

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost August 27, 2023



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

*Madeleine Guekquegian
Guest Speaker*

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost
August 27, 2023

Our Gathering

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

Prelude “Prelude in B-flat major” - J.S. Bach Scott Horton, organ
“Fugue in C minor” - J.S. Bach

Welcome Madeleine Guekguezian, Guest Speaker

***Call to Worship** Melinda Mobley, liturgist

One: In our union with Christ we will be...

All: *clouds with life-giving rain!*

One: In our union with Christ we will be...

All: *trees bearing luscious fruit!!*

One: In our union with Christ we will be...

All: *cool water for thirsty travelers!*

One: We will be in union with Christ and each other,

**All: *because no force on Earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one but
Our union makes us strong that we may transform the world!***

***Hymn** “My Life Flows on in Endless Song” vs 1-3 #476, pew hymnal

***Opening Prayer** Melinda Mobley

God who calls us into connection with one another, let us be bound together through our joys and our struggles. When all is well and the dearest wish of our hearts is to lift our voices in celebration, let us do so together —remembering our Creator who gave us to each other. When the storms of life whirl around us and everything feels beyond our help and our control, let us come together —remembering our Creator who gave us to each other. For it is in community that our sincerest joys are magnified, and it is in community that we can weather any storm and build each other up when the skies clear. O God, may it be so! Amen.

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	"My Soul Gives Glory to My God"	#119, pew hymnal
Scripture	Nehemiah 5:1-13	Melinda Mobley
Sermon		Madeleine Guekguezian

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
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Invitation to Generosity	Melinda Mobley
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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

“Adagio” - W.A. Mozart

Scott Horton, organ

*Doxology (Tune: OLD HUNDREDTH)

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God, all creatures here below.
Praise God, above, ye heavenly host.
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost! Amen.

*Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving

Madeleine Guekguezian

Jesus, our co-laborer, fellow-traveler, and friend, we lift up these gifts to you. May the money, skills, and time we offer in your service be multiplied many times over by our collective action, so that we may be advocates for and with the poor and marginalized on Earth as you the Advocate for all humankind in Heaven. Amen

Announcements

Hank Delcore, Christian Ed

*Closing Hymn

“Won’t You Let Me Be Your Servant?”

#539, pew hymnal

Benediction

Madeleine Guekguezian

*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

“Fugue in B-flat major”- J.S. Bach

Scott Horton, organ

It is our tradition to be seated for the Postlude.

Please join us in the Fellowship Hall for Coffee Hour



15th Annual Keyboard Chamber Concert

September 10, 2023 - 3:00 p.m.

Join Us For An Afternoon of Music

- featuring -

**Gina Fazio, Matthew Horton, Jane Davis Maldonado,
Robert Maldonado, and Alan Rea piano; & Scott Horton, pipe organ**

*- performing masterworks for piano duet, two pianos, and solo organ from -
Bach, Beethoven, Moscheles, Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, and Kulenty*

First Congregational Church of Fresno

2131 N. Van Ness Blvd. (South of Clinton)

This is a free concert. A free-will offering will be collected to benefit the Casavant Pipe Organ

This Week at Big Red

Monday, August 28

- ♦ 5:00pm: Yoga - Room 1

Tuesday, August 29

Wednesday, August 30

- ♦ 8:00am: Bible Study - Zoom
- ♦ 4:00pm: Yoga - Room 1
- ♦ 6:00pm: Handbell Rehearsal - Music Room
- ♦ 7:00pm: Chancel Choir Rehearsal - Sanctuary

Thursday, August 31

Friday, Sept 1

Saturday, Sept 2

Sunday, Sept 3

- ♦ 9:00am: Root and Branches - Fireside Room
- ♦ 10:00am: Worship Service - Pastor Ara Guekguezian, Guest pastor
- ♦ Sanctuary
- ♦ 11:00am: Coffee Hour - Fellowship Hall



Save the Date:

September 24, 2023 - JAZZ ON VAN NESS

Jazz on Van Ness concert tickets are on sale now, following Worship Service, in the Fellowship Hall, during Coffee Hour and in the Church office from 9:30am to 3:30pm Monday thru Friday.

Featuring the musical stylings of Joyce Brewer, vocals, Davis Aus, piano with accompanying musicians on bass and drums.

There will be a variety of appetizers, a cash bar and a silent auction.

Tickets are \$35 per person or reserve a table of 8 for \$250

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 & Fellowship

Organist: Scott Horton

Liturgist: Melinda Mobley

Ushers: Bruce Owdom, Bob McParland,
Sue Karibian

Technician: Karisa Garza

Coffee Hour: Jacquie Shore, Lindsey Hill
Bailey Hill

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.

