

# **First Sunday of Advent**

## **December 3, 2023**

hope



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** “Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland, BWV 659”- J.S. Bach Scott Horton, organ  
“Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, BWV 645”- J.S. Bach

**Welcome** Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

**Hymn of Approach** “One Candle Is Lit” (vs 1)

**Lighting the Candle of Hope** Nancy Mack & Bill Geissert

Tear open the heavens and bring forth your presence.

We watch and we wait for the glory to come.

***We gather with hope, remembering your mercy.***

***Lead us in love; shine from above.***

Awaken the earth, enflame and enflesh

We watch and we wait for what’s birthing ahead.

***We gather with hope, remembering your justice.***

***Revive us, restore us; shine from above.***

Make us your love wave to broaden your reach

We watch and we wait for your deeds to appear.

***We gather with hope, remembering your handiwork.***

***Make us, mold us; shine from above.***

**\*Hymn** “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” (vs. 1-2) #116, pew hymnal

**Prayer for Transformation** (Inspired by “Hope” by Jason Robert Brown)

Mary Stegall, liturgist

***We come singing songs of hope this morning.***

***Though we may not be inspired much right now, we still sing.***

***Though it may take us time to sit with our hampered thoughts and sift through the growing pile of despair, we still sing.***

***In spite of everything ridiculous and sad—***

***Though we may be beyond belief, depressed, confused, and mad—***

***Some of us got dressed, and***

***Some of us made it out of bed or out the door***

***And we still sing of hope.***

***God, remind us that we have gotten through a lot of things we didn't think we could—  
that you have not left us nor forsaken us—  
The work begins in us. That our individual and collective ancestors still sang new songs in  
the valleys of death.  
And so, we still sing, too.  
Embolden us as we try to show the world the we can find hope even when it seems im-  
possible to bear.  
Hope must be there.  
Fear never wins.  
The work begins in us.  
Amen.***

**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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*- When invited, all in the sanctuary may come forward with  
your strip of yellow fabric to place in the manger-*

**\*Hymn of Preparation**      “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”      #335, pew hymnal

## **Holy Communion**

**Invitation to the table**

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

**The Sharing**

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**\*Hymn**      “Comfort, Comfort O My People”      #101, pew hymnal

**Scripture**      Isaiah 64:1-9      Mary Stegall

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence—  
as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil—  
to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence!  
When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down; the mountains quaked at your presence.  
From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him.  
You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways.  
But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed.  
We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.

We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.  
There is no one who calls on your name or attempts to take hold of you,  
for you have hidden your face from us and have delivered us into the hand of our  
iniquity.

Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the  
work of your hand.

Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD, and do not remember iniquity forever.

Now consider, we are all your people.

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.**

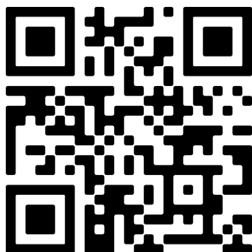
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**The Church at Prayer**

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

**Invitation to Generosity**

Mary Stegall



*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**

“Prepare the Way, O Zion” - arr. Dake

Chancel Choir

**\*Doxology and Dedication**

*We give You but Your own, whate'er the gift may be;  
All that we have is Yours alone, we give it gratefully. Amen.*

**\*Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving**

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

**Hymn**

*"Come, O Long Expected Jesus"*

**\*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**

*"Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland, BWV 661"- J.S. Bach*

Scott Horton, organ

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

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**Please join us in the Fellowship Hall for a special Family Advent Workshop and Coffee Hour  
immediately following the worship service.**

# This Week at Big Red

## Monday, December 4

- ♦ 5:00pm: Yoga - Room 1

## Tuesday, December 5

- ♦ 6:00pm: M.O.M - Chapel

## Wednesday, December 6

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

## Thursday, December 7

## Friday, December 8

## Saturday, December 9

## Sunday, December 10

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

Please pick up a directory update form, if you have any changes to email address, cell numbers etc. The new Directory will be coming out in January.

