

Second Sunday after Epiphany

January 14, 2024



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

Rev. Ara Guekguezian
Guest Pastor

Our Gathering

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

Prelude	"Praeludium in C Major" - D. Buxtehude	Scott Horton, organ
Welcome		Rev. Ara Guekguezian
*Call to Worship		Alison Chamberlin, Liturgist

There are no words for what this testimony means, only the wonder at how it feels like grace.

We celebrate the prophets and visionaries; in story and song, we awaken to the sound of one voice.

There is no way to know what this following will take, only the hope that it is leading us deeper into the heart of love.

We cherish the risk-takers and the tide-turners; in prayer and praise, we witness to the sound of voices two.

There is no telling when the struggle will end, only the faith in a future we cannot yet behold.

We become the movement and the liberation; in worship and wrestling, we create the sound of all of us.

*Hymn	"Let Justice Flow Like Streams"	#588, pew hymnal
Opening Prayer		Alison Chamberlin

To the revelation and the wonder, open us.

With the vision and the possibility, convict us.

For the recognizing and the following, equip us.

In the struggle and the seeking, be with us.

Holy One, manifest your love, make your justice known in and among us. Amen.

Choral Anthem	"Come Let Us Dream" - arr. J. Middleton	Chancel Choir
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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.

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** "Precious Lord, Take My Hand" #472, pew hymnal

Scripture Lesson 1 Samuel 3:1-10; John 1: 43-51 Alison Chamberlin

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 "Nothing Good Can Come from This" Rev. Ara Guekguezian

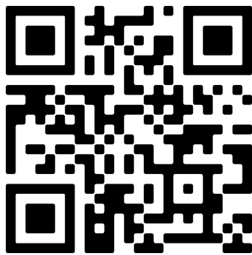
Sung Invitation to Prayer

**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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Prayers of the Church Rev. Ara Guekguezian

Invitation to Generosity Alison 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

“Let There Be Peace on Earth”

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.*

Announcement

***Hymn**

“We Are Marching in the Light of God” (3x) #526, pew hymnal

***Benediction**

Rev. Ara Guekguezian

***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 Hymn

“We Shall Overcome” (vs 1,2 6)

#570, pew hymnal

This Week at Big Red

Monday, January 15 - Office will be closed

- ♦ 5:00pm: Yoga - Room 1

Tuesday, January 16

Wednesday, January 17

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

Thursday, January 18

Friday, January 19

Saturday, January 20

Sunday, January 21

- ♦ 9:00am: Exploration Hour - Roots and Branches - Fireside Room
- ♦ 10:00am: Worship - Sanctuary
- ♦ 11:00am: Coffee Hour
- ♦ 11:15am: Children's Ministry Vision Casting Meeting - Room 5

Upcoming Dates to remember

- * 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
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Music Director/Organist

Scott Horton

Caretaker/ Event Coordinator

Pat Morales

Accountant

Penny Leas Peterson

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Technicians

Karisa Garza
Brad Jenkins

Assisting in Today's Service

Organist: Scott Horton

Liturgist: Alison Chamberlin

Ushers: Rebecca Kliwer, Gene Kliwer and Teresa Fuentes

Acolytes: Addison and Hudson

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.

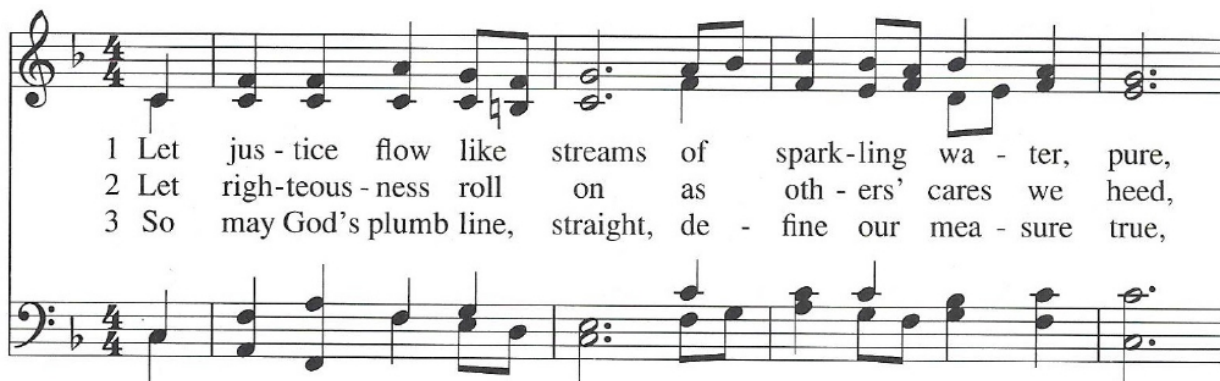
We welcome all people to participate fully in our church's life and ministry. We celebrate the variety of talents and perspectives which flow into our spiritual community, continuing to enrich us in ways we could not have predicted or envisioned.