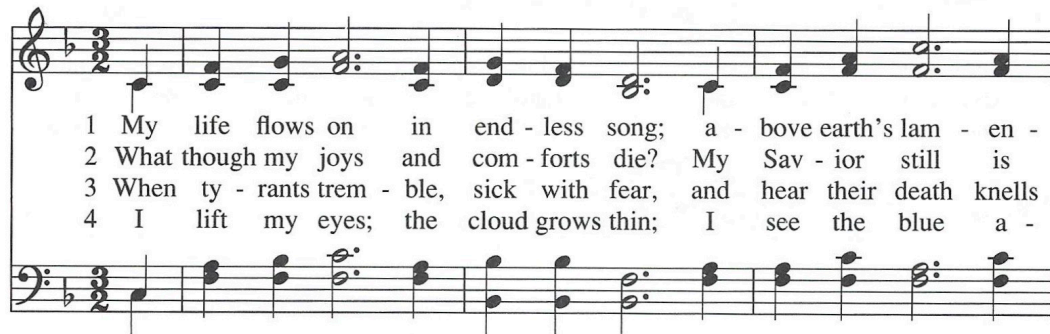
We welcome all people to participate fully in our church's life and ministry. We celebrate the variety of talents and perspectives which flow into our spiritual community, continuing to enrich us in ways we could not have predicted or envisioned.

My Life Flows on in Endless Song

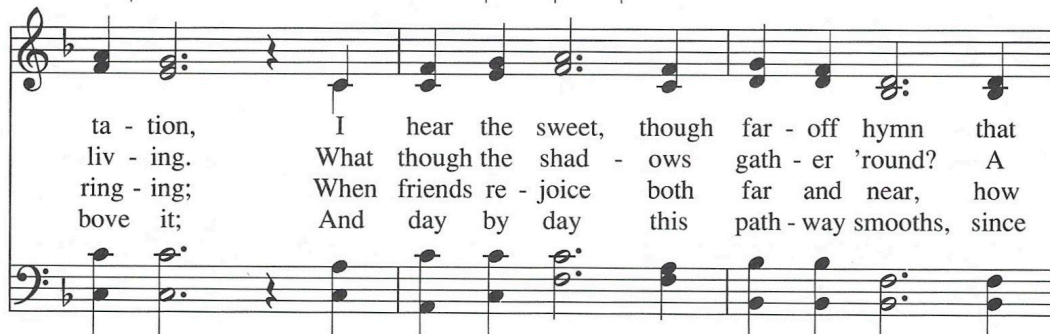
(How Can I Keep from Singing)

Ps. 46:1-7; 1 Cor. 3:21-23; 2 Cor. 5:17

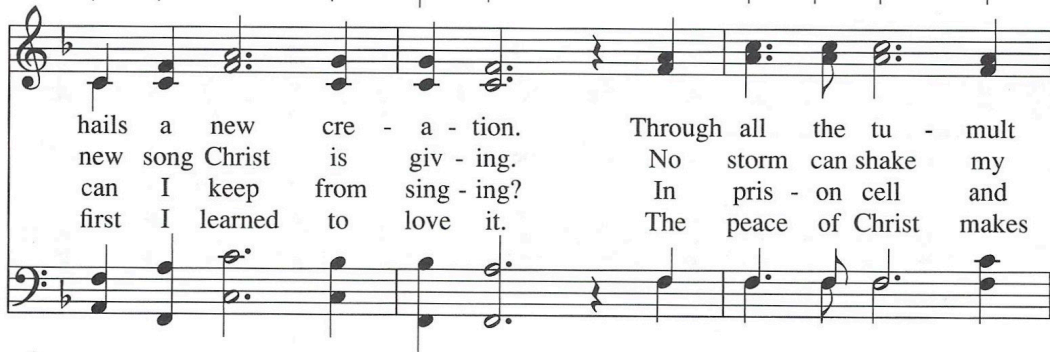
Anon. in Bright Jewels for the Sunday School,
ed. Robert Lowry, 1869; alt.
St. 3, Doris Plenn, c. 1957



