

# Epiphany Sunday

## January 7, 2024



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**

Carol/Hymn Sing

**Welcome**

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

**\*Call to Worship**

Michael Camunez, Liturgist

We gather in the Light

**We seek the Light's ancient wisdom.**

We gather in the Light that is God's continuing gift.

**We live into the Light's new wisdom**

We gather in the Light that is our own, emerging anew each day.

**We seek to share this wisdom, nurtured in the Light from Bethlehem's cradle.**

Let us pray together:

**God of Light and Love, in this very moment the star still beckons.**

**Gather us and let the star call us to new ways of healing and hope,**

**restoration and renewal, as we discover again Christ's call to discipleship. Amen.**

**\*Hymn**

"Angels From the Realms of Glory"

#126, pew hymnal

**Prayer of Confession & Assurance of Pardon**

Michael Camunez, liturgist

Sometimes we feel lost and even consumed by darkness.

We wonder if we are loveable.

Our actions dim the value and worth of others, and ourselves.

**Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy. Lord have mercy.**

Sometimes we feel lost in shadows of unclear choices.

Which way will lead to justice? To transformation? To peace?

We are afraid to risk a step out, unsure of the path.

**Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy. Lord have mercy.**

But in Christ, God has given us a new Light,

kindling unconditional love for us,

and showing us a well-lit path

to wholeness and forgiveness;

to courage and clarity.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Choral Anthem**

"Gloria" - A. Vivaldi

Chancel Choir

**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 of Preparation**

**"Draw Us In the Spirit's Tether"**

**#337, pew hymnal**

## **Holy Communion**

**Invitation to the table  
The Sharing  
Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi**

**\*Hymn**

**"What Child Is This?"**

**#148, pew hymnal**

## **Scripture Lesson**

**Matthew 12: 2-12**

**Michael Camunez**

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah, for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.' "

Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary, his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

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 Invitation 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.**

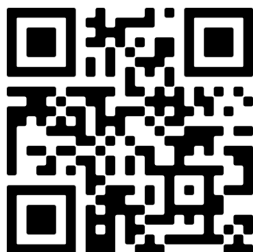
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**The Church at Prayer**

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

**Invitation to Generosity**

Michael Camunez



*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

"Dear Little Stranger" - D. Moore

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

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

#160, pew hymnal

\*Benediction

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

\*Blessing Song (*We turn toward center aisle so to bless one another*)

Go now in peace, never be afraid;  
God will go with you each hour of ev'ry day.  
Go now in peace, 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.

Postlude

"Go Tell It On the Mountain"

#154, pew hymnal



**Let's Go to see**  
**ILLUMINATURE**  
January 12th  
Calling all youth, 6th grade and up...  
There's an outing on January 12th to the  
Fresno Chaffee Zoo.  
**Meet at Big Red Church at 4:30 with  
permission slip.**  
Pizza and s'mores to follow at  
3199 W. Madison  
Kenny Schoelen's house  
Please contact Kenny by Tues. Jan. 9th  
for more details and to reserve a spot  
559-540-0600 No cost to the kids

# This Week at Big Red

## Monday, January 8

- ♦ 5:00pm: Yoga - Room 1

## Tuesday, January 9

- ♦ 6:00pm: Church Council Meeting - Parlor

## Wednesday, January 10

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

## Thursday, January 11

## Friday, January 12

## Saturday, January 13

## Sunday, January 14

- ♦ 10:00am: Worship - Sanctuary
- ♦ 11:00am: Coffee Hour
- ♦ 11:15am: Elders' Meeting - Parlor

### Upcoming Dates to remember

- ♦ Youth outing (6th grade and up) - Jan 12
- \* Elders' Meeting - January 14, following worship service
- \* Children's Ministry Vision Casting - January 21
- \* "Let's Eat Out" BRC Pantry Fundraiser at Old Spaghetti Factory - Jan 23
- \* Annual Meeting - Jan 28, following worship service



## **First Congregational Church of Fresno**

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

### **Pastor**

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi  
simon@bigredchurch.org

### **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**

Organist: Scott Horton

Liturgist: Michael Camunez

Ushers: Bruce Owdom, Sue Karibian, Bob McParland

Acolytes: Olivia & McKenna

Technician: Brad Jenkins

## **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.

# Angels, from the Realms of Glory



126

James Montgomery, 1816; alt.


Luke 2:8-20; Matt. 2:1-2, 9-11




1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
2 Shep-herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch-ing o'er your flocks by night,  
3 Sag - es, leave your con - tem-pla-tions, bright-er vi - sions beam a - far;  
4 Saints, be - fore the al - tar bend-ing, watch-ing long in hope and fear,




As you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro-claim Mes - si - ah's birth:  
God with us is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant light:  
Seek the great De - sire of Na-tions, guid - ed by Christ's na - tal star:  
Sud-den - ly, your prayers at - tend-ing, Christ be - side you shall ap - pear.



*Refrain*



Come and wor-ship, come and wor-ship, wor-ship Christ, give thanks and sing.



