

*Fourth Sunday of Easter*  
*April 30, 2023*



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

*Madeleine Guekquezian*  
*Guest Pastor*



## Our Gathering

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

**Prelude**

"Canon in D" - J. Pachelbel

Scott Horton, organ

**Welcome**

Madeleine Guekguezian, Guest Pastor

**\*Call to Worship**

Mary Leas Stegall, liturgist

Leader: We are called here for a purpose: We gather to worship, for the sake of knowing and drawing close toward God.

**People: We are not here by chance, but because we are drawn to the source of all goodness.**

Leader: We are chosen and gathered as workers for the vast harvest, as laborers for the building of a land of love and justice, as small drops that come together into a vast river.

**People: We are not here by chance, but because God is doing wonderful things through us.**

Leader: Jesus Christ, the Great Organizer of common people, calls us to him—to stand united, our many gifts doing more together than we could accomplish alone.

**People: Jesus, we are not here by chance. We heard your call and we respond, "here we are, use us!" Lord, let our worship together sustain us for the great work ahead. Amen.**

**\*Hymn**

"We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky "

#563, pew hymnal

**Prayer of Confession, Assurance, and Solidarity**

Mary Leas Stegall, liturgist

Leader: God's love for the world has been revealed in Jesus Christ, who certainly loved us to the uttermost; Jesus – Savior and Lord – who at His last meal with his disciples gave them – and us – that new commandment: "...love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." Merciful God, we have not loved you with all our heart and mind and soul. Lord, have mercy.

**People Lord, have mercy**

Leader: We have not loved our neighbors as you have taught us. Christ, have mercy.

**People: Christ, have mercy.**

Leader: We are indifferent to the saving grace of your Word and life.

Lord, have mercy.

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: Forgive and heal us by your steadfast love made known to us in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**People: Amen**

Leader: Jesus said: "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" and "having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end." The good news therefore is this: In Jesus Christ, we are loved and we are forgiven.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

Leader: May our hearts be emboldened by the assurance of the enduring love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ.

**People: May our hearts, minds, and spirits be aligned in the call to join the struggle for justice and healing of the world.**

Leader: Let us say together a prayer of solidarity:

**All: The people of God stand—**

**For equal rights and complete justice for all people in all stations of life.**

**For the principle of conciliation and arbitration in industrial dissensions.**

**For the protection of workers from dangerous machinery, occupational diseases, injury, and mortality.**

**For the abolition of child labor.**

**For such regulations of the conditions of labor that racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and any prejudice that harms the wellbeing of individuals and communities are eradicated from the workplace.**

**For the suppression of the "sweating system."**

**For the gradual and reasonable reduction of hours of labor to the lowest practical point, with work for all; and for that degree of leisure for all which is the condition of the highest human life.**

**For a release from employment at least two days in seven.**

**For a living wage in every industry.**

**For the highest wage that each industry can afford, and for the most equitable division of the products of industry that can ultimately be devised.**

**For a reduction of environmental harm in every industry to its greatest possible extent.**

**For the recognition of the Golden Rule as the supreme law of society and the sure remedy of all social ills, and for the presence of our Creator, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit as a firm foundation for the formation of a just society.**

**Amen.\***

*\*adapted from the 1908 Social Creed of the Methodist Episcopal Church.*

**Anthem**

**"The Risen Christ" - Townend/Getty**

**Chancel 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**

**"We'll Build a Land"**

**bulletin insert**

**Scripture**

**Amos 5:9–15, 21–24 (NRSV)  
Luke 10:1–11 (NRSV)**

**Mary Leas Stegall, liturgist**

**Amos 5:14-15 & 21-24**

Seek good and not evil, that you may live; and so the Lord, the God of hosts, will be with you, just as you have said. Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that the Lord, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them, and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

**Luke 10:1-11**

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go on your way; I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag,

no sandals, and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' And if a person of peace is there, your peace will rest on that person, but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.'

**Message**

"Organized Religion"

Madeleine Guekguezian

**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**

Madeleine Guekguezian

**Invitation to Generosity**

Mary Leas Stegall, 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**

"My Shepherd" - Page/Shafferman

Chancel Choir

**\*Doxology (Tune: LASST UNS ERFREUEN)**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;**

**Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Praise God, the source of all our gifts!**

**Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!**

**Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Dedication**

**Announcement**

Ministry Moment

Michele Eskew

**\*Closing Hymn**

“Canticle of the Turning”

bulletin insert

**Benediction**

Madeleine Guekguezian

Jesus, the Great Organizer, calls you by name and sends you into the world.

The harvest is vast but so is the love and abundant life of the Risen Christ! May God set us into common cause with one another that, united, we may see the day when justice rolls down like a river and righteousness like a never-failing stream. Go in peace and do your part in the great work of love!

Alleluia! Alleluia!

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**\*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 in E minor” - J. Pachelbel

Scott Horton, organ

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

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# This Week at Big Red

## **Monday, May 01**

- ♦ 05:00pm: Yoga - Room 1

## **Tuesday, May 02**

## **Wednesday, May 03**

- ♦ 08:00am: Bible Study - Zoom
- ♦ 05:00pm: Yoga - Room 1
- ♦ 06:00pm: Handbell rehearsal—Music Room
- ♦ 07:00pm: Chancel Choir rehearsal - Sanctuary

## **Thursday, May 04**

## **Friday, May 05**

- ♦ 05:00pm: Yoga - Room 1

## **Saturday, May 06**

## **Sunday, May 07**

- ♦ 09:00am: Roots and Branches - Fireside Room
- ♦ 10:00am: Worship Service - Music Sunday - Sanctuary
- ♦ 11:00am: Coffee Hour

## **First Congregational Church of Fresno**

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

### **Guest in the Pulpit**

Madeleine Guekguezian

### **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: Mary Leas Stegall

Ushers: Harold Householder, Lester Leas and  
Richard VanWyhe

Technician: Brad Jenkins

Coffee Hour: Pat Morales and Paula

Acolytes: Makenna and Sarah

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.