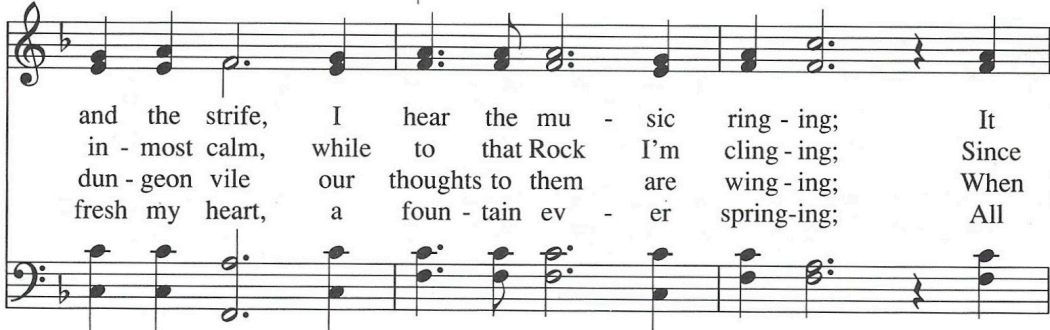
1 My life flows on in end - less song; a - bove earth's lam - en -
2 What though my joys and com - forts die? My Sav - ior still is
3 When ty - rants trem - ble, sick with fear, and hear their death knells
4 I lift my eyes; the cloud grows thin; I see the blue a -



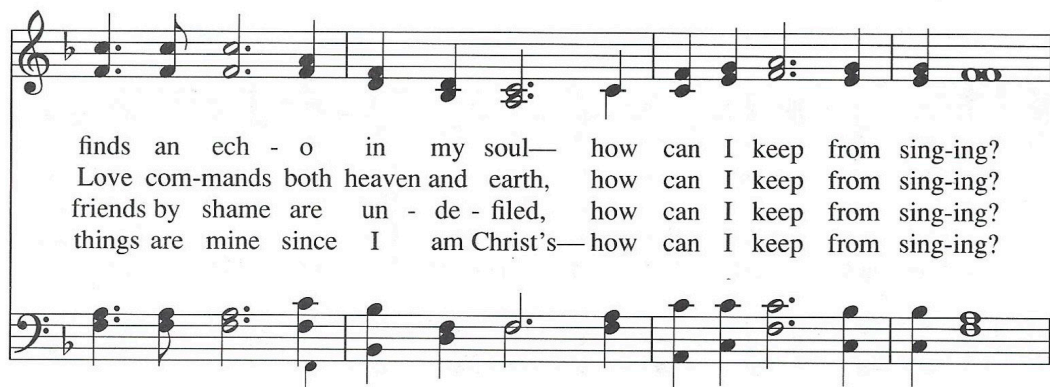
ta - tion, I hear the sweet, though far - off hymn that
liv - ing. What though the shad - ows gath - er 'round? A
ring - ing; When friends re - joice both far and near, how
bove it; And day by day this path - way smooths, since



hails a new cre - a - tion. Through all the tu - mult
new song Christ is giv - ing. No storm can shake my
can I keep from sing - ing? In pris - on cell and
first I learned to love it. The peace of Christ makes



and the strife, I hear the mu - sic ring - ing; It
in - most calm, while to that Rock I'm cling - ing; Since
dun - geon vile our thoughts to them are wing - ing; When
fresh my heart, a foun - tain ev - er spring - ing; All



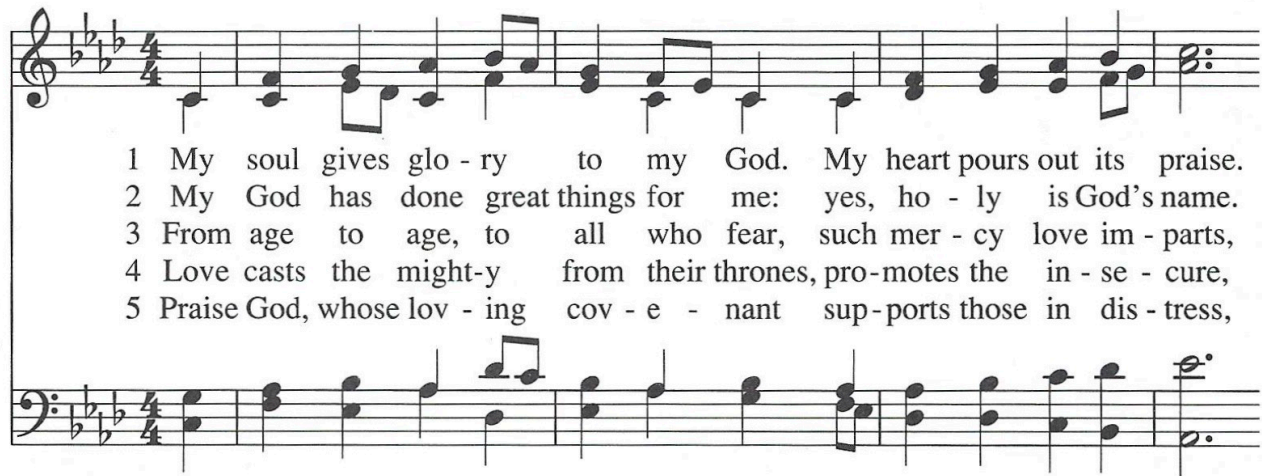
finds an ech - o in my soul— how can I keep from sing - ing?
Love com - mands both heaven and earth, how can I keep from sing - ing?
friends by shame are un - de - filed, how can I keep from sing - ing?
things are mine since I am Christ's— how can I keep from sing - ing?