Thank you kindly...K

## Upcoming Dates to remember

- \* **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**
- \* **Annual Meeting - Jan 28**



**Sunday, December 17th  
3:00 p.m.**

*Featuring the Chancel Choir, Handbell Choir  
& Musicians of First Congregational Church*

**First Congregational Church of Fresno**  
***"The Big Red Church"***

2131 N. Van Ness Boulevard  
Fresno, CA 93704  
559.227.8489

Free Concert - Free-will offering will benefit the Casavant Pipe Organ Fund



## **Flowers for Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols Service**

*If you would like to contribute to the sanctuary flowers for Christmas Eve, please consider donating a flower in memory of or in honor of a loved one or friend. Please complete the form and add \$15 (cash, check made out to FCCF, or the Givelify App) and place in the offering plate, give to an usher, or mail to the office. The form and money need to be received by Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
In memory / in honor of: (circle one) Please print name.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Your name and \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number

*For your convenience: Please place order form with payment into offering plate*

## **First Congregational Church of Fresno**

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

### **Pastor**

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi  
Simon@bigredchurch.org

### **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**

Organist: Scott Horton

Liturgist: Mary Stegall

Ushers: Cliff Dodd, Teresa Fuentes

Candle Lighters: Nancy Mack & Bill Geissert

Communion Servers: Randy and Judy Oftedal, Peter Wall, Robbyn Mosley

Acolytes: Olivia and Addison

Coffee Hour: Church Ministries and Council

Technician: Karisa Garza

## **FCCF Open and Affirming Statement**

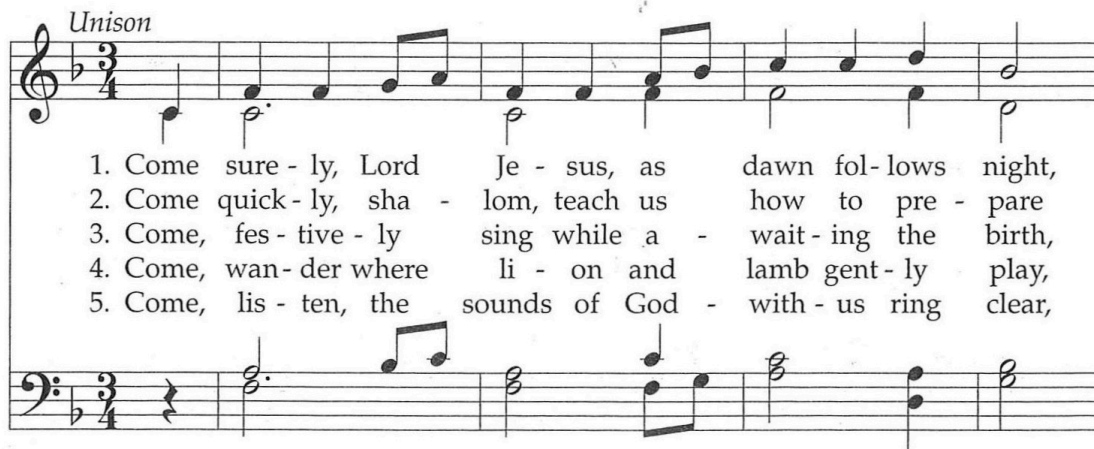
We believe that all people are sacred creations of a loving God. We affirm the diversity that exists among us. We strive to answer the call of Christ by extending his love, compassion and acceptance to everyone. In this spirit, we open our family of faith to people of every religious background, sexual 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.

