

Fourth Sunday of Lent
March 19, 2023



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

Faye Saxton
Guest Speaker

Our Gathering

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

Prelude

"Amazing Grace" - arr. F. Swann
 "Prayer; Be Still, My Soul" - arr. E. Whitehill

Scott Horton, organ
 Handbell Choir
 Faye Saxton

Welcome

Centering Psalm 23

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

Wade Hobson, cantor

Response *Antiphon: Carolyn Jennings, 1994*

God re - stores my soul and leads me in right paths.

God is my shepherd; I shall not want.

God makes me lie down in green pastures, and leads me beside still waters;

God restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for God's name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil, for you are with me;
 your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Sung Response: "God restores my soul and leads me in right paths"

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of God my whole life long.

Sung Response: "God restores my soul and leads me in right paths"

*Call to Worship

Randy Oftedal, liturgist

Kindred of God, a new vision of leadership is called forth and God calls upon the least likely, the unheard of, and the humble of heart to assemble to receive anointing.

In peace, we anoint the forgotten, the youngest, smallest, and unlikeliest of siblings whom God has raised up to serve.

Though the call may involve risk and danger, we are called to listen, obey,
 and live a love unwavering.

In peace, we anoint the disinherited and dismissed.

God's call does not depend on our outward appearance or our earthly achievements.

In peace, we anoint neighbor and kin alike, knowing God looks upon the heart.

Let us open our hearts to God this day. Amen.

***Hymn**

"Savior Like a Shepherd, Lead Us"

252, pew hymnal

Opening Prayer

Randy Oftedal, liturgist

Anointed One, your love comes peaceably into our lives if we will but let it. We are so fixated on the gold standard, the familiar, and the safe choice that we often lose sight of what you are raising up right in our very midst. Enliven us with your Spirit this day so that we might get a glimpse of your peace. Take what we might imagine as too small for your kingdom and use it to open the world to your overflowing abundance and provision for all that you have created. In the name of Jesus the Christ we pray. Amen.

Special Music

"Celtic Grace" - Susan Geschke

Handbell Choir

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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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**

"Amazing Grace"

547, pew hymnal

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man who was blind from birth. Jesus' disciples asked, "Rabbi, who sinned so that he was born blind, this man or his parents?"

Jesus answered, "Neither he nor his parents. This happened so that God's mighty works might be displayed in him. While it's daytime, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." After he said this, he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and smeared the mud on the man's eyes. Jesus said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (this word means *sent*). *So the man went away and washed. When he returned, he could see.*

The man's neighbors and those who used to see him when he was a beggar said, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?"

Some said, "It is," and others said, "No, it's someone who looks like him."

But the man said, "Yes, it's me!"

So they asked him, "How are you now able to see?"

He answered, "The man they call Jesus made mud, smeared it on my eyes, and said, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed, and then I could see."

They asked, "Where is this man?"

He replied, "I don't know."

Then they led the man who had been born blind to the Pharisees. Now Jesus made the mud and smeared it on the man's eyes on a Sabbath day. So Pharisees also asked him how he was able to see.

The man told them, "He put mud on my eyes, I washed, and now I see."

Some Pharisees said, "This man isn't from God, because he breaks the Sabbath law." Others said, "How can a sinner do miraculous signs like these?" So they were divided. Some of the Pharisees questioned the man who had been born blind again: "What do you have to say about him, since he healed your eyes?"

He replied, "He's a prophet."

The Jewish leaders didn't believe the man had been blind and received his sight until they called for his parents. The Jewish leaders asked them, "Is this your son? Are you saying he was born blind? How can he now see?"

His parents answered, "We know he is our son. We know he was born blind. But we don't know how he now sees, and we don't know who healed his eyes. Ask him. He's old enough to speak for himself." His parents said this because they feared the Jewish authorities. This is because the Jewish authorities had already decided that whoever confessed Jesus to be the Christ would be expelled from the synagogue. That's why his parents said, "He's old enough. Ask him."

Therefore, they called a second time for the man who had been born blind and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know this man is a sinner."

The man answered, "I don't know whether he's a sinner. Here's what I do know: I was blind and now I see."

Message

"Amazing Grace "

Faye Saxton

Invitation to Prayer

Faye Saxton

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

Invitation to Generosity

Randy Oftedal, liturgist



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

"Amazing Grace/My Chains are Gone"
arr. Koerts

Chancel Choir
Pete Espinoza, soloist

*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

*Closing Hymn

"Open My Eyes"

Benediction

Faye Saxton

***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

“Toccata on *Amazing Grace*” - arr. C. Pardini

Scott Horton, organ

It is our tradition to be seated during the Postlude.



