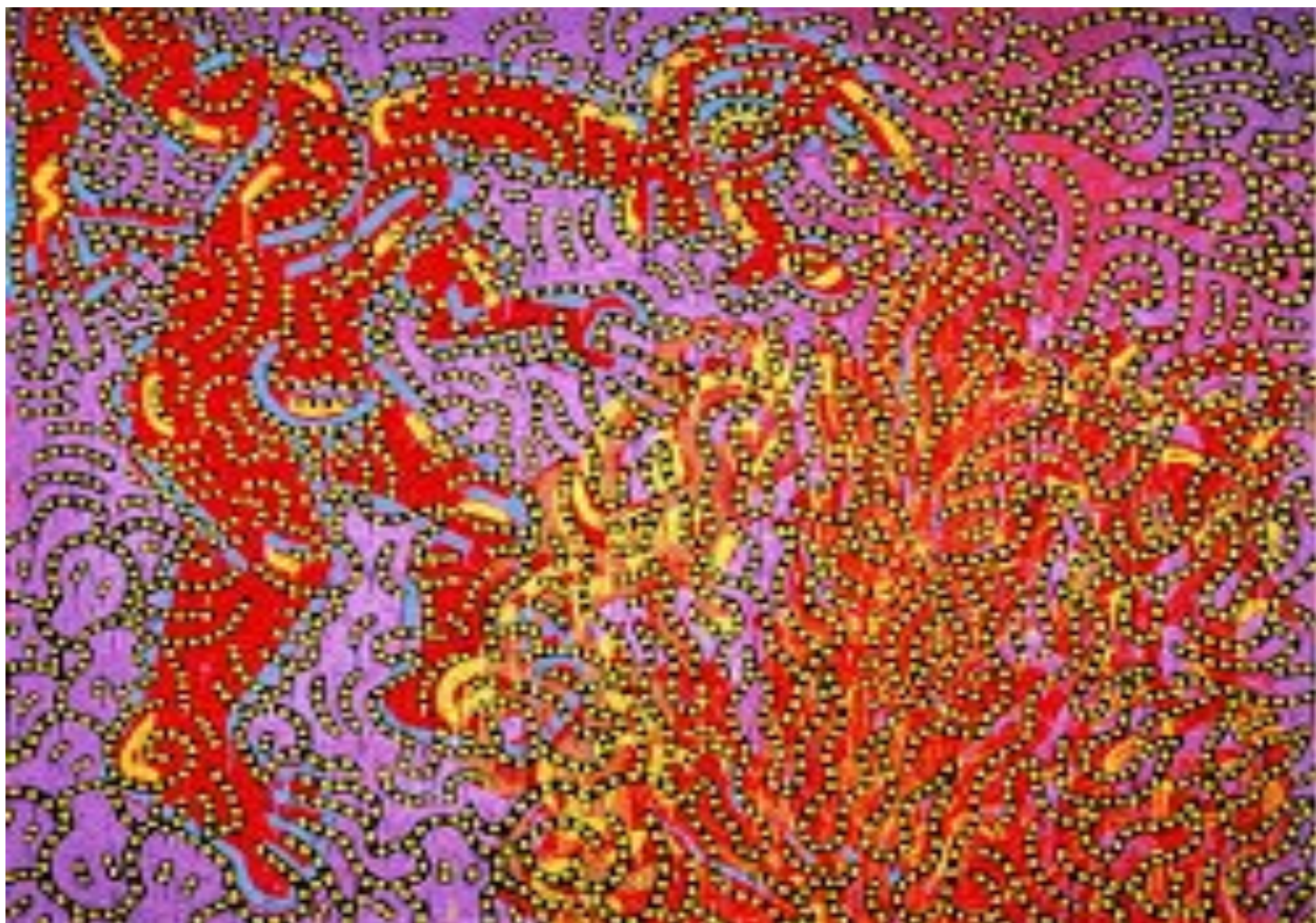


Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 3, 2023



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

*Rev. Ara Guekquezian
Guest Pastor*

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 3, 2023

Our Gathering

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

Prelude

Scott Horton, organ

Welcome

Rev. Ara Guekguezian, Guest Pastor

*Call to Worship

Peter Wall, liturgist

One: Give thanks to the Holy One!

All: *The God of our ancestors is with us!*

One: Give thanks to the Holy One!

All: *We call upon the name of our God, and our God responds.*

One: Give thanks to the Holy One!

All: *The steadfast and faithful love of our God lasts forever!*

*Hymn

“Blessed Assurance”

#473, pew hymnal

*Opening Prayer

Peter Wall

Eternal God, when we search for you, we find you. When we seek you, we find you seeking us. Your presence among us changes our circumstances and our lives. We honor and worship you as an act of devotion and discipleship. Infuse us with your Spirit that our witness and ministry may be a testimony to your everlasting love. 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 of Preparation

"Let Us Break Bread Together"

#330, pew hymnal

Invitation

Rev. Ara Guekguezian

The Consecration

Set before us are these two sacramental elements of bread and wine.

Remembering how on the night he gathered with his disciples, Jesus took bread,
blessed it, broke it, and said "This is my body given for you."

Come Holy Spirit, bless this bread and us, that in ways symbolic and real, the bread we share connects us more closely with you and with our neighbors- near and far.

Remember, too, how he took the cup and said that it is offered for the forgiveness of sin.

Come Holy Spirit, bless this cup in ways symbolic and real, that this fruit of the vine reminds us of a divine love that when poured out it brings the promise of abundant and new life through Jesus our Christ.

Blessing God, may this simple meal bring us into union with you, our ancestors in faith,
your people here today, and throughout your world:

each united as body and spirit in the One Body of Christ.

