

Second Sunday of Advent

December 10, 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

“Pastorale” - D. Zipoli
“Variations on Veni Emmanuel” - Dengler

Scott Horton, organ

Welcome

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

Hymn of Approach “One Candle Is Lit” (tune: CRADLE SONG)

(vs 2) ***Come quick-ly, sha-lom, teach us how to pre-pare
For a gift that com-pels us with jus-tice to care.
Our spir-its are rest-less till sin and war cease.
One can-dle is lit for the reign of God’s peace.***

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Lighting the Candle of Peace

Melinda Mobley, Rebecca, Jesse, & Selena Aguero
Dominick Schoelen-Aguero, and Jessie Schoelen

A voice cries our declaring God’s presence.
Comfort, O Comfort my people, says God.

***We come preparing the way of the Lord.
Together, we’re actively wait for God’s peace.***

A voice cries our declaring God’s equity.
Valleys shall be lifted and hills be made low.

***We come to make straight in the desert a highway.
Together, we’re pressing toward God’s peace.***

A voice cries out declaring steadfastness.
Grass withers, flowers fade, but God’s word stands forever.

***We lift up our voices with strength and good tidings.
Together, we carry out God’s peace***

*Hymn

“O Come, O Come Emmanuel” (vs. 3-4)

#116, pew hymnal

Prayer for Transformation

Parker Chamberlin, liturgist

***We come to you, Creator, not asking for an empty or entitled peace;
We come to you asking that you call us to a life of meaning and purpose.
Remind us to dig deeper to the wells of truth.
Help us see beneath the surface level arguments and beyond viral news clips.***

***Embolden us to be the revolutionaries you have called us to be
So that all injustice might be eradicated
And peace that surpasses understanding may reign.
Amen.***

Choral Anthem

"The Promise" - R. Nagy

**Chancel Choir;
Jane Maldonado, piano**

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.***

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

***Hymn**

"The Baptist Shouts on Jordan's Shore"

#115, pew hymnal

Scripture

Mark 1:1-8

Parker Chamberlin

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,
"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way,
the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord;
make his paths straight,' "

so John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And the whole Judean region and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him and were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

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

Bridget Webster, Guest speaker

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

Parker Chamberlin



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

"Lo, How A Rose" - Shafferman

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.***

Hymn "Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates" #117, 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 "Chant du Roi René" - A. Guilmant Scott Horton, organ

It is our tradition to be seated for the Postlude.

**Please join us in the Fellowship Hall for Coffee Hour immediately following the
worship service.**

This Week at Big Red

Monday, December 11

- ♦ 5:00pm: Yoga - Room 1

Tuesday, December 12

Wednesday, December 13

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

Thursday, December 14

Friday, December 15

- ♦ 9:30am: BRC Pantry food distribution preparation - Fellowship Hall

Saturday, December 16

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

Sunday, December 17

- ♦ 9:00am: Roots and Branches - Fireside Room
- ♦ 10:00am: Sunday of Peace Worship - Sanctuary
- ♦ 11:00am: Coffee Hour
- ♦ 3:00pm: Celebration of Christmas Concert - Sanctuary

Upcoming Dates to remember

- * **Celebration of Christmas Concert - Dec 17**
- * **Blue Christmas 7pm - December 21**
- * **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 17th.

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

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Pastor

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi
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Scott Horton

Caretaker/ Event Coordinator

Pat Morales

Accountant

Penny Leas Peterson

Office Administrator

Kymberly Lindsey
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Technicians

Karisa Garza
Brad Jenkins

Assisting in Today's Service

Organist: Scott Horton

Liturgist: Parker Chamberlin

Ushers: Bruce Owdom, Sue Karibian, Bob McParland

Candle Lighters: Melinda Mobley, Rebecca, Jesse, & Selena Aguero,
Dominick Schoelen-Aguero, and Jessie Schoelen

Acolytes: Sarah and Selena

Technician: Brad Jenkins

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.

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!

