

Ascension Sunday

May 21, 2023



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

*Kim Williams
Guest Speaker*

Ascension Sunday
May 21, 2023

Our Gathering

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

Prelude

Scott Horton, piano

Welcome

Kim Williams, Member in Discernment

***Call to Worship**

Gayle Thornton, liturgist

One: Beloved, let us worship God!

All: Let us give praise to God, the one who rides upon the clouds!

One: Parent to orphans and Protector of widows,

All: God gives the desolate a home and leads the imprisoned into prosperity.

One: As God led the Israelites through the wilderness and provided for them,

All: We too find our dwelling in God's goodness and provision.

One: The Rider in the heavens speaks throughout creation;

All: We gather to listen and ascribe power to God! Awesome is God in the sanctuary of creation! Blessed be God! Amen.

***Hymn**

"Alleluia! Gracious Jesus!"

#257, pew hymnal

Opening Prayer

Gayle Thornton, liturgist

Risen and ascended Christ, you surround us with witnesses and send us the Counselor who opens our minds to understand your teaching. Bless us with such grace that our lives may become a blessing for the world now, and in the age to come. Amen.

Anthem

"Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven"
arr. Dave and Jean Perry

Chancel Choir &
Robbyn Mosley, cornet

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

"Blessed Assurance"

#473, pew hymnal

Scripture

1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

Gayle Thornton, liturgist

Message

Kim Williams

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

Invitation to Generosity

Gayle Thornton, 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

“On Eagles Wings” - Joncas; arr. Wagner

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**

Kim Williams

One: For the wondrous ways this offering will bless this community and the world,

All: We dedicate these gifts.

One: For the ways it'll help us be witnesses to God's love and compassion

All: We dedicate these gifts.

**Let this offering, and the works of our hands and feet, give power
to all we stand for as a community of faith. Amen.**

***Closing Hymn**

“God of Grace and God of Glory”

#436, pew hymnal

Announcement

Jeannie Hobson

Benediction

Kim Williams

***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

“Sortie” - C. Franck

Scott Horton, organ

It is our tradition to be seated for the Postlude.

A Quiet Thank you...

Thank you Jacquie Shore for your talent, your skill and your love of our church. Thank you for creating a beautiful Chancel scene for Easter and for providing the beautiful calla lilies for the whole of Eastertide.

The deep hues of the flowers enhanced the beauty of our sanctuary and brought a stylish warmth to the space. Your gift is an affirmation of God's grace.

Camp Tam Registration is now open -

- Junior Camp: July 16-22 - Grades 3 thru 6
- Junior High: July 23-29 - Grades 7 thru 9
- Senior High: July 30-Aug 5 - Grades 10 thru 12



Camp Tamarack is waiting. We are looking for counselors, a chaplain and medical supervisors. Chef/Miss Kymberly can always use an assistant.

Please call Jeannie Hobson for answers to your staffing and camp registration questions **559.903.4542** or email: **jeanniehob@comcast.net**

Sound System Upgrade - A Capital Campaign

**HEY! Can you hear me...? This is critically important and necessary.
Please**

The church council approved a capital campaign to replace the aging sound system in the Sanctuary. The Ministry of Resources is asking for your help. An upgraded system with an estimated cost of \$32,000, will make our live streaming more effective and will make Big Red the envy of Van Ness Blvd.

So, please reach deep and help out. A directed donation to the "Sound System Upgrade" will be greatly appreciated.

**Sequoia Association Annual Meeting
Sunday, May 21, 2023, 3:00pm —That's TODAY!!!**

The Sequoia Association annual meeting will be Sunday, May 21, 2023, 3:00pm at **United Japanese Christian Church 559-322-0701 · 136 N. Villa Ave.**

A delicious meal is served after the meeting. All are welcome and you are encouraged to attend – come meet your sisters and brothers of the Sequoia Association.

This Week at Big Red

Monday, May 22

- ♦ 05:00pm: Yoga - Room 1

Tuesday, May 23

Wednesday, May 24

- ♦ 08:00am: Bible Study - Zoom
- ♦ 04:00pm: Yoga - Room 1
- ♦ 06:00pm: Handbell rehearsal—Music Room
- ♦ 07:00pm: Chancel Choir rehearsal - Sanctuary

Thursday, May 25

Friday, May 26

- ♦ 09:00am: BRC Food Pantry food distribution prep - Fellowship Hall
- ♦ 05:00pm: Yoga - Room 1

Saturday, May 27

- ♦ 10:00am: BRC Food Pantry “Free Food Saturday” - Fellowship Hall

Sunday, May 28

- ♦ 09:00am: Roots and Branches - Fireside Room
- ♦ 10:00am: Worship Service - Simon Biasell, Guest preaching - Sanctuary
- ♦ 11:00am: Coffee Hour

Remember

- ♦ The deadline to submit items for the Grapevine is Tuesday, May 23
- ♦ The deadline to submit items for the Grape Leaf is Wednesday 2pm
- ♦ The weather is warming up...stay hydrated!

