

25th Sunday after Pentecost

November 19, 2023



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

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi
Pastor

Our Gathering

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

Prelude "Prelude on "Nun Danket" - J. Phillips Handbells
"A Joyful Thanksgiving" - A.L. Page

Welcome Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

***Call to Worship** (inspired by Wisdom of Solomon 6:12-16) Rosalie Brown, liturgist

Give Thanks.

We give thanks for the harvest

Give Thanks

We give thanks for the blessings of family and friends.

Give Thanks

We give thanks for the blessings of our family, for Jesus the Christ and the freedom to share these blessings to those in our family, our church community, and the world.

***Hymn** "Come, O Thankful People, Come" #422, pew hymnal

Stewardship Moment

Gathering and Dedicating Our Gifts of Generosity, Time and Talents

Choral Anthem "Autumn Carol" - arr. R. Schulz-Widmar Chancel Choir
& Handbells

Time for Discovery [*children are invited to the chancel steps with the Pastor*]

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**

"For the Fruit of All Creation"

#425, pew hymnal

Scripture

Matthew 25:1-13

Rosalie Brown

"The kingdom of heaven is like a man who was leaving on a trip. He called his servants and handed his possessions over to them. To one he gave five valuable coins, and to another he gave two, and to another he gave one. He gave to each servant according to that servant's ability. Then he left on his journey.

"After the man left, the servant who had five valuable coins took them and went to work doing business with them. He gained five more. In the same way, the one who had two valuable coins gained two more. But the servant who had received the one valuable coin dug a hole in the ground and buried his master's money.

"Now after a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The one who had received five valuable coins came forward with five additional coins. He said, 'Master, you gave me five valuable coins. Look, I've gained five more.'

"His master replied, 'Excellent! You are a good and faithful servant! You've been faithful over a little. I'll put you in charge of much. Come, celebrate with me.'

"The second servant also came forward and said, 'Master, you gave me two valuable coins. Look, I've gained two more.'

"His master replied, 'Well done! You are a good and faithful servant. You've been faithful over a little. I'll put you in charge of much. Come, celebrate with me.'

"Now the one who had received one valuable coin came and said, 'Master, I knew that you are a hard man. You harvest grain where you haven't sown. You gather crops where you haven't spread seed. So I was afraid. And I hid my valuable coin in the ground. Here, you have what's yours.'

“His master replied, ‘You evil and lazy servant! You knew that I harvest grain where I haven’t sown and that I gather crops where I haven’t spread seed? In that case, you should have turned my money over to the bankers so that when I returned, you could give me what belonged to me with interest. Therefore, take from him the valuable coin and give it to the one who has ten coins. Those who have much will receive more, and they will have more than they need. But as for those who don’t have much, even the little bit they have will be taken away from them. Now take the worthless servant and throw him out into the farthest darkness.’

“People there will be weeping and grinding their teeth.

Liturgist: For the Word of God in Scripture, for the Word of God within us, and for the Word of God amongst us.

Congregation: *Thanks be to God.*

Sermon

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

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.

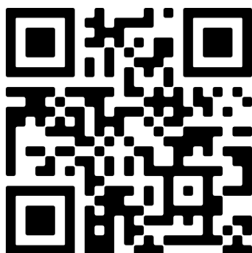
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Prayers of the Church

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

Invitation to Generosity

Rosalie Brown



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

“We Are Grateful” - R. Repp

Chancel Choir

***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. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

***Closing Hymn**

“Now Thank We All Our God ”

#419, pew hymnal

Benediction

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

***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

“Now Thank We All Our God,” from Cantata No.79 - Bach; arr. V. Fox

Scott Horton, organ

It is our tradition to be seated for the Postlude.

Please join us for refreshments in the Fellowship Hall

TODAY



This Week at Big Red

Monday, November 20

- ♦ 5:00pm: Yoga - Room 1

Tuesday, November 21

- ♦ 6:00pm: Council Meeting - Parlor

Wednesday, November 22

- ♦ 8:00am: Bible Study - Zoom
- ♦ 6:00pm: Handbell rehearsal - Music Room
- ♦ 7:00pm: Chancel Choir rehearsal - Sanctuary

Thursday, November 23

- ♦ Office will be closed

Friday, November 24

- ♦ Office will be closed

Saturday, November 25

Sunday, November 26

- ♦ 9:00am: Roots and Branches - Fireside Room
- ♦ 10:00am: Worship - Sanctuary
- ♦ 11:00am: Coffee Hour

Upcoming Dates to remember

- * Church Council Meeting - Nov 21
- * First Sunday of Advent - Dec 3
- * Family Advent Workshop and Coffee Hour- Dec 3
- * Celebration of Christmas Concert - Dec 17
- * Christmas Eve Family Friendly Worship Service 10am - Dec 24
- * Christmas Eve Lessons and Carol Service 9pm - Dec 24
- * Epiphany - Jan 7

First Congregational Church of Fresno

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Pastor

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Office Administrator

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Music Director/Organist

Scott Horton

Technicians

Karisa Garza
Brad Jenkins

Caretaker/ Event Coordinator

Pat Morales

Accountant

Penny Leas Peterson

Assisting in Today's Service

Organist: Scott Horton

Liturgist: Rosalie Brown

Ushers: Harold Householder, Richard VanWyhe

Technician: Karisa Garza

Acolytes: Makenna and Hudson

Altar Flowers: Jacquie Shore

Coffee Hour: Church Life

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.