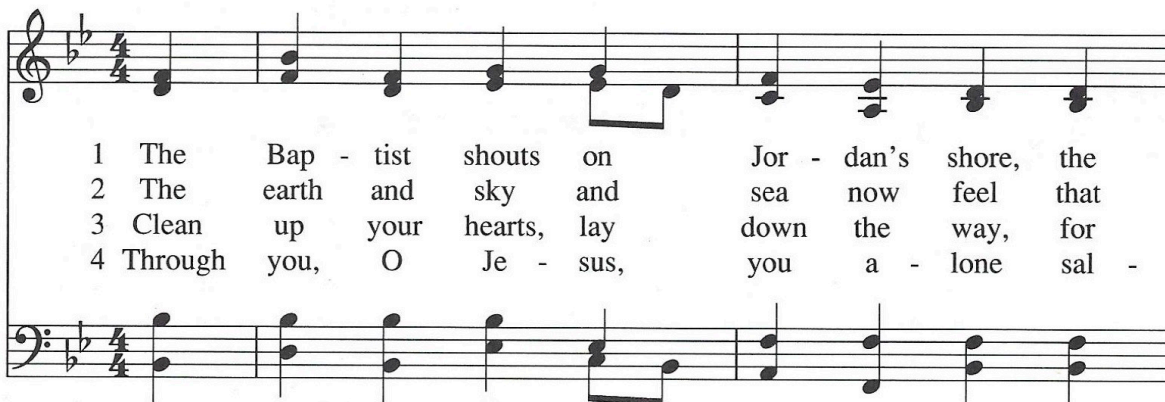
The Baptist Shouts on Jordan's Shore

115

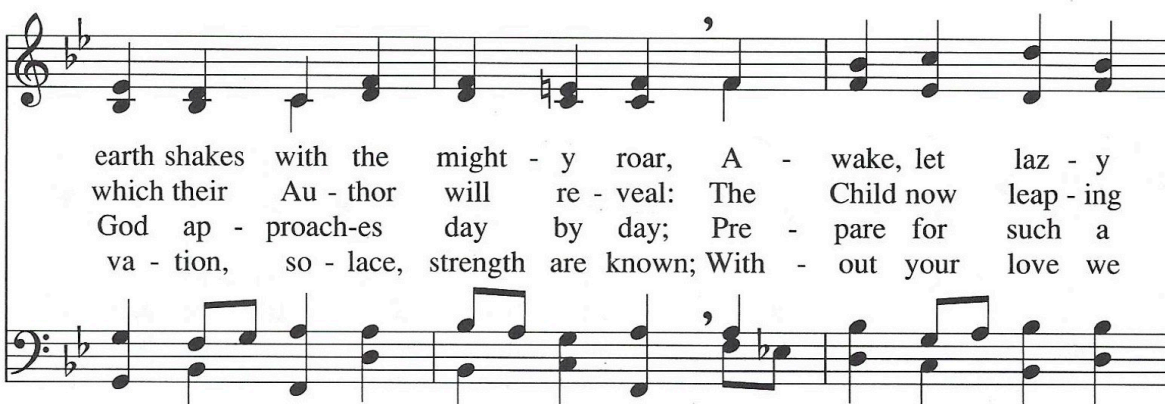
Charles Coffin, 1736

Transl. The New Century Hymnal, 1993

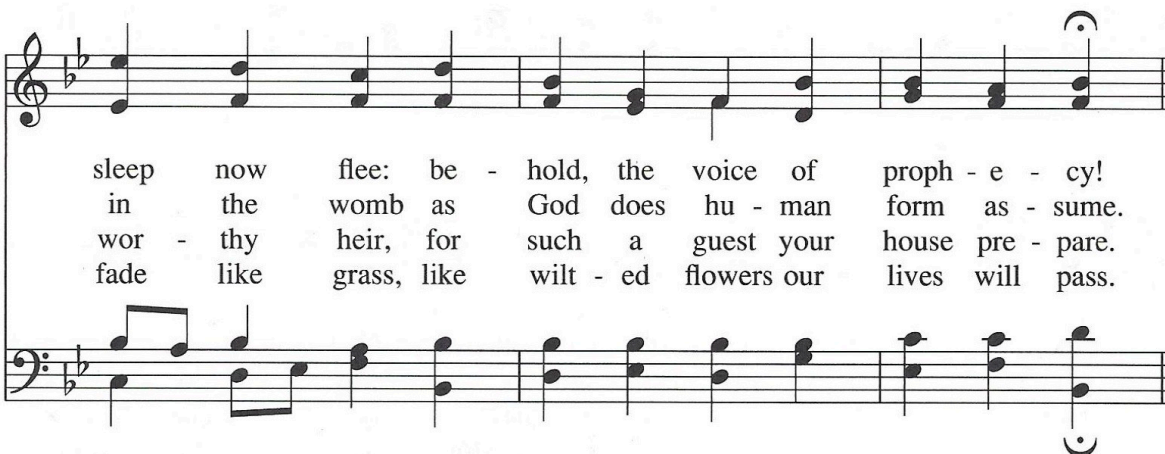
John 1:6-8, 19-28; Mark 1:1-8;
Luke 3:2-6, 15-18; Matt. 3:1-6, 11-12



1 The Bap - tist shouts on Jor - dan's shore, the
2 The earth and sky and sea now feel that
3 Clean up your hearts, lay down the way, for
4 Through you, O Je - sus, you a - lone sal -



earth shakes with the might - y roar, A - wake, let laz - y
which their Au - thor will re - veal: The Child now leap - ing
God ap - proach-es day by day; Pre - pare for such a
va - tion, so - lace, strength are known; With - out your love we



sleep now flee: be - hold, the voice of proph - e - cy!
in the womb as God does hu - man form as - sume.
wor - thy heir, for such a guest your house pre - pare.
fade like grass, like wilt - ed flowers our lives will pass.

5 Your hands ex-tend, our pain em-brace,
lift up the pros-trate, show your face;
Though we in part your beau-ty know,
O blos-som forth, your splen-dor show.