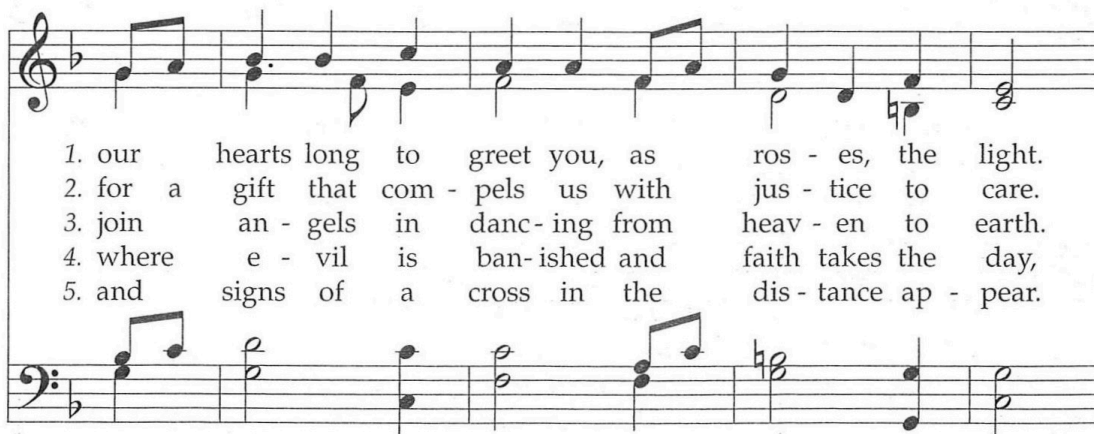
We welcome all people to participate fully in our church's life and ministry. We celebrate the variety of talents and perspectives which flow into our spiritual community, continuing to enrich us in ways we could not have predicted or envisioned.

# One Candle Is Lit

*Unison*



1. Come sure - ly, Lord Je - sus, as dawn fol - lows night,  
2. Come quick - ly, sha - lom, teach us how to pre - pare  
3. Come, fes - tive - ly sing while a - wait - ing the birth,  
4. Come, wan - der where li - on and lamb gent - ly play,  
5. Come, lis - ten, the sounds of God - with - us ring clear,



1. our hearts long to greet you, as ros - es, the light.  
2. for a gift that com - pels us with jus - tice to care.  
3. join an - gels in danc - ing from heav - en to earth.  
4. where e - vil is ban - ished and faith takes the day,  
5. and signs of a cross in the dis - tance ap - pear.



1. Sal - va - tion, draw near us, our vi - sion en - gage.  
2. Our spir - its are rest - less till sin and war cease.  
3. Wave ban - ners of good news, lift high thank - ful praise.  
4. a babe in a man - ger to fool the world's eyes.  
5. The Word once made flesh, yet the Word ev - er near.



1. One can - dle is lit for the hope of the age.  
2. One can - dle is lit for the reign of God's peace.  
3. One can - dle is lit for the joy of these days.  
4. One can - dle is lit for God's lov - ing sur - prise.  
5. One can - dle is lit for the Christ - birth - day here.

*Isa. 11:1-12; Exod. 19-20:17*

*Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum, 1710*  
*Based on ancient antiphons from Advent Vespers*  
*Transl. John Mason Neale, 1851, and others; alt.*  
*St. 2, 7, transl. Henry Sloane Coffin, 1916; alt.*

*Unison*

1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and  
 2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, and  
 3 O come, O come, O A - do - nai, who  
 4 O come, O shoot of Jes - se, free your  
 5 O come, O Key of Da - vid, come, and

ran - som cap - tive Is - ra - el That mourns in lone - ly  
 or - der all things far and nigh; To us the path of  
 came to all on Si - nai high, And from its peak a  
 own from Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny, From depths of hell your  
 o - pen wide your heaven - ly home; Make safe the path to

ex - ile here, un - til the Child of God ap - pear.  
 knowl - edge show, and help us in that way to go.  
 sin - gle law pro - claimed in maj - es - ty and awe.  
 peo - ple save, and give them vic - tory o'er the grave.  
 end - less day, to hell's de - struc - tion close the way.

Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el!

*Isa. 6:1-3; 1 Tim. 6:13-15**From the Liturgy of St. James, 4th century  
Transl. Gerard Moultrie, 1864; alt.*

1 Let all mor - tal flesh keep si - lence, and with fear and  
 2 Mon-arch great, yet born of Mar - y, as of old on  
 3 Rank on rank the host of heav - en spreads its van-guard  
 4 At Christ's feet the six - winged ser - aphs, cher - u - bim with

trem - bling stand; Pon - der noth - ing earth - ly - mind - ed,  
 earth Christ stood, Lord of all, in hu - man ves - ture—  
 on the way, As the Light of light de - scend - ing  
 sleep - less eye, Veil their fac - es to the Pres - ence,

