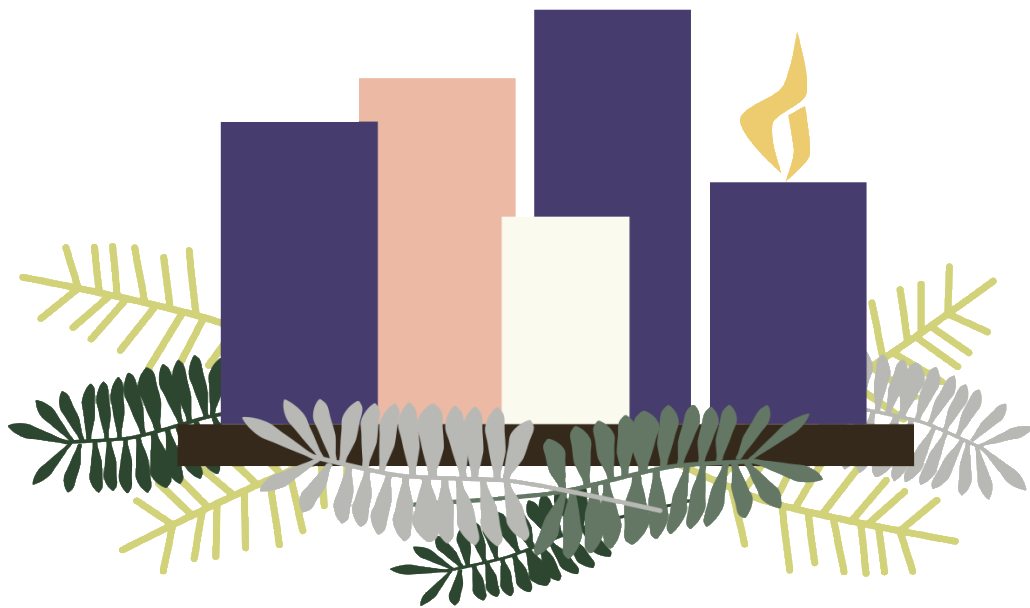


First Sunday of Advent

December 1, 2024



First Congregational Church of Fresno
United Church of Christ
2131 N. Van Ness Blvd.
Fresno, CA 93704

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi
Pastor

Our Gathering

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

Prelude “Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland, BWV 659” - J.S. Bach Scott Horton, organ
“Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, BWV 645” - J.S. Bach

Welcome Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

Hymn of Approach “One Candle Is Lit” vs.1 Insert

Lighting the Candle of Hope Weaver Family

***Hymn** “Comfort, Comfort O My People” #101, pew hymnal

Prayer of Transformation Justin Larson, Liturgist

**God of the Possible and Probable,
Gloom often encapsulates us when life is confusing and conflict is great. Our faith is rattled, and we are swallowed by shadows of fear. The world often feels like the end is near even when a new beginning is around the corner. We forget that even when shadows have lengthened, there remains a crack in the surface. Light begins to stream into our space, and warmth dances upon our hearts. When fear unnerves us, may we cling to the hope of God’s love and the possibilities of joy once again. Amen.**

Words of Grace

***Passing of the Peace**

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.**

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

***Hymn of Preparation**

"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"

#345, pew hymnal

Holy Communion

Invitation to the table

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

The Sharing

*- When invited, all in the sanctuary may come forward with
your strip of yellow cloth to place in the manger-*

Prayer of Thanksgiving

***Hymn**

"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

Insert

Scripture

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Justin Larson

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."

