing. God gives us health, life, live - li - hood, with ev - ery
 new us. De - light-ed at what you have done, you show your
 fail - ing. Re - gard-less what we may de - serve, we see this
 hear me!" My cer - tain help pro - vides re - lief, faith, hope, and

need - ed bless - ing. To God, who won-drous works per-forms, cre -
 great - ness through us. So may all liv - ing things pro-claim the
 good pre - vail - ing. To God who gov - erns ev - er - more with
 love to cheer me. So let me sing, joy - ful and free: ah,

a - ting life and calm-ing storms, to God give praise and glo - ry!
 won-ders of their Mak-er's name: to God give praise and glo - ry!
 jus - tice serv - ing rich and poor, to God give praise and glo - ry!
 thank-ful Chris-tians, sing with me: to God give praise and glo - ry!

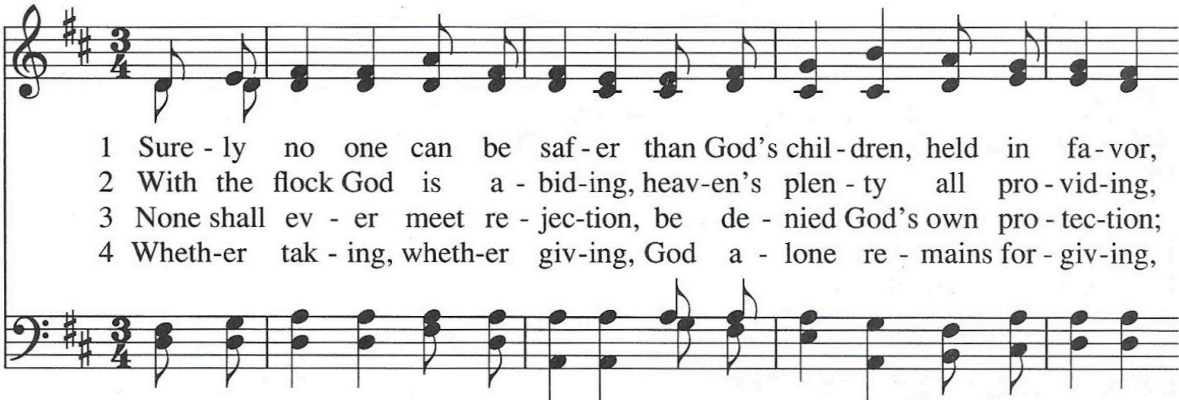
Surely No One Can Be Safer

487

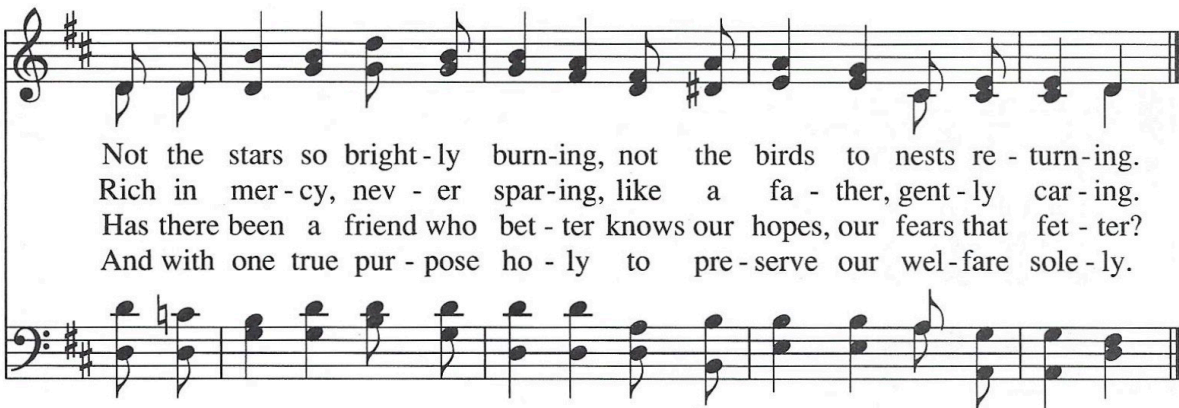
Lina Sandell, 1855

Rom. 8:38-39

Transl. The New Century Hymnal, 1994



1 Sure - ly no one can be saf - er than God's chil - dren, held in fa - vor,
2 With the flock God is a - bid - ing, heav - en's plen - ty all pro - vid - ing,
3 None shall ev - er meet re - jec - tion, be de - nied God's own pro - tec - tion;
4 Wheth - er tak - ing, wheth - er giv - ing, God a - lone re - mains for - giv - ing,



Not the stars so bright - ly burn - ing, not the birds to nests re - turn - ing.
Rich in mer - cy, nev - er spar - ing, like a fa - ther, gent - ly car - ing.
Has there been a friend who bet - ter knows our hopes, our fears that fet - ter?
And with one true pur - pose ho - ly to pre - serve our wel - fare sole - ly.

Lina Sandell endured many hardships in her early years, including illness, the death of a child, and the drowning of her father, who was a Swedish Lutheran pastor. She maintained a deep piety and strong commitment to mission, and wrote more than 650 hymns and poems.

Tune: TRYGGARE KAN INGEN VARA L.M.
Swedish folk melody
Harm. Song Book for Sunday School, 1871

Be Not Dismayed

(God Will Take Care of You)

460

Civilla D. Martin, 1904; alt.

