

# *Second Sunday of Lent and Communion*

*A special joint service with*

*Amazing Grace Ministries*

*March 5, 2023*



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

*Pastor Ray L. Parmer  
Amazing Grace Ministries  
Guest Pastor*

## Our Gathering

Prelude

Hymn Sing

Welcome

Pastor Ray L. Parmer  
Guest Preaching

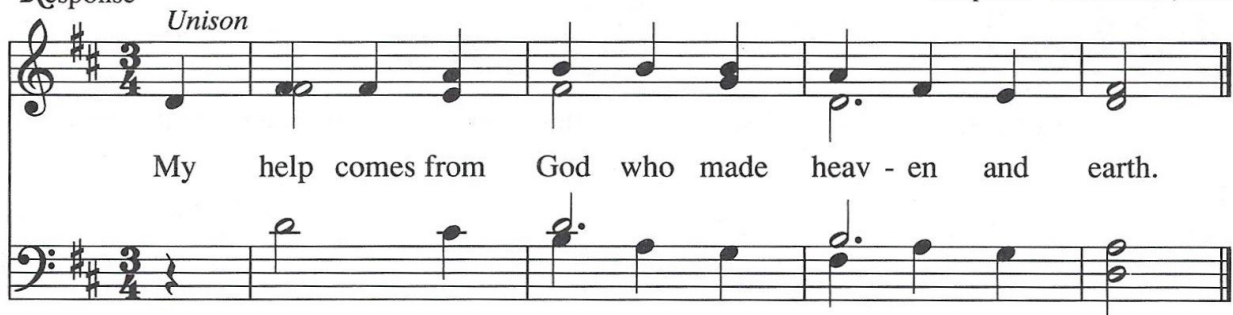
Centering Psalm 121

Justin Larson , cantor

(The Congregation sings the Response with the Choir)

Response Antiphon: David Hurd, 1994

Unison



My help comes from God who made heav - en and earth.

I lift my eyes to the hills, from where will my help come?

My help comes from God, who made heaven and earth.

God will not let your foot be moved; God who keeps you will not slumber.

God who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

***Sung Response: "My help comes from God who made heaven and earth."***

God is your keeper; God is your shade at your side.

The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.

God will keep you from all evil; God will keep your life.

God will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on  
and forevermore.

***Sung Response: "My help comes from God who made heaven and earth."***

Call to Worship

Peter Wall, liturgist

**"Go from," God says, and our hesitant hearts place one foot in front of the other to trust God with the unknown.**

By night, Nicodemus came seeking greater insight into the teachings of God for the journey set before him. Jesus called him out of the shadows and towards a life born anew.

**"Go towards" God says, and a new life awaits us. We reach towards a God who has not come to condemn the world but to offer a salve that can heal all wounds.**

We fear the unknown and that which we lack in understanding. "How can this be?" we proclaim with Nicodemus. And yet, God's call is one that urges us to go with our whole self into that unknowing, trusting that God will provide a way.

**Love calls us forth into lives of transformation, born anew into new paths of faith. Though we do not know where we are going, God has promised to never leave us alone. Let us worship the One who will show us the way.**

**Opening Prayer**

Ellie Stephenson, liturgist

God of calls and courage, you draw us towards your loving embrace even as we face what seems like impossibility. We experience heartache and grief, injustice and cruelty, fear and anxiety as daily teachers on this path of faith. As you call us to go into an uncertain and unknown future, O God, grant us the courage needed to let go of all that we have known so that we can take hold of the new life you are bringing about even now. Though we may not know where we are going, God, your way is revealed moment by moment, step by step, and breath by breath. In the name of the One who so loves the world we pray. Amen.

**Special Music**

**"Joy" - Le'Andria Johnson**

Amazing Grace Ministries &  
First Congregational Church Choirs

*Chorus Refrain:*

**Weeping may endure for a night  
But joy is gonna come in the morning.**

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

**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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**\*Hymn of Preparation**

**"Let Us Break Bread Together"**

**#330, pew hymnal**

**Invitation**

Rev Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

**Consecration of Bread and Wine**

**The Sharing**

**Unison Words of Thanksgiving**

**God, by the bread of heaven and the cup of life, you make us one body.  
Bind us together by your spirit that we might live into your hopes for us,  
a community centered in Christ and rich in compassion, commitment,  
courage, and care. Amen.**

**\*Hymn**

**"I Give Myself Away"**

**Scripture**

John 3:1-17, NKJV

Elder Jerry Proby, liturgist

Invitation to Prayer

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



*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 with your smartphone camera.*
- ⇒ *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

"I Will Praise You O Lord" - V. Johnson

Chancel Choir &  
Robbyn Mosley, cornet

\*Doxology

*We give You but Your own,  
Whate'er the gift may be;  
All that we have is Yours alone,  
We give it gratefully. Amen.*

Dedication

Benediction

Pastor Ray L. Parmer

Friends, go forth with the courage of God to guide you into those places of restlessness and uncertainty. For we are called to go...