*James Montgomery, English journalist, raised a strong voice against injustice in his newspaper Sheffield Iris, in which this hymn was first printed on December 24, 1816. The tune is named for Regent Square Church in London, today a congregation of the United Reformed Church in England and Wales.*

Tune: REGENT SQUARE 8.7.8.7.8.7.  
Henry T. Smart, 1867



# Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether

337

Percy Dearmer, 1925; alt.

Matt. 18:20

*Unison*

1 Draw us in the Spir-it's teth - er, for when hum - bly  
 2 As dis - ci - ples used to gath - er in the name of  
 3 All our meals and all our liv - ing make as sac - ra -

in your name, two or three are met to - geth - er,  
 Christ to sup, then with thanks to God the Giv - er,  
 ments of you, that by car - ing, help-ing, giv - ing,

you are in the midst of them; Al-le - lu - ia!  
 break the bread and bless the cup, Al-le - lu - ia!  
 we may be dis - ci - ples true. Al-le - lu - ia!

Al-le - lu - ia! Touch we now your gar - ment's hem.  
 Al-le - lu - ia! So now bind our friend - ship up.  
 Al-le - lu - ia! We may serve with faith a - new.

British hymnal editor Percy Dearmer originally wrote these stanzas under a pseudonym as part of a postcommunion hymn by George H. Bourne. The tune was adapted from an anthem by Harold Friedell and is named for Union Theological Seminary in New York.


Tune: UNION SEMINARY 8.7.8.7.4.4.7.  
 Harold Friedell, 1957  
 Adapt. Jet Turner, 1967

# What Child Is This



148

William C. Dix, 1865; alt.



Luke 2:7-14, 25-32; Matt. 2:11; John 1:14;  
John 19:16b-18, 34




1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep - ing?  
2 Why lies the Child in man-ger bare where ox and ass are feed - ing?  
3 Bring gifts of in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, join in ju - bi - la - tion;


Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet while shep-herds watch are keep-ing?  
Give heed, draw near; for sin - ners here the si - lent Word is plead-ing.  
The Ho - ly Child, though meek and mild, has come with God's sal - va - tion.

This, this, the an - gels sing, is Christ, God's ho - ly of - fer-ing;  
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;  
Raise, raise the song on high, the moth - er sings her lul - la - by;




Haste, haste your praise to bring the babe, the child of Mar - y!  
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the child of Mar - y!  
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the child of Mar - y!



William Chatterton Dix, manager of an English marine insurance company, wrote a number of fine hymns. This one is always sung to the tune Greensleeves, which first appeared in England in 1580 and is mentioned in one of Shakespeare's plays.

Tune: GREENSLEEVES 8.7.8.7.6.8.6.7. with refrain  
English traditional melody, 16th century



# Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

(Jesus, the Light of the World)

John 8:12; 9:5

Charles Wesley, 1739; alt.; adapt. George D. Elderkin; alt.

1 Hark! the her-ald an - gels sing, Je-sus, the light of the world;  
 2 Joy - ful, all you saints a - rise, Je-sus, the light of the world;  
 3 Christ, by high-est heaven a - dored, Je-sus, the light of the world;  
 4 Hail the Bear-er of God's peace! Je-sus, the light of the world;

Glo - ry to the Christ-child bring, Je-sus, the light of the world.  
 Join the tri - umph of the skies, Je-sus, the light of the world.  
 Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Word, Je-sus, the light of the world.  
 Hail the Sun of righ - teous-ness! Je-sus, the light of the world.

*Refrain*

We will fol - low the light, beau - ti - ful light, come where the  
 dew-drops of mer - cy are bright, Shine all a - round us by  
 day and by night, Je - sus, the light of the world.

The original version of Charles Wesley's hymn has received various alterations throughout the years. This adaptation by George Elderkin utilizes a repeated ascription, "Jesus, the light of the world," and a refrain to create a rousing carol of praise.

Tune: ELDERKIN 7.7.7.7. with refrain  
 George D. Elderkin  
 Arr. Jeffrey Radford, 1993

# Go Tell It on the Mountain

154

African-American spiritual  
Arr. John W. Work II, 1907

Luke 2:8-20; Isa. 18:3; 52:7

*Refrain*

G D7 G

Go tell it on the moun-tain, o-ver the hill and ev-ery-where.

*Last time, end*

G Em C G/D D7 G

Go tell it on the moun-tain, that Je-sus Christ is born!

G D7 G

1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si-lent flocks by night,  
2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when lo! a-bove the earth  
3 Down in a low-ly man-ger the hum-ble Christ was born,

*to Refrain*

G A7 D7

Be-hold through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho-ly light.  
Rang out the an-gel cho-rus that hailed our Sav-ior's birth.  
And God sent us sal-va-tion that bless-ed Christ-mas morn.

This is one of the few spirituals heard inside as well as outside African-American churches. It was adapted by John Wesley Work II, who is remembered as the director of the Jubilee Singers of Fisk University.

Tune: African-American spiritual  
Adapt. Joyce Finch Johnson, 1992