6 O One who comes to set us free,
O Child, to you our song will be,
With Fa-ther, Spir-it moth-er-ing,
to you shall praise for-ev-er ring!

Charles Coffin, distinguished scholar and Latin author, was rector of the University of Paris for a time. The hymn, appearing here in a new translation, is from a breviary ordered by the archbishop of Paris to replace ancient Latin hymns with newer ones.

Tune: WINCHESTER NEW L.M.
Musikalisches Handbuch, Hamburg, 1690

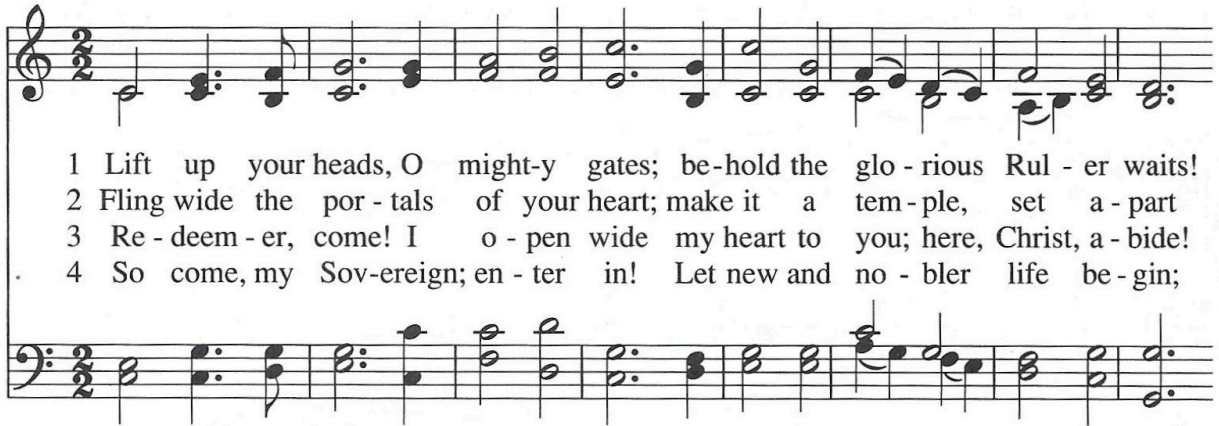
Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates

117

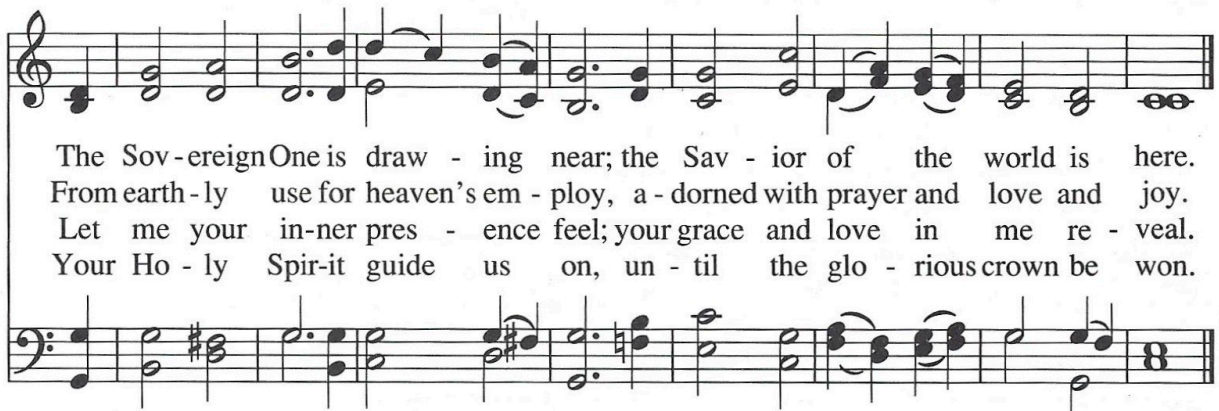
Georg Weissel, 1641

Ps. 24:7-10

Transl. Catherine Winkworth, 1865; alt.



1 Lift up your heads, O might-y gates; be-hold the glo - rious Rul - er waits!
2 Fling wide the por - tals of your heart; make it a tem - ple, set a - part
3 Re - deem - er, come! I o - pen wide my heart to you; here, Christ, a - bide!
4 So come, my Sov-ereign; en - ter in! Let new and no - bler life be - gin;



The Sov-ereign One is draw - ing near; the Sav - ior of the world is here.
From earth - ly use for heaven's em - ploy, a - dorned with prayer and love and joy.
Let me your in - ner pres - ence feel; your grace and love in me re - veal.
Your Ho - ly Spir - it guide us on, un - til the glo - rious crown be won.

Georg Weissel, a Lutheran pastor, served a church in Königsberg, East Prussia. He wrote some twenty hymns, most of them for the great festivals of the church year. This hymn was written for Advent.

Tune: TRURO L.M.
Thomas Williams' Psalmodia Evangelica, 1789