HOLY WEEK at BIG RED



Join us for these special services and opportunities



Palm Sunday

April 2, 2023 - 10:00 a.m. Worship

Join us for the procession and story of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.



Maundy Thursday

April 6, 2023 - 6:30 p.m.

Commemorate Jesus' Last Supper with His Disciples with a Soup Supper and Stations of the Cross.



Good Friday

April 7, 2023 - 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Minturn Chapel will be open for mediation and prayer.



Holy Saturday

April 8, 2023

Last Lenten Study
Time / Place TBA



Easter Sunday

April 9, 2023

6:30 a.m. Easter Sunrise Service with Communion (Courtyard)
10:00 a.m. Celebration of the Resurrection (Sanctuary)
& Easter Egg Hunt

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH - 2131 N. Van Ness Blvd. - Fresno, CA 93704

News from the pews....



1st Congregational Church of Fresno

2131 N. Van Ness Ave

SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 2023

(IN CONJUNCTION WITH CAMBRIDGE AVE YARD SALE)

7:00 am to 2:00 pm

GOT STUFF? GOT CRAFT ITEMS?

We are offering spaces to rent: \$20

Applications are available in the church office and Narthex.



We will also be accepting donations on

Thursday and Friday March 30 & 31st from

5:00pm to 7:00pm only (please, no exceptions).

Gently used items only, small appliances, bookshelves, dressers, lawn equipment, dishware sets (boxed), linens are ok to donate. Please NO CLOTHING!!!



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.

Wednesday is the deadline



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 until Easter. Music and practice CDs will be provided.

*Warning - smiles and feelings of joy are side effects.

Please see/contact Scott Horton to get involved or if you have any questions.

This Week at Big Red

Monday March 20

- ♦ 05:00pm: Yoga - Room 1

Tuesday, March 21

- ♦ 06:00pm: Church Council meeting - Parlor

Wednesday March 22

08:00am: Bible Study - Zoom

- ♦ 04:00pm: Yoga - Room 1
- ♦ 05:15pm: Soup Supper - Hosted by the Ministry of Christian Education Fellowship Hall
- ♦ 06:00pm: Lenten Book Study - Parlor
- ♦ 07:00pm: Chancel Choir rehearsal - Sanctuary

Thursday March 23

Friday March 24

- ♦ 05:00pm: Yoga - Room 1

Saturday March 25

Sunday March 26

- ♦ 09:00am: Roots and Branches - Fireside Room
- ♦ 10:00am: Worship Service - Rev. Ara Guekguezian, Guest Preaching Sanctuary
- ♦ 11:00am: Coffee Hour - Hosted by Kymberly Lindsey

IMPORTANT STUFF...

- Council Meeting is this Tuesday @ 6pm in the Parlor
- Deadline to order Easter flowers is Mar 22 (Weds)
- Kim Williams will be conducting Pastoral care through April.
- Order forms for flowers, the yard sale and enchilada fundraiser are available in the Fellowship Hall.

First Congregational Church of Fresno

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

Guest in the Pulpit

Peter Wall

Music Director/Organist

Scott Horton

Caretaker/ Event Coordinator

Pat Morales

Accountant

Penny Leas Peterson

Office Administrator

Kymberly Lindsey

Office@bigredchurch.org

Technicians

Karisa Garza

Brad Jenkins

Assisting in Today's Service

Organist: Scott Horton

Liturgist: Randy Oftedal

Ushers: Lester Leas, Richard Van Wyhe, Harold Householder

Technician: Brad Jenkins

Coffee Hour: Paula Roberts, Deana Householder
Bitsy Wagman

Acolytes: Makenna M and Olivia C

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.

Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us

252

Attrib. to Dorothy A. Thrupp (1779–1847)

John 10:1–29

From Hymns for the Young, 1836; alt.

St. 1 transl. to Hawaiian by Laiana (1807–1886)

1 Sav-ior, like a shep-herd lead us, much we need your ten - der care;
 1 Ie - su no ke Ka - hu - hi - pa, Ka - hu - hi - pa ma'i-ka'i e,
 2 We are yours, in love be - friend us, be the guard-ian of our way;
 3 Let us al - ways seek your fa - vor; let us al - ways do your will;

in your pleas - ant pas-tures feed us, for our use your folds pre-pare.
 Ei - a ma - kou ka 'o - ha - na ke ho'o-lo - he a ha - hai:
 keep your flock, from sin de - fend us, seek us when we go a - stray.
 Je - sus Christ our on - ly Sav - ior, with your love our spir - its fill.