From our places of comfort.

From our certainties and complacency.

From our old life and into the new.

May the call of God not just call us *from but toward a love so compelling that we are willing to trust our whole self into the embrace of the Creator, into the abiding love of Christ, and into the sacred dance of the Holy Spirit.*

**We go forth in the peace of Christ. Amen!**

**\*Blessing Hymn**

**"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 can 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**

**"A Galloway Organ Evensong Preview"**

**Scott Horton, organ**

*It is our tradition to be seated during the Postlude.*



**TODAY AT 3PM**



*Galloway Memorial Organ  
Evensong*

**Scott Horton**

organist

**Sunday, March 5, 2023**

**3:00 p.m.**

*Admission Free - Freewill Offering to Benefit  
the Casavant Organ Fund*

*First Congregational Church of Fresno*

*2131 N. Van Ness Blvd.*

*(559) 227-8489*



## News from the pews....

**REV. PAUL  
BRANDEIS  
RAUSHENBUSH**  
PRESIDENT OF  
INTERFAITH  
ALLIANCE

INTERFAITH SCHOLAR  
WEEKEND 2023

Celebrating  
Inclusive Religious  
Freedom in our  
Diverse Nation

FREE FRIDAY MARCH 10, 6:00-7:30 PM  
ST. PAUL CATHOLIC NEWMAN CENTER  
1572 E BARSTOW AVE,  
FRESNO CA, 93710-6503

SATURDAY MARCH 11, 8:00 AM-2:30 PM  
TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL \$50 GENERAL  
6622 N MAROA AVE \$10 STUDENT  
FRESNO, CA 93704 SCHOLARSHIPS

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
CHURCH OF FRESNO  
2672 E ALLUVIAL AVE  
FRESNO, CA 93720  
SUNDAY SERVICE 10:30 AM

MORE DETAILS AND  
REGISTRATION  
INTERFAITHSCHOLAR.ORG



### Easter Flowers

Do you have a person you would like honor? Easter Flower order forms are now available in the Narthex and in the church office.



### Flash Mob Hallelujah Chorus on Easter

Have you ever wanted to sing the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's Messiah?

We will be singing this masterpiece as the postlude on Easter Sunday! On Easter, all you will have to do is make your way up to the Chancel area, up with the choir during the singing of "Go Now in Peace," and we'll be all set to sing our collective "Hallelujah" to the Risen Lord!

We will be having a single run-through practice every Sunday following worship

# This Week at Big Red

## **Monday March 6**

- ♦ 05:00pm: Yoga - Room 1

## **Tuesday, March 7**

## **Wednesday March 8**

- ♦ 08:00am: Bible Study - Zoom
- ♦ 05:00pm: Yoga - Room 1
- ♦ 05:15pm: Soup Supper - Hosted by the Ministry of Resources - Fellowship Hall
- ♦ 06:00pm: Lenten Book Study - Parlor
- ♦ 07:00pm: Chancel Choir rehearsal - Sanctuary

## **Thursday March 9**

- ♦ 10:00am: Mike Karibian Memorial Service - Sanctuary

## **Friday March 10**

- ♦ 05:00pm: Yoga - Room 1

## **Saturday March 11**

## **Sunday March 12**

- ♦ 09:00am: Roots and Branches - Fireside Room
- ♦ 10:00am: Worship Service - Peter Wall Guest Preaching - Sanctuary
- ♦ 11:00am: Coffee Hour - Fellowship Hall

## **First Congregational Church of Fresno**

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

### **Guest Preacher**

Rev Ray L. Parmer

### **Music Director/Organist**

Scott Horton

### **Caretaker/ Event Coordinator**

Pat Morales

### **Accountant**

Penny Leas Peterson

### **Office Administrator**

Kymberly Lindsey

Office@bigredchurch.org

### **Custodian**

Gregory Chavarria

### **Technicians**

Karisa Garza

Brad Jenkins

## **Assisting in Today's Service**

Organist: Scott Horton

Liturgist: Peter Wall, Ellie Stephenson, Elder Jerry Proby

Ushers: Bruce Owdom, Bob McParland

Technician: Brad Jenkins

Coffee Hour: Zorayda Darce

Acolytes: Selena A. & Dominick S

Altar Flowers:

## **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.



## This Is the Day

Ps. 118:24; Luke 24:1-7; Acts 2:1-4

St. 1 paraphr. by Les Garrett, 1967; alt.