Liturgist: For the Word of God in Scripture, for the Word of God within us,
and for the Word of God among 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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The Church at Prayer

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

Invitation to Generosity

Justin Larson



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

“O Dayspring” - K. Marroli

Chancel Choir
John Morrice, violin

***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**

“Come, O Long Expected Jesus”

Insert

***Benediction**

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

***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

“Wachet auf!” - P.Manz

Scott Horton, organ

It is our tradition to be seated for the Postlude



*Featuring the Chancel Choir, Handbell Choir
& Musicians of First Congregational Church*

First Congregational Church of Fresno

“The Big Red Church”

2131 N. Van Ness Boulevard

Fresno, CA 93704

559.227.8489

Free Concert - Free-will offering will benefit the Casavant Pipe Organ Fund



Advent Devotional

Today is the First Sunday of Advent. Yes, it is here already!

Advent is the beginning of a new church year—a new *liturgical* year, if you like technical words. As Pastor Simon reminded us this past Sunday, this is when we start again on the journey of faith, beginning with a period of preparation. Maybe you have walked through many Advents, or maybe this will be your first. Either way, we have the great privilege of walking together.

To help synchronize our steps on this journey, we have prepared an Advent Devotional. This is a guide for daily spiritual reading during this season of preparation. Each day, the Advent Devotional presents a reading from scripture together with a reflection to aid your prayer, meditation, or spiritual contemplation.

Christians have been writing, reading, and using daily devotionals for hundreds of years. Continuing this ancient practice together is a way to help us foster our spiritual growth and formation, both as individuals, and as a community.

You can pick up a copy in the Narthex. We look forward to sharing this journey through Advent with you!



It's the time for giving.

For several years the Outreach Team has given Christmas Gift Packs to the ladies temporarily residing at Naomi's House.

With your help we will be able to fill 34 Gift Packs.

We are in need of the following items:

ITEMS	# NEEDED
Beans	10
Winter Gloves	10
Shampoo	20 (can be travel size)
Conditioner	22 (can be travel size)
Soap	14 (can be hotel size)
Kleenex	20 (purse size)
Socks	12 (knee highs or tube socks)
Paperback books	26 (can be used; not horror or violent)
Christmas cookies	68 (prefer homemade; two kinds 34 each)



Please notify Marilyn Coles at toppspnn@gmail.com or at 559-903-0635, if you will be able to donate any of the above requested items.

We would love to provide the ladies a gift to open for Christmas with your help.

We will pack the gifts at 9:30 am on Friday, December 13th in the Parlor. All are welcome.
Thanks to all who provide donations and time.



Please join us for

Advent Family
TIME

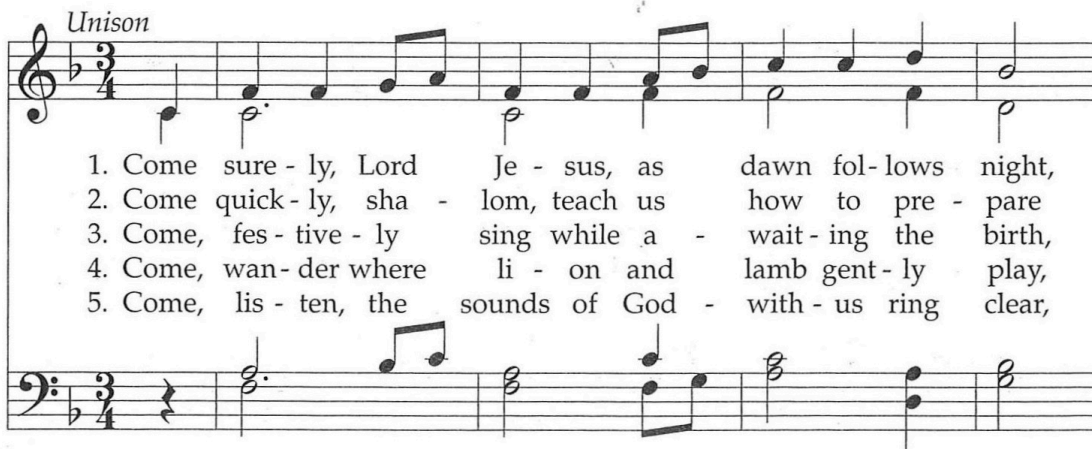
Big Red Church
December 8, 2022
Fellowship Hall
following worship