The Sharing

The Thanksgiving (*in unison*)

Rev. Ara Guekguezian

Holy and Abiding Presence of 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	"When Israel Was in Egypt's Land"	#572, pew hymnal
Scripture	Exodus 3:1-15	Peter Wall
Sermon	"Just Ignore It"	Rev. Ara Guekguezian

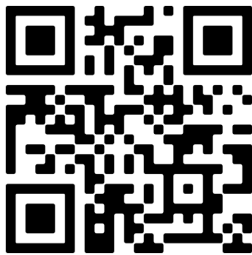
Sung Call to Prayer

**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	Rev. Ara Guekguezian
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Invitation to Generosity	Peter Wall
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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	"Finest Wheat" - K. Kiel	Scott Horton, piano
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***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**

Rev. Ara Guekguezian

Announcements

Jeannie Hobson, Moderator

***Closing Hymn**

“Lead On Eternal Sovereign”

#573, pew hymnal

***Benediction**

Rev. Ara 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

“March Héroïque” - Wm. Stickles

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, Sept 4 - Office will be closed

- ♦ 5:00pm: Yoga - Room 1

Tuesday, Sept 5

- ♦ 6:00pm: M.O.M. - Minturn Chapel

Wednesday, Sept 6

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

Thursday, Sept 7

Friday, Sept 8

Saturday, Sept 9

Sunday, Sept 10

- ♦ 9:00am: Roots and Branches - Fireside Room
- ♦ 10:00am: Worship Service - Chris Williams, Guest speaker
- ♦ 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

Rev. Ara 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: Peter Wall

Ushers: Rebecca Kliwer, Gene Kliwer
Teresa Fuentes

Technician: Brad Jenkins

Communion Servers: Peter Wall, Mary Leas Stegall
Penny Leas Peterson

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.

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.

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.

1-2 3

1-2 3

When Israel Was in Egypt's Land

572

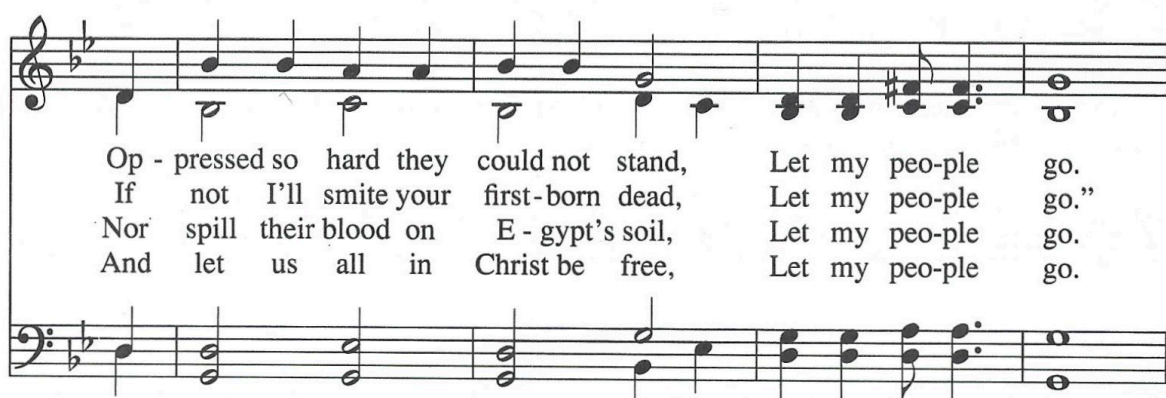
African-American spiritual; alt.

Exod. 3:7-12; 7:16; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3

Unison



1 When Is - rael was in E - gypt's land, Let my peo-ple go,
 2 "Thus spoke our God," bold Mo - ses said, "Let my peo-ple go;
 3 No more in bond - age shall they toil, Let my peo-ple go,
 4 Oh, let us all from bond-age flee, Let my peo-ple go,




Op - pressed so hard they could not stand, Let my peo-ple go.
 If not I'll smite your first-born dead, Let my peo-ple go."
 Nor spill their blood on E - gypt's soil, Let my peo-ple go.
 And let us all in Christ be free, Let my peo-ple go.

Refrain



Go down, Mo - ses, way down in E - gypt's land,



Tell old Pha - raoh to let my peo-ple go.

According to historian Jon Michael Spencer, this is the most famous of the spirituals to speak subtly of the desire the enslaved had for freedom, believing that God would set them free just as God had set the Hebrew people free from captivity in Egypt.

Tune: GO DOWN, MOSES 8.5.8.5. with refrain
African-American spiritual

Lead On Eternal Sovereign

Ernest W. Shurtleff, 1887; alt.

1 Lead on e - ter - nal Sov - ereign, we fol - low in your way;
 2 Lead on e - ter - nal Sov - ereign, we fol - low not with fear,
 3 Lead on e - ter - nal Sov - ereign, till sin's fierce war shall cease,

loud rings your cry for jus - tice, your call for peace this day:
 for in each hu - man con - flict your words of strength we hear:
 and all your saints to - geth - er will sing a hymn of peace;

Through prayer-ful prep - a - ra - tion, your grace will make us strong,
 That when we serve with glad - ness, you will not let us fall,
 Then all in your do - min - ion will live with hearts set free,

to car - ry on the strug - gle to tri - umph o - ver wrong.
 our trust is in your prom - ise that love will con - quer all.
 to love and serve each oth - er for all e - ter - ni - ty.

At Andover Seminary, fellow students asked Ernest W. Shurtleff to write a hymn for their graduation. This is the result. Shurtleff became a Congregational minister and in his last years established churches in Europe and did relief work during World War I.

Tune: LANCASHIRE 7.6.7.6.D.
Henry T. Smart, 1836