St. 2-3, traditional; alt.

*Unison*  
E $\flat$  B $\flat$ 7

1 This is the day, this is the day that our God has made, that our  
 2 This is the day, this is the day Je - sus rose a - gain, Je - sus  
 3 This is the day, this is the day when the Spir - it came, when the

God has made; we will re-joice, we will re-joice and be glad in it, and be  
 rose a - gain; we will re-joice, we will re-joice and be glad in it, and be  
 Spir - it came; we will re-joice, we will re-joice and be glad in it, and be

glad in it. This is the day that our God has made, we will re-joice and be  
 glad in it. This is the day Je - sus rose a - gain, we will re-joice and be  
 glad in it. This is the day when the Spir - it came, we will re-joice and be

glad in it; This is the day, this is the day that our God has made.  
 glad in it; This is the day, this is the day Je - sus rose a - gain.  
 glad in it; This is the day, this is the day when the Spir - it came.

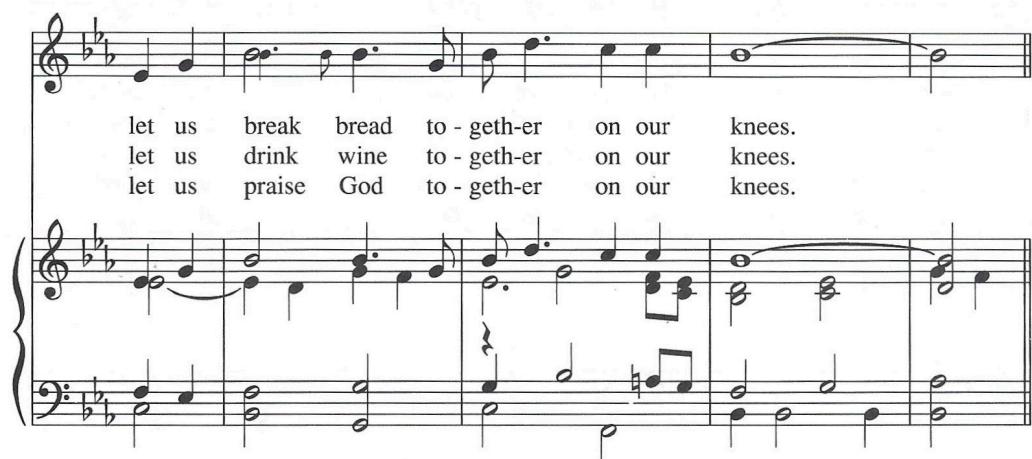
E $\flat$  E $\flat$ /B $\flat$  B $\flat$ 7 E $\flat$

The first stanza of this hymn was written by Leslie Garrett, who was born in New Zealand and served as pastor of a church in western Australia. The other two stanzas are anonymous.

Tune: THIS IS THE DAY Irr.  
 Les Garrett, 1967



1 Let us break bread to - geth - er on our knees;  
 \* 2 Let us drink wine to - geth - er on our knees;  
 3 Let us praise God to - geth - er on our knees;



let us break bread to - geth - er on our knees.  
 let us drink wine to - geth - er on our knees.  
 let us praise God to - geth - er on our knees.

*Refrain*



When I fall on my knees, with my face to the ris - ing sun,



My God, have mer - cy on me.

# I give myself away

**A** B $\flat$  F/A Gm Gm/F

I give my-self a-way, \_\_\_\_\_ I give my-self a-way, \_\_\_\_\_ so You can

Hoge variant na 2e Couplet Bridge naar:  $\oplus$

E $\flat$ 2 B $\flat$  F/A Gm Gm/F

use me. I give my-self a-way, \_\_\_\_\_ I give my-self a-way, \_\_\_\_\_ so You can

1. E $\flat$ 2 2. E $\flat$ 2 B $\flat$  F/A

use me. I give my-self a-way, \_\_\_\_\_ use me. 1. Here I am, here I stand. Lord, my  
2. Take my heart, take my life as a

Cm7 F $\text{sus}$  B $\flat$  F/A

life is in Your hands. I am long - ing to see Your de -  
liv - ing sac - ri - fice. All my dreams, all my plans, Lord, I

Cm7 E $\flat$ maj7 F $\text{sus}$   $\oplus$  Gm Gm/F

sir - es re-vealed in me. I give my-self a-way, \_\_\_\_\_ so You can  
place them in Your hands.

E $\flat$ 2 C B $\flat$  F/A

use me. My life is not my own, \_\_\_\_\_ to You I be - long. \_\_\_\_\_ I

Gm Gm/F E $\flat$ 2

give my - self, \_\_\_\_\_ I give my - self \_\_\_\_\_ to You. \_\_\_\_\_ My  
I give my - self a-way