Let Justice Flow like Streams

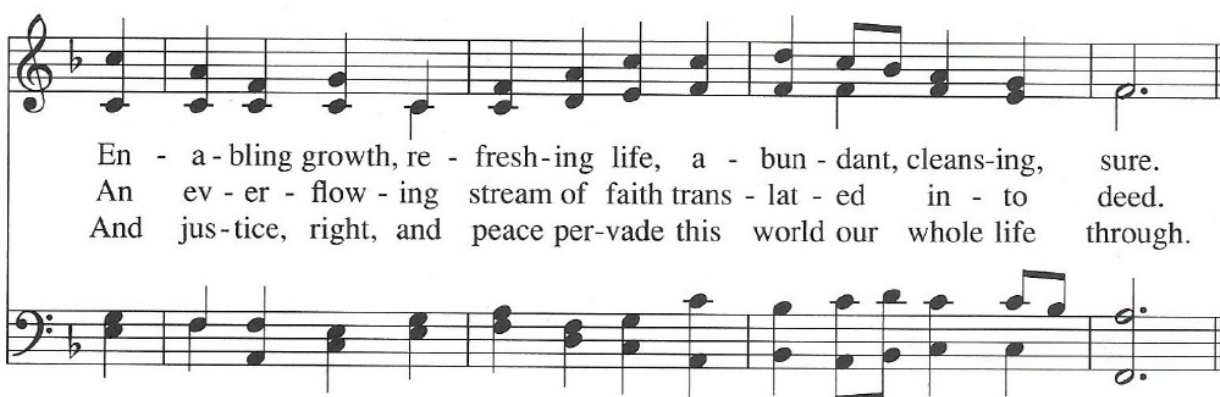
588

Jane Parker Huber, 1984

Amos 5:14–15, 24; 7:7–8



1 Let jus - tice flow like streams of spark - ling wa - ter, pure,
2 Let righ - teous - ness roll on as oth - ers' cares we heed,
3 So may God's plumb line, straight, de - fine our mea - sure true,



En - a - bling growth, re - fresh - ing life, a - bun - dant, cleans - ing, sure.
An ev - er - flow - ing stream of faith trans - lat - ed in - to deed.
And jus - tice, right, and peace per - vade this world our whole life through.

This is one of two hymns Jane Parker Huber wrote for special events emphasizing economic justice for women at the time of the reunification of two Presbyterian denominations in 1983. The text's brevity underscores the urgency of Amos' pronouncements against injustice.

Tune: ST. THOMAS S.M.
Aaron Williams' New Universal Psalmist, 1770

Precious Lord, Take My Hand

472

Thomas A. Dorsey, 1932; alt.

1 Pre - cious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand,
2 When my way grows drear, pre-cious Lord, lin - ger near,
3 When the shad - ows ap - pear and the night draws near,

I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
when my life is al - most gone,
and the day is past and gone,

Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light:
Hear me cry, hear my call, hold my hand, lest I fall:
At the riv - er I stand, guide my feet, hold my hand:

Refrain

Take my hand, pre - cious Lord, lead me home.

Thomas A. Dorsey was known as "Georgia Tom" when he played piano for blues singer Ma Rainey. He started writing gospel songs after what he called "a definite spiritual change." This inspirational song, composed following the deaths of his wife, Nettie, and a newborn child, derives from the tune Maitland.

Tune: PRECIOUS LORD Irr. with refrain
Thomas A. Dorsey, 1932

Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'

(We Are Marching in the Light of God)

Ps. 89:15

South African freedom song; transl. Freedom Is Coming, 1984

Si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen-khos', si - ya -
We are march - ing in the light of God, we are

hamb' e - ku - kha-nyen' kwen-khos'. Si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha -
march-ing in the light of God. We are march-ing in the

nyen' kwen - khos', Si - ya - ham - ba, ham - ba, si - ya -
kha - nyen' kwen-khos', light of God. We are march-ing, march-ing, we are
the light of God.

ham - ba, ham - ba, march-ing, march-ing, we are march-ing in the light of God.

Oo, si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha-nyen' kwen-khos'.
ham - ba, ham - ba, march-ing, march-ing, we are march-ing in the light of God.

Last time, end

This South African song and fourteen others were first recorded and published in 1980 by the Church of Sweden Mission and the singing group "Fjedur" after a visit they made to South Africa. The subsequent 1984 collection *Freedom Is Coming* brought the songs to a worldwide audience.

Tune: SIYAHAMBA Irr.
South African song

We Shall Overcome

570

United States traditional

John 8:31–32; Rom. 12:21; 2 Cor. 13:11

1 We shall o - ver - come, we shall o - ver -

2 We'll go hand in hand, we'll go hand in

3 We are not a - fraid, we are not a -

4 Our God will see us through, our God will see us

come, we shall o - ver - come some day;

hand, we'll go hand in hand some day;

fraid, we are not a - fraid to - day;

through, our God will see us through some day;

(1-6) Oh, deep in my heart, I do be - lieve,

we shall o - ver - come some day.

we'll go hand in hand some day.

we are not a - fraid to - day.

our God will see us through some day.

5 The truth shall make us free . . . some day.

6 We shall live in peace . . . some day.

This anthem of the 1960s civil rights movement was frequently sung at mass meetings and marches. Several sources have been cited as its origins, including the spiritual "No more auction block for me" based on the tune known as Sicilian Mariners; an old Baptist hymn "I'll Be All Right"; and part of the text from C. A. Tindley's gospel hymn "I'll Overcome Someday."

Tune: WE SHALL OVERCOME Irr.
United States traditional
Harm. J. Jefferson Cleveland, 1981