Ps. 91

1 Be not dis-mayed what-e'er be-tide, God will take care of you;
2 Through days of toil when heart grows frail, God will take care of you;
3 All you may need God will pro- vide, God will take care of you;
4 No mat-ter what may be the test, God will take care of you;

Be-neath God's wings of love a-bide, God will take care of you.
When dan-gers fierce your path as-sail, God will take care of you.
Noth-ing you ask will be de-nied, God will take care of you.
Lean, wea-ry one, up-on God's breast, God will take care of you.

Refrain

God will take care of you, through ev-ery day, o'er all the way;

God will take care of you, God will take care of you.
take care of you

This early hymn by Civilla Martin was written in 1904 and set to music by her husband, a Baptist minister, as a contribution to a songbook he was compiling for a school. This is one of several such collaborations.

Tune: MARTIN C.M. with refrain
W. Stillman Martin, 1905

This Week at Big Red

Monday, March 10

- ♦ 5:00pm: Yoga - Rm 1

Tuesday, March 11

- ♦ 11:30 to 9pm; "Let's Eat Out" Old Spaghetti Factory Pantry Fundraiser

Wednesday, March 12

- ♦ 4:00pm: Yoga - Rm 1
- ♦ 5:15pm: Lenten Soup Supper hosted by Worship Committee - Fellowship Hall
- ♦ 6:00pm: Handbell rehearsal - Music Room
- ♦ 7:00pm: Chancel Choir rehearsal - Sanctuary

Thursday, March 13

Friday, March 14

Saturday, March 15

Sunday, March 16

- ♦ 9:00am: Roots and Branches - Fireside Rm
- ♦ 10:00am: Worship - Sanctuary
- ♦ 11:00am: Coffee Hour - Fellowship Hall
- ♦ 11:15am: Church Life Enchilada Sale pick up - Fellowship Hall

Save The Date

- ♦ **BRC Pantry "Let's Eat Out" Old Spaghetti Factory Fundraiser**
Tuesday, March 11th (Fliers available in Narthex)
- ♦ **Lenten Soup Supper and Discussion - Weds, from March 12th to April 9th**
(starting at 5:15pm, discussion begins at 6:00pm)
- ♦ **Church Life "Enchilada Sale" pick up - Sunday, March 16th, Fellowship Hall**
- ♦ **St. Paddy's Crochet Night - March 17th 6:00pm, Parlor**
- ♦ **Lenten Soup Supper and Discussion - Wednesday, March 19th Soups served**
(starting at 5:15pm, discussion begins at 6:00pm)
- ♦ **Ushers and Greeters "Meet and Greet Informational Meeting" - Sunday**
March 30th - Parlor following worship

First Congregational Church of Fresno

United Church of Christ

2131 N. Van Ness Blvd., Fresno, CA 93704 | (559) 227-8489

Bigredchurch.org

Pastor

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi
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Music Director/Organist

Scott Horton

Office Administrator

Kymberly Lindsey
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Director of Christian Education

Vanessa Valdez-Johnson
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Caretaker/ Event Coordinator

Pat Morales

Technicians

Karisa Garza
Brad Jenkins

Assisting in Today's Service

Organist: Scott Horton

Cantor:

Liturgist: Peter Wall

Acolytes: Caroline and Makenna

Ushers: Cliff Dodd, Harold Householder
Richard van Wyhe

Coffee Hour: Louis Herrera and Pat Morales

Technician: Karisa Garza

FCCF Open and Affirming Statement

We believe that all people are sacred creations of a loving God. We affirm the diversity that exists among us.

We strive to answer the call of Christ by extending his love, compassion and acceptance to everyone. In this spirit, we open our family of faith to people of every religious background, sexual orientation, family composition, physical and mental ability, race, age and gender.

As Christians, we experience God's reconciling love. In response we stand with those who suffer discrimination, isolation and alienation.

We welcome all people to participate fully in our church's life and ministry. We celebrate the variety of talents and perspectives which flow into our spiritual community, continuing to enrich us in ways we could not have predicted or envisioned.

Information for Families with Kids:



Families with Infants and Toddlers: If you have any care needs for your infant or toddler during service, Room 1, located in the courtyard, is available. There is a live feed of the service playing in the room.

Families with Kids 3 Years old and older: Kids are welcome to stay with their parents in service until the children's message. After the message, kids can join us in Sunday School. If your kids are joining us in Sunday School for the first time, please scan the QR code and fill out the form online. Thank you!



Enchiladas for Sale at Big Red...

First Congregational Church of Fresno, The Big Red Church is currently taking orders for its annual enchilada sale. All proceeds will go to the Church's General Fund.



Choose from delicious cheese, chicken or ground beef enchiladas, prices from \$6 to \$22. Call FCCF 559.227.8489 or email office@bigredchurch.org All orders will be ready for pick up on March 16th at FCCF 2131 N. Van Ness Blvd. Fresno 93704 (just north of Fresno High). Deadline to order is March 10th

Don't forget these



St Paddy's Crochet Night

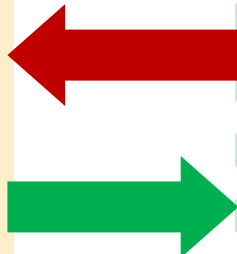
Bring a project and supplies, show off finished work, or come for inspiration!

Snacks | Free Patterns | Show & Tell

Come crochet with us!

March 17, 2025 6pm to 8pm
Big Red Church's Parlor
2131 N Van Ness Blvd

March is National Crochet Month
Beginners and other crafters are welcome!



We believe God wants to liberate those in bondage. If you are a victim of domestic violence we encourage you to find safety. 559.233.HELP
Help@MMCenter.org