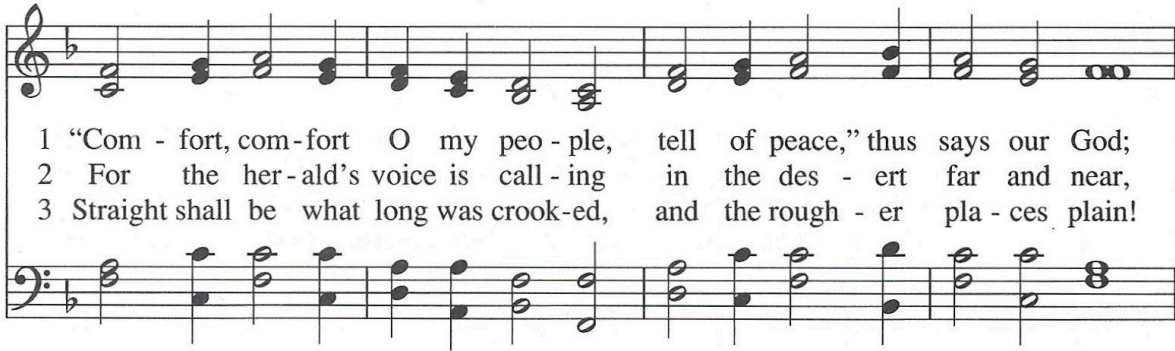
for with bless - ing in the hand, Christ our God to  
 in the bod - y and the blood— Christ will give to  
 from the realms of end - less day, That the powers of  
 as with cease-less voice they cry, Al - le - lu - ia,

earth de - scend - ing, our full hom-age to de - mand.  
 all the faith - ful bread of life for heaven-ly food.  
 hell may van - ish as the shad-ows clear a - way.  
 al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, God most high!

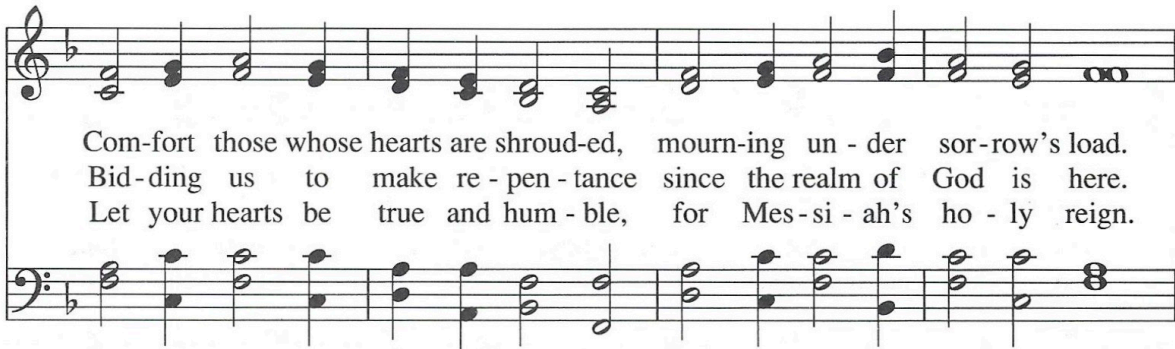
Isa. 40:1-8

Johannes Olearius, 1671


Transl. Catherine Winkworth, 1863; alt.