Bless-ed Je - sus, bless-ed Je - sus, you have bought us, yours we are;
 E a - lo - ha, e a - lo - ha, a - la - ka'i a ha - nai mai,
 Bless-ed Je - sus, bless-ed Je - sus, hear your chil - dren when we pray;
 Bless-ed Je - sus, bless-ed Je - sus, you have loved us, love us still;

Bless-ed Je - sus, bless-ed Je - sus, you have bought us, yours we are.
 E a - lo - ha, e a - lo - ha, a - la - ka'i a ha - nai mai.
 Bless-ed Je - sus, bless-ed Je - sus, hear your chil - dren when we pray.
 Bless-ed Je - sus, bless-ed Je - sus, you have loved us, love us still.

The theme of Christ as shepherd is familiar and beloved to Christians. Emma Lyons Doyle, granddaughter of Laiana (translator Lorenzo Lyons), once said, "If you want to know the full beauty of this hymn, hear it sung in Hawaiian."

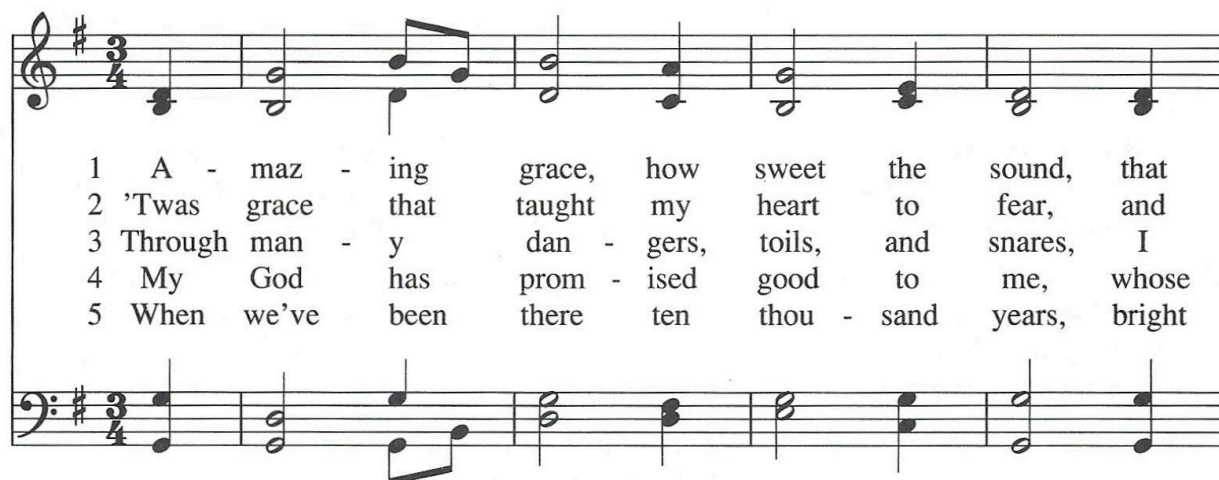
Tune: BRADBURY 8.7.8.7.D.
 William B. Bradbury, 1859

Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound

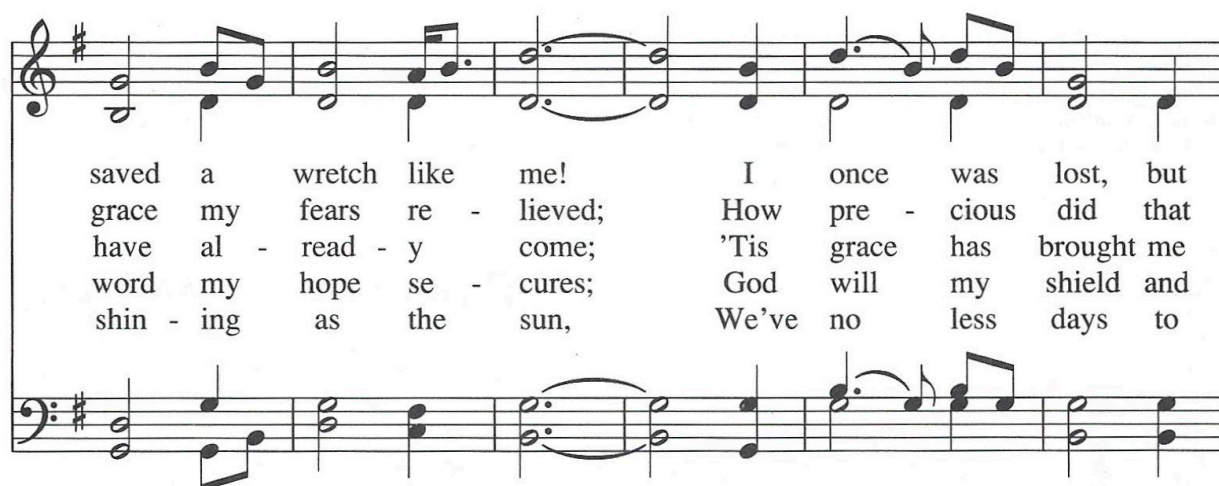
547

St. 1-4, John Newton, 1779; alt.

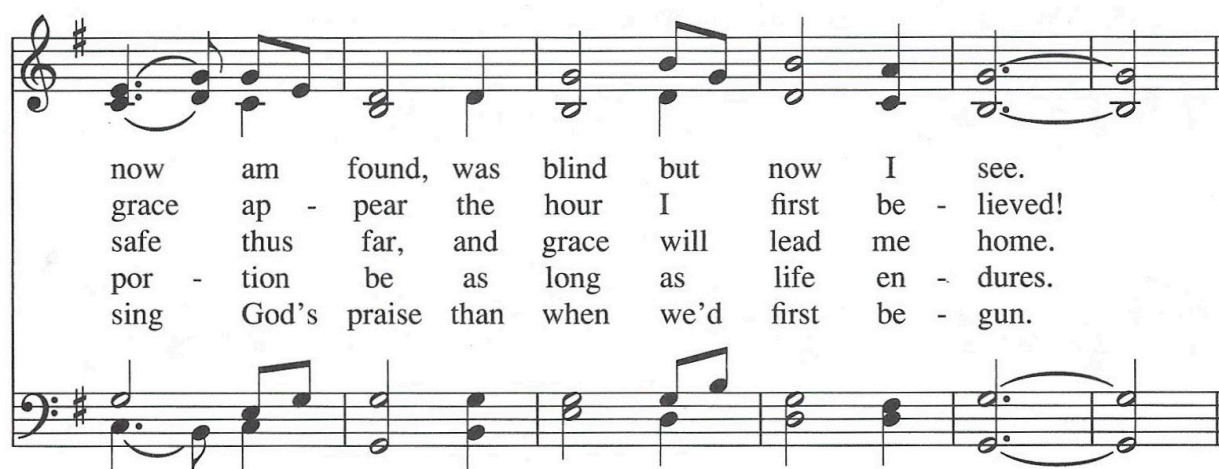
St. 5, A Collection of Sacred Ballads, 1790



1 A - maz - ing grace, how sweet the sound, that
 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and
 3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares, I
 4 My God has prom - ised good to me, whose
 5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright



saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but
 grace my fears re - lieved; How pre - cious did that
 have al - read - y come; 'Tis grace has brought me
 word my hope se - cures; God will my shield and
 shin - ing as the sun, We've no less days to



now am found, was blind but now I see.
 grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!
 safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
 por - tion be as long as life en - dures.
 sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

John Newton's autobiographical hymn reflects his conversion from his earlier existence as a slave trader. While serving as curate in the English village of Olney, Newton met William Cowper, and together they published Olney Hymns, which included this hymn.

Tune: AMAZING GRACE C.M.
 (NEW BRITAIN)
 Columbia Harmony, Cincinnati, 1829
 Arr. Edwin O. Excell, 1900

Open My Eyes, That I May See

586

1. O - pen my eyes, that I may see glimps-es of truth thou
 2. O - pen my ears, that I may hear voic-es of truth thou
 3. O - pen my mouth, and let me bear glad-ly the warm truth
 hast for me; place in my hands the won-der-ful key
 send-est clear; and while the wave-notes fall on my ear,
 ev-ery-where; o - pen my heart and let me pre-pare

Refrain

that shall un-clasp and set me free.
 ev-ery-thing false will dis-ap-pear. Si-lent-ly now I
 love with thy chil-dren thus to share.
 wait for thee, read-y, my God, thy will to see.
 O - pen my eyes,
 O - pen my ears, il-lu-mine me, Spir-it di-vine!
 O - pen my heart,