

# **First Sunday of Lent**

## **February 18, 2024**



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

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi  
Pastor

First Sunday of Lent  
February 18, 2024

## Our Gathering

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

Prelude

Scott Horton, organ

Welcome

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

Centering Psalm 25:1-10

Norman Broadbent, cantor

(The Congregation sings the *Response with the Choir*)

Response *Unison D* Bm Em7 A D *Antiphon: Judy Hunnicutt, 1994*

Your mer-cy and love have been from of old.

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.  
O my God, in you I trust;  
do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me.  
Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;  
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.  
Make me to know your ways, O God; teach me your paths.

***Sung Response: Your mercy and love have been from of old.***

Lead me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.  
Be mindful of your mercy, O God, and of your steadfast love,  
for they have been from of old.  
Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;  
according to your steadfast love remember me,  
for the sake of your goodness, O God!

***Sung Response: Your mercy and love have been from of old.***

Good and upright is God; therefore he instructs sinners in the way.  
God leads the humble in what is right and teaches the humble God's way.  
All the paths of God are steadfast love and faithfulness,  
for those who keep God's covenant and decrees.

***Sung Response: Your mercy and love have been from of old.***

**\*Call to Worship**

Faye Saxton, liturgist

The voice of God proclaims of Jesus, "You are my beloved, and I love you."

***We, too, are God's beloved children, loved and embraced.***

With all the voices reminding us that we are not enough or don't belong, it is tempting to forget our place in God's Kingdom.

***With the waters of baptism and the voice of God's promises, we can face the temptations of any wilderness or desert that would draw us away from the Source of our hope.***

Embrace your belovedness.

***We rejoice in God's unending love for us!***

**\*Hymn**

"Lord Jesus, Who Through Forty Days"

#211, pew hymnal

**Prayer of Confession**

Faye Saxton

***O God of love, as Jesus was driven out to be tempted in the wilderness, we too, face wildernesses of our own. We are tempted to forget your promises, to rely upon our own strength, and to listen to the destructive voices of power and oppression. Free us from our own hubris. Help us to reclaim our spiritual center as rooted in your love. Open our being to hearing your voice proclaim us as your child who is welcomed, held, and whole. Amen.***

**Assurance of Pardon**

**Choral Anthem**

"Lenten Prayer" - G. Pergolesi; arr. Libergen

Chancel Choir

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

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

**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 cloth to place on the cross-*

**\*Hymn**

**"Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley"**

**Insert**

**Scripture**

**Mark 1:9-15**

**Faye Saxton**

**Liturgist: God be in our listening. God be in our understanding.**

**Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

**Scripture** Genesis 9:8-17 Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh, and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."

**Pastor: For the Word of God in Scripture, for the Word of God within us, and for the  
Word of God among us.**

**Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

**Sermon**

**Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi**

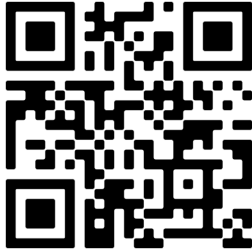
**Sung Call to Prayer**

**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.**



*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.*

**\* Doxology**

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

**\*Dedication**

**\*Closing Hymn**

“Lord, Make Me More Holy”

#75, pew hymnal

**\*Benediction**

**\*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**

“Toccata in E Minor” - J. Pachelbel

Scott Horton, organ

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



## *Galloway Memorial Organ Evensong*

**Scott Horton**

organist

**Sunday, March 3, 2024**

**3:00 p.m.**

Admission Free - Freewill Offering to Benefit  
the Casavant Organ Fund

*First Congregational Church of Fresno*  
2131 N. Van Ness Blvd.  
(559) 227-8489

## ***New Member Brunch***

***Sunday, February 25, 2024***

***11:15am/in the Parlor***

***Come and meet other prospective new members and current congregation members. Chat with Pastor Simon and get to know what First Congregational Church is about. Orientation materials will be provided.***