My Soul Gives Glory to My God

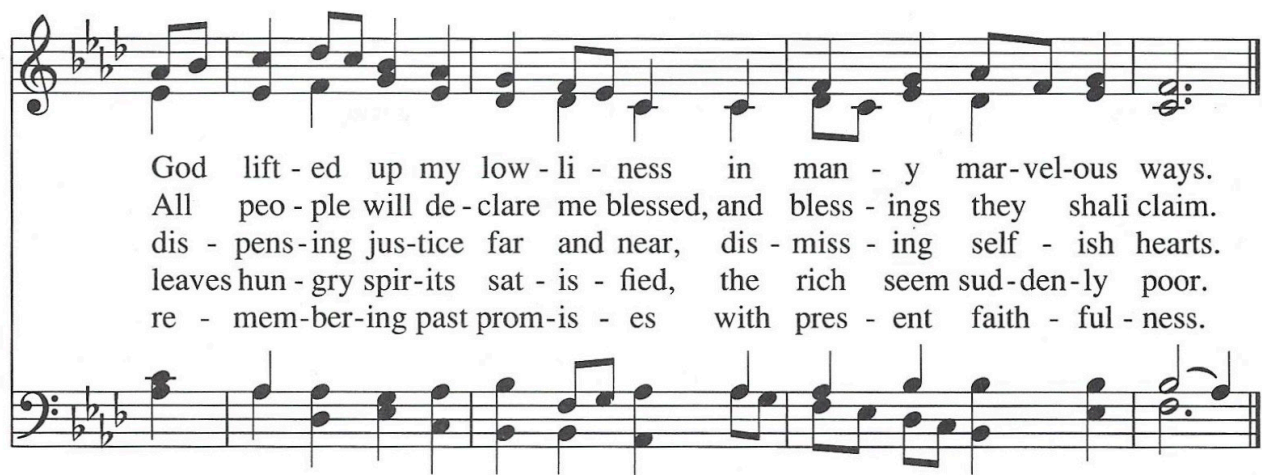
119

Miriam Therese Winter, 1987

Luke 1:46b-55; 1 Sam. 2:1-10



1 My soul gives glo - ry to my God. My heart pours out its praise.
2 My God has done great things for me: yes, ho - ly is God's name.
3 From age to age, to all who fear, such mer - cy love im - parts,
4 Love casts the might-y from their thrones, pro-motes the in - se - cure,
5 Praise God, whose lov - ing cov - e - nant sup-ports those in dis - tress,



God lift - ed up my low - li - ness in man - y mar-vel-ous ways.
All peo - ple will de - clare me blessed, and bless - ings they shall claim.
dis - pens-ing jus-tice far and near, dis - miss - ing self - ish hearts.
leaves hun - gry spir-its sat - is - fied, the rich seem sud-den-ly poor.
re - mem-ber-ing past prom-is - es with pres - ent faith - ful - ness.

This New Testament canticle, with its mosaic of liberation motifs that proclaim the justice of God, is known as the "Magnificat," the opening word of its Latin translation.

Tune: MORNING SONG C.M.
Melody from Kentucky Harmony, 1816
Harm. C. Winfred Douglas, 1940

Won't You Let Me Be Your Servant?

539

Richard Gillard, 1977; alt.

Rom. 12:9-18; Col. 1:24-29

1 & 6 Won't you let me be your ser - vant, let me be as Christ to you?
2 We are pil - grims on a jour - ney, we are trav - elers on the road;
3 I will hold the Christ-light for you in the shad - ow of your fear;
4 I will weep when you are weep - ing; when you laugh, I'll laugh with you.
5 When we sing to God in heav - en we shall find such har - mo - ny,

Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my ser - vant, too.
We are here to help each oth - er go the mile and bear the load.
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.
I will share your joy and sor - row till we've seen this jour - ney through.
Born of all we've known to - geth - er of Christ's love and ag - o - ny.
(repeat stanza 1)

Richard Gillard was born in England and later made his home in New Zealand. Largely self-taught, Gillard has described his musical style as "folk." This is the best known of his many songs in the United States.

Tune: SERVANT SONG 8.7.8.7.
Richard Gillard, 1977
Arr. Betty Carr Pulkingham, 1977; adapt.