First Congregational Church of Fresno

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

Guest in the Pulpit

Kimberly Williams, Member In discernment

Office Administrator

Kymberly Lindsey

Office@bigredchurch.org

Music Director/Organist

Scott Horton

Technicians

Karisa Garza

Brad Jenkins

Caretaker/ Event Coordinator

Pat Morales

Accountant

Penny Leas Peterson

Assisting in Today's Service & Fellowship

Organist: Scott Horton

Liturgist: Gayle Thornton

Ushers: Rebecca Kliever, Gene Kliever and Teresa Fuentes

Technician: Karisa Garza

Coffee Hour: Jacqui Shore, Pat Morales and Paula Roberts

Acolytes: Faith and Olivia

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.

Alleluia! Gracious Jesus!

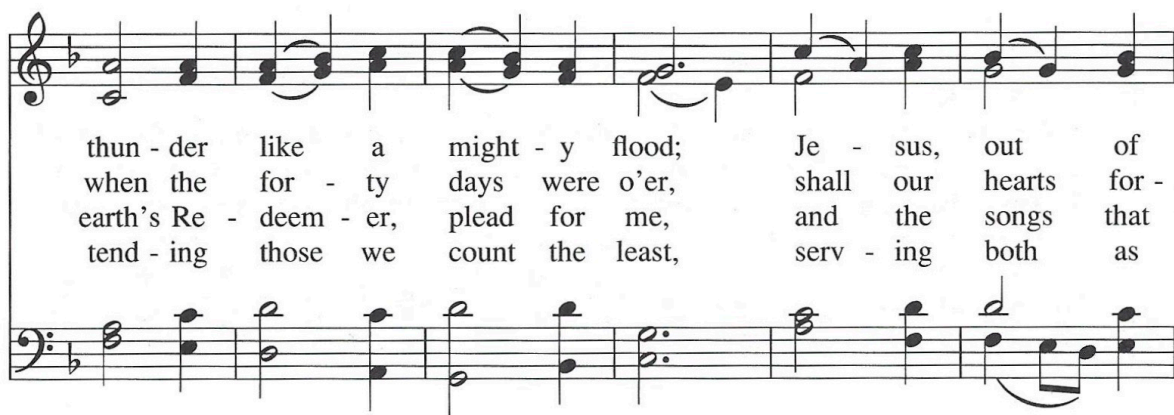
*Eph. 1:15-23; Heb. 9:11-14**William C. Dix, 1867; alt.*

1 Al - le - lu - ia! Gra - cious Je - sus! Yours the
 2 Al - le - lu - ia! Not as or - phans are we
 3 Al - le - lu - ia! Bread of an - gels, you on
 4 Al - le - lu - ia! Christ e - ter - nal, noth - ing

scep - ter, yours the throne! Al - le - lu - ia! Yours the
 left in sor - row now. Al - le - lu - ia! You are
 earth our food, our stay. Al - le - lu - ia! Here the
 can dis - rupt your reign; Al - le - lu - ia! Born of

tri - umph, yours the vic - to - ry a - lone!
 near us; faith be - lieves, nor ques - tions how.
 sin - ful flee to you from day to day.
 Mar - y, heaven and earth are your do - main.

Hark! the songs of peace - ful Zi - on
 Though the cloud from sight re - ceived you
 In - ter - ces - sor, friend of sin - ners,
 Hu - man life you ful - ly en - tered,



thun - der like a might - y flood; Je - sus, out of
 when the for - ty days were o'er, shall our hearts for -
 earth's Re - deem - er, plead for me, and the songs that
 tend - ing those we count the least, serv - ing both as



ev - ery na - tion you've re - deemed us by your blood.
 get your prom - ise, "I am with you ev - er - more."
 sound in heav - en will re - peat your gra - cious plea.
 Priest and Vic - tim in the eu - cha - ris - tic feast.

William C. Dix, manager of a marine insurance company, was also a gifted writer who made a significant contribution to hymnody. This hymn was written to fill a need for communion hymns in Church of England hymnals.

Tune: HYFRYDOL 8.7.8.7.D.
 Rowland H. Prichard, 1844
 Arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