There will be crafts
and carols and
refreshments

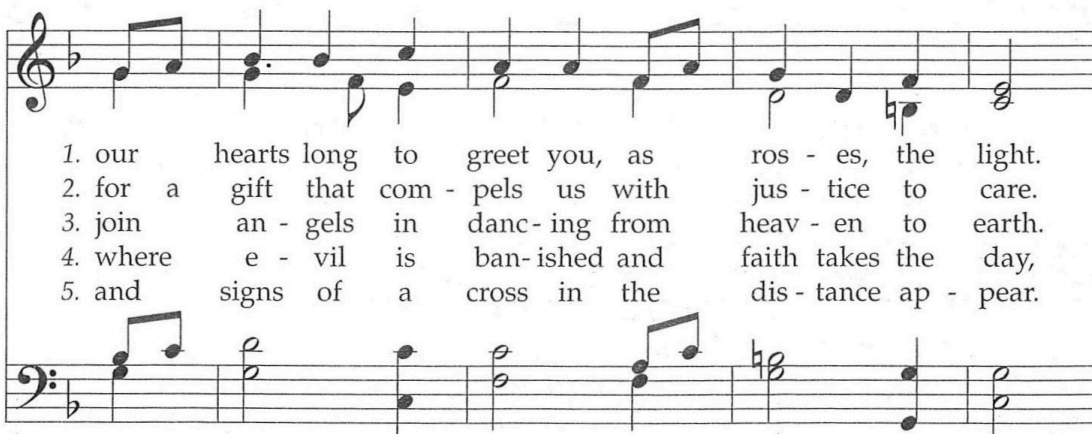


One Candle Is Lit

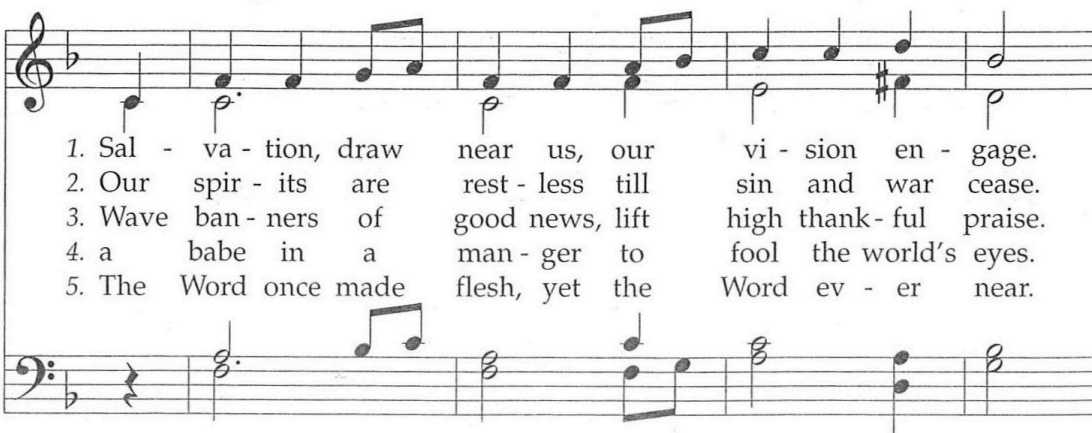
Unison



1. Come sure - ly, Lord Je - sus, as dawn fol - lows night,
2. Come quick - ly, sha - lom, teach us how to pre - pare
3. Come, fes - tive - ly sing while a - wait - ing the birth,
4. Come, wan - der where li - on and lamb gent - ly play,
5. Come, lis - ten, the sounds of God - with - us ring clear,



1. our hearts long to greet you, as ros - es, the light.
2. for a gift that com - pels us with jus - tice to care.
3. join an - gels in danc - ing from heav - en to earth.
4. where e - vil is ban - ished and faith takes the day,
5. and signs of a cross in the dis - tance ap - pear.