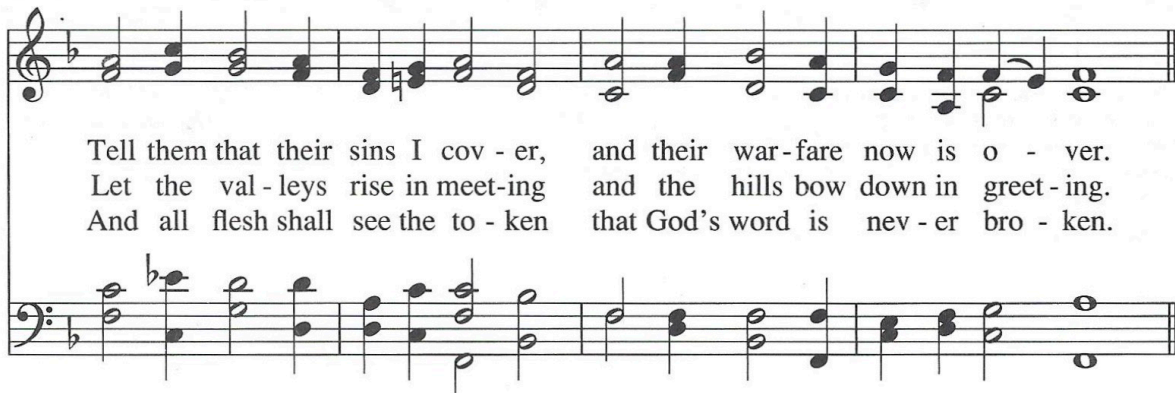
1 "Com - fort, com-fort O my peo - ple, tell of peace," thus says our God;  
 2 For the her - ald's voice is call - ing in the des - ert far and near,  
 3 Straight shall be what long was crook-ed, and the rough - er pla - ces plain!



Com-fort those whose hearts are shroud-ed, mourn-ing un - der sor-row's load.  
 Bid-ding us to make re - pen - tance since the realm of God is here.  
 Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, for Mes-si - ah's ho - ly reign.



Speak un - to Je - ru - sa - lem of the peace that waits for them;  
 Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre-pare for God a way;  
 For God's glo - ry ev - er-more shall be known o'er all the world;



Tell them that their sins I cov - er, and their war-fare now is o - ver.  
 Let the val - leys rise in meet-ing and the hills bow down in greet-ing.  
 And all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

Written for John the Baptist's Day, June 24, this hymn clearly reflects the Isaiah text. Johannes Olearius, a Lutheran pastor, held a faculty appointment at Wittenberg University as well as church administration positions in his region.

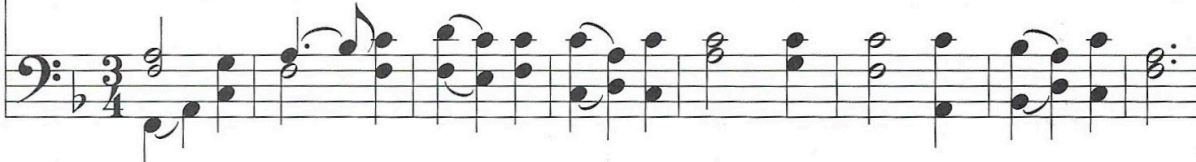
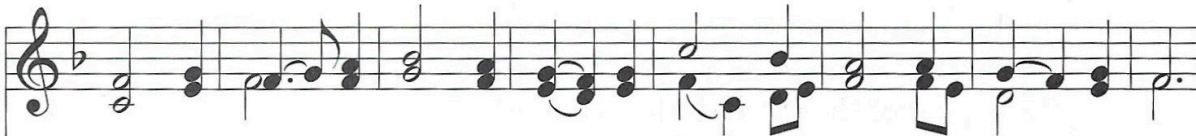
Tune: PSALM 42 8.7.8.7.7.8.8.  
 (FREU DICH SEHR)  
 Trente quatre Pseaumes, Geneva, 1551

# Come, O Long-expected Jesus


125



1. Come, O long-ex-pect-ed Je-sus, born to set your peo-ple free.  
2. Born your peo-ple to de-liv-er, born a child, and yet a king,

From our fears and sins re-lease us; Christ, in whom our rest shall be.  
born to reign in us for-ev-er, born your grac-ious realm to bring.




You, our strength and con-so-la-tion, come sal-va-tion to im-part;  
By your own e-ter-nal Spir-it rule in all our hearts a-lone;




dear de-sire of man-y a na-tion, joy of man-y a long-ing heart.  
by your all-suf-fi-cient mer-it raise us to your glo-rious throne.



WORDS: Charles Wesley, 1744  
MUSIC: Rowland H. Prichard, 1830; harm. *The English Hymnal*, 1906

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