***If you are interested, please contact  
Kymberly Lindsey in the office  
559-227-8489***

# This Week at Big Red

## **Monday, February 19**

- ♦ 5:00pm: Yoga - Room 1

## **Tuesday, February 20**

## **Wednesday, February 21**

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

## **Thursday, February 22**

## **Friday, February 23**

- ♦ 10:00am: BRC Pantry “Free Food Saturday” prep and committee meeting

## **Saturday, February 24**

- ♦ 10:00am: BRC Pantry “Free Food Saturday” distribution

## **Sunday, February 25**

- ♦ 9:00am: Exploration Hour - Roots and Branches - Fireside Room
- ♦ 10:00am: Worship - Sanctuary
- ♦ 11:00am: Coffee Hour - Fellowship Hall
- ♦ 11:15am: Prospective New Members’ Brunch - Parlor

### **Upcoming Dates to remember**

- \* **“Free Food Saturday”**
- \* **New Member Brunch - February 25**
- \* **Galloway Memorial Organ Evensong - March 3**

## **First Congregational Church of Fresno**

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

Bigredchurch.org

### **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: Faye Saxton

Ushers: Bruce Owdom, Gene Kliewer, Rebecca Kliewer

Acolytes: Makenna and Selena

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.



# Lord Jesus, Who through Forty Days

211

*Claudia F. I. Hernaman, 1873; alt.*

*Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13*

1 Lord Je - sus, who through for - ty days for us did fast and pray,  
2 As you with Sa - tan did con-tend, and did the vic-tory win,  
3 And through these days of pen - i - tence, and through this Pas-sion - tide,  
4 A - bid with us, till when this life of suf - fering shall be past,

Teach us with you to mourn our sins, and close by you to stay.  
O give us strength to per - se - vere, in you to con-quer sin.  
Yes, ev - er - more, in life and death, O Christ, with us a - bid.  
An Eas - ter of un - end - ing joy we may at - tain at last.

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It features a treble and bass staff for the voice part, and a grand staff (treble and bass) for the piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with a clear cadence at the end of each line. The piano accompaniment provides a steady harmonic support.

*Unflagging in her zeal for religious education of children, Claudia F. I. Hernaman wrote some 150 hymns. This one appeared in her Child's Book of Praise (1873).*

Tune: ST. FLAVIAN C.M.  
*Day's The Whole Booke of Psalms, 1562*

# Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley

F F7 Bb Gm7

1. Je - sus walked this lone-some val-ley, he had to  
 2. We must walk this lone-some val-ley, we have to  
 3. You must go and stand your tri - al, you have to

F Dm Gm C7 F7 3

walk it by him-self; O, no-bod-y else could walk it  
 walk it by our-selves; O, no-bod-y else can walk it  
 stand it by your-self, O, no-bod-y else can stand it

Bb Gm7 F Gm C7 1-2 F Bb F 3 F

for him, he had to walk it by him - self.  
 for us, we have to walk it by our - selves.  
 for you, you have to stand it by your - self.

WORDS: American spiritual  
 MUSIC: American spiritual; arr. Bill Thomas, 1994

LONESOME VALLEY  
 88.10 8

# Lord, Make Me More Holy

75

*African-American spiritual*

1 Lord, make me more ho - ly. Lord, make me more ho - ly.

Lord, make me more ho - ly, un - til we meet a - gain.

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly un - til we meet a - gain.

- 2 Lord, make me more faith-ful, . . . Faith-ful, . . . un-til we meet a-gain.
- 3 Lord, make me more hum-ble, . . . Hum-ble, . . . un-til we meet a-gain.
- 4 Lord, make me more righ-teous, . . . Righ-teous, . . . un-til we meet a-gain.

*The origins of this African-American spiritual have been traced to the area of Charleston, South Carolina, where it may have been sung as a closing hymn for worship. It is one of a number of devotional songs expressing the desire to attain the spiritual character of Jesus.*

Tune: LORD, MAKE ME MORE HOLY

6.6.6.6.6.6.

*African-American spiritual*