1. Sal - va - tion, draw near us, our vi - sion en - gage.
2. Our spir - its are rest - less till sin and war cease.
3. Wave ban - ners of good news, lift high thank - ful praise.
4. a babe in a man - ger to fool the world's eyes.
5. The Word once made flesh, yet the Word ev - er near.



1. One can - dle is lit for the hope of the age.
2. One can - dle is lit for the reign of God's peace.
3. One can - dle is lit for the joy of these days.
4. One can - dle is lit for God's lov - ing sur - prise.
5. One can - dle is lit for the Christ - birth - day here.

Isa. 40:1-8

Johannes Olearius, 1671

Transl. Catherine Winkworth, 1863; alt.

1 "Com - fort, com - fort O my peo - ple, tell of peace," thus says our God;
 2 For the her - ald's voice is call - ing in the des - ert far and near,
 3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er pla - ces plain!

Com - fort those whose hearts are shroud - ed, mourn - ing un - der sor - row's load.
 Bid - ding us to make re - pen - tance since the realm of God is here.
 Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, for Mes - si - ah's ho - ly reign.

Speak un - to Je - ru - sa - lem of the peace that waits for them;
 Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way;
 For God's glo - ry ev - er - more shall be known o'er all the world;

Tell them that their sins I cov - er, and their war - fare now is o - ver.
 Let the val - leys rise in meet - ing and the hills bow down in greet - ing.
 And all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

Written for John the Baptist's Day, June 24, this hymn clearly reflects the Isaiah text. Johannes Olearius, a Lutheran pastor, held a faculty appointment at Wittenberg University as well as church administration positions in his region.

Tune: PSALM 42 8.7.8.7.7.8.8.
 (FREU DICH SEHR)
 Trente quatre Pseaumes, Geneva, 1551

*Isa. 6:1-3; 1 Tim. 6:13-15**From the Liturgy of St. James, 4th century
Transl. Gerard Moultrie, 1864; alt.*

1 Let all mor - tal flesh keep si - lence, and with fear and
 2 Mon - arch great, yet born of Mar - y, as of old on
 3 Rank on rank the host of heav - en spreads its van - guard
 4 At Christ's feet the six - winged ser - aphs, cher - u - bim with

trem - bling stand; Pon - der noth - ing earth - ly - mind - ed,
 earth Christ stood, Lord of all, in hu - man ves - ture—
 on the way, As the Light of light de - scend - ing
 sleep - less eye, Veil their fac - es to the Pres - ence,

for with bless - ing in the hand, Christ our God to
 in the bod - y and the blood— Christ will give to
 from the realms of end - less day, That the powers of
 as with cease - less voice they cry, Al - le - lu - ia,

earth de - scend - ing, our full hom - age to de - mand.
 all the faith - ful bread of life for heav - en - ly food.
 hell may van - ish as the shad - ows clear a - way.
 al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, God most high!

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

160

1. Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing from ten - der stem
 2. I - sa - iah 'twas fore - told it, the rose I have

hath sprung, of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing by
 in mind; with Mar - y we be - hold it, the

faith - ful proph - ets sung; it came a flow'r-et bright,
 vir - gin moth - er kind. To show God's love a - right

a - mid the cold of win - ter when half spent was the night.
 she bore to us a Sav - ior when half spent was the night.

Come, O Long-expected Jesus

125

1. Come, O long-expect-ed Je-sus, born to set your peo-ple free.
 2. Born your peo-ple to de-liv-er, born a child, and yet a king,

From our fears and sins re-lease us; Christ, in whom our rest shall be.
 born to reign in us for-ev-er, born your grac-ious realm to bring.

You, our strength and con-so-la-tion, come sal-va-tion to im-part;
 By your own e-ter-nal Spir-it rule in all our hearts a-lone;

dear de-sire of man-y a na-tion, joy of man-y a long-ing heart.
 by your all-suf-fi-cient mer-it raise us to your glo-rious throne.