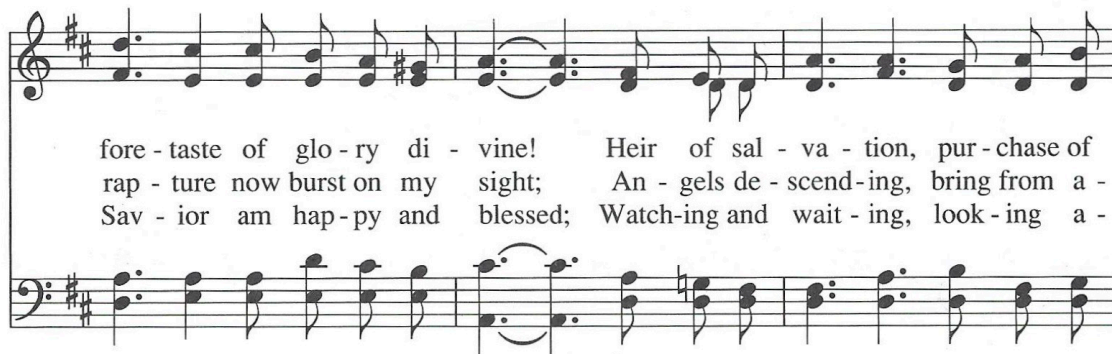
Blessed Assurance

Acts 17:30-31; Rev. 7:9-14

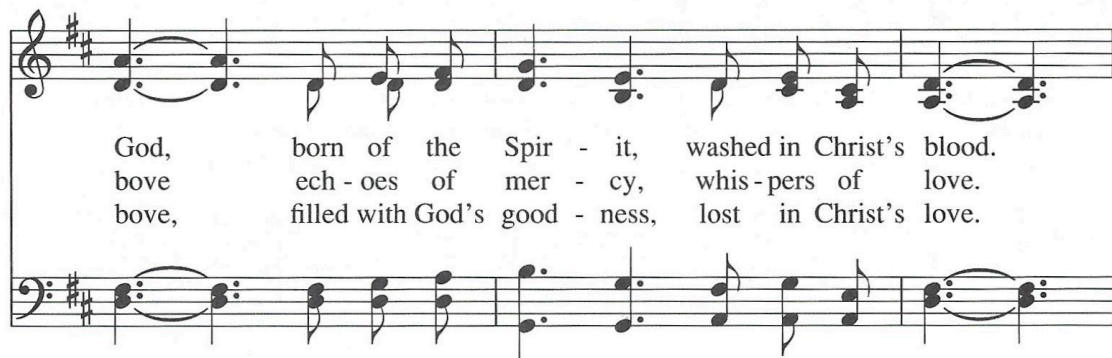
Fanny Crosby, 1873; alt.



1 Bless-ed as - sur - ance, Je - sus is mine! O what a
2 Per - fect sub - mis - sion, per - fect de - light! Vi - sions of
3 Per - fect sub - mis - sion, all is at rest, I in my

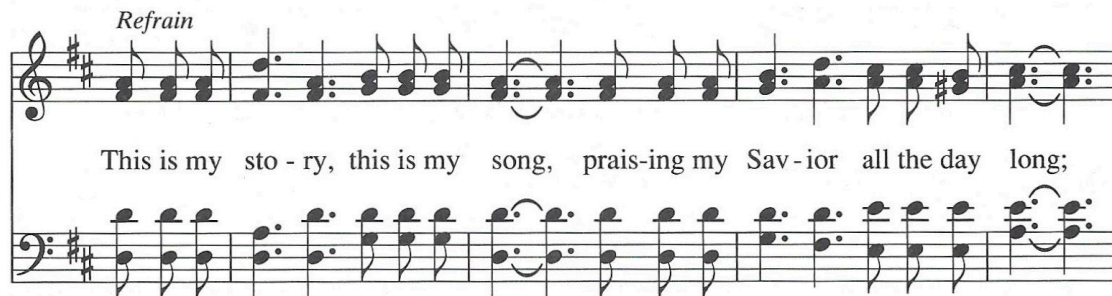


fore - taste of glo - ry di - vine! Heir of sal - va - tion, pur - chase of
rap - ture now burst on my sight; An - gels de - scend - ing, bring from a -
Sav - ior am hap - py and blessed; Watch - ing and wait - ing, look - ing a -



God, born of the Spir - it, washed in Christ's blood.
bove ech - oes of mer - cy, whis - pers of love.
bove, filled with God's good - ness, lost in Christ's love.

Refrain



This is my sto - ry, this is my song, prais - ing my Sav - ior all the day long;



This is my sto - ry, this is my song, prais - ing my Sav - ior all the day long.

God of Grace and God of Glory

436

Harry Emerson Fosdick, 1930; alt.

1 God of grace and God of glo - ry, on your peo - ple
 2 From the e - vils that sur - round us and as - sail the
 3 Cure your chil - dren's war - ring mad - ness; bend our pride to
 4 Set our feet on loft - y plac - es; gird our lives that
 5 Save us from weak res - ig - na - tion to the e - vils

pour your power; crown your an - cient church - 's sto - ry;
 Sav - ior's ways, from the fears that long have bound us—
 your con - trol. Shame our reck - less, self - ish glad - ness,
 they may be ar - mored with all Christ - like grac - es,
 we de - plore; let the search for your sal - va - tion

bring its bud to glo - rious flower. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 free our hearts for faith and praise. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 rich in things and poor in soul. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 in the fight to set us free. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 be our glo - ry ev - er - more. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,

for the fac - ing of this hour, for the fac - ing of this hour.
 for the liv - ing of these days, for the liv - ing of these days.
 make our bro - ken spir - its whole, make our bro - ken spir - its whole.
 in the quest for lib - er - ty, in the quest for lib - er - ty.
 serv - ing you whom we a - dore, serv - ing you whom we a - dore.

Harry Emerson Fosdick, a prophetic preacher and writer, taught at Union Theological Seminary from 1915 to 1946. This hymn was written for the opening service and dedication of Riverside Church, New York City, which he served for twenty years.

Tune: CWM RHONDDA 8.7.8.7.8.7.7.
 John Hughes, c. 1907