WORDS: Charles Wesley, 1744
 MUSIC: Rowland H. Prichard, 1830; harm. *The English Hymnal*, 1906

HYFRYDOL
 87.87D

Say
Hello...
To
Christmas!



I am doing a "Christmas Special" Say Hello column (or maybe several, if I get enough responses!) sharing our special Christmas memories and traditions with each other. If you would like to participate, please email me at maryelainewall@gmail.com with a Christmas memory that you hold dear, laugh at, or get misty over, or a holiday tradition that you have enjoyed.

Please:

- Send it to me by next week,

- Keep the length from a couple of sentences to a paragraph at the most (keeping in mind I will edit as necessary),
- Make it something personal of yours (rather than something you saw, heard, or read that others do).

I will attribute each contribution to the person sending it in. I hope this will be a fun way to share our memories and traditions with one another. Thanks!

- Mary Wall

FCCF Bylaws Review Town Hall Meeting **Today - Following service in the Parlor**

The Council has appointed a committee to review and update the church's bylaws. All members are invited to a town hall following worship on December 1 to provide input and ask questions regarding the proposed changes. After receiving input from the congregation, the Council will vote on a draft to bring a motion to the congregation for approval at the Annual Meeting on January 26.

Saturday Friends Advent Discussions

Saturday, December 7th and Saturday, December 14th
Marie Calendar's (Shaw and Cedar) - 9:30 A.M.

Using Kate Bowler's "The Weary World Rejoice".

This devotional can be downloaded in three different formats at Katebowler.com/advent. Copies of the devotional are being printed. Saturday Friends is asking for a donation of \$5.00 to First Congregational Church of Fresno to cover the costs of printing. Please text Catherine (540.420.0803) to request a printed copy of the devotional.

Come join the discussion on Saturday, December 7th and/or Saturday, December 14th. Please text Catherine if you plan on attending (540.420.0803), so we can meet in the appropriate area of Marie Calendar's. In the meantime, take time to notice the lights of Christmas or look up at the stars and the moon.

This Week at Big Red

Monday, December 2

- ♦ 5:00pm: Yoga - Room 1

Tuesday, December 3

Wednesday, December 4

- ♦ 12:00pm: Bible Study - Zoom
- ♦ 4:00pm: Yoga - Room 1
- ♦ 6:00pm: Handbells rehearsal - Music Room
- ♦ 7:00pm: Chancel Choir rehearsal - Sanctuary

Thursday, December 5

Friday, December 6

Saturday, December 7

Sunday, December 8

- ♦ 9:00am: Exploration Hour - Roots and Branches - Fireside Room
- ♦ 10:00am: Worship and Communion - Sanctuary
- ♦ 11:00am: Family Advent Workshop and Coffee Hour - Fellowship Hall

Save The Dates:

- ♦ A Celebration of Christmas Concert - Dec 15 - 3:00pm
- ♦ BRC Pantry "Free Food Saturday" - Dec 21 - 10:00am
- ♦ Family Friendly Christmas Eve Service - Dec 24 - 4:00pm
- ♦ Traditional Lessons and Carols - Dec 24 - 9:00pm

First Congregational Church of Fresno

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

Bigredchurch.org

Pastor

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi
simon@bigredchurch.org

Music Director/Organist

Scott Horton

Office Administrator

Kymerly Lindsey
office@bigredchurch.org

Director of Christian Education

Vanessa Valdez-Johnson
vanessa@bigredchurch.org

Caretaker/ Event Coordinator

Pat Morales

Technicians

Karisa Garza
Brad Jenkins

Assisting in Today's Service

Organist: Scott Horton

Liturgist: Justin Larson

Ushers: Harold Householder, Richard VanWyhe

Lighting of the Advent Candle: The Weaver Family

Acolytes: Hazel and Caroline

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!



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