

Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 10, 2024



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

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi
Pastor

Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 10, 2024

Our Gathering

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

Prelude

“Allegro,” from Piano Trio in B flat major KV. 502 - W.A. Mozart

John Morrice, violin; Marilyn George, cello; Dr. David Fox, piano

Welcome

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

Centering Psalm 107:1-3, 19-22

Paul Martzen, cantor

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

Response
Am

Em

Antiphon: Marty Haugen, 1994
Am

Con - sid - er the stead - fast love of God.

O give thanks to God, for God is good,
for God's steadfast love endures forever.
Let the redeemed of the Lord say so,
those whom God redeemed from trouble
and gathered in from the lands,
from the east and the west,
from the north and the south.

Sung Response: Consider the steadfast love of God.

Then they cried to God in their trouble,
and God saved them from their distress;
God sent out God's word and healed them
and delivered them from destruction.
Let them thank God for God's steadfast love,
for God's wonderful works to humankind.
And let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving
and tell of God's deeds with songs of joy.

Sung Response: Consider the steadfast love of God.

***Call to Worship**

Melinda Mobley, liturgist

God's love is for all of creation.

The vastness of God is for human, animal, soil, and sun, all together as God's beloved.

God has not come into the world for Jesus to condemn us.

Jesus has come to live God's love in the flesh.

While the world is dim with injustice and the feeling of loneliness,

It is in Jesus that the light of love illuminates our path of friendship. Come, let us join our lives with our Savior, whose love is for the whole world. Let us worship God!

***Hymn**

"As Moses Raised the Serpent Up"

#605, pew hymnal

Prayer of Confession

Melinda Mobley

Holy One, we confess there are moments when we desire to see you bring condemnation on others or wish that your love was not for the whole world, but just a few. But, your love is bigger than our limited lenses, broader than our small scope of vision of all that love embodies. Help us to see the world as you do. Help us to love as you do. Release us from our need to condemn and set us free for love. For, it is what you came enfleshed to show us. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

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.**

Gordon Light, ©1994 Common Cup Company
OneLicense.net License #A-711732

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.***

forever. Amen.

your strip of cloth to place on the cross-

John Morrice, violin; Marilyn George, cello; Dr. David Fox, piano

#208, pew hymnal

Melinda Mobley

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

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom, but the people became discouraged on the way. The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." So Moses made a serpent of bronze and put it upon a pole, and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

and for the Word of God among us.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

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.

1973, Hope, Publishing CO., All rights reserved.
OneLicense.net License #A-711732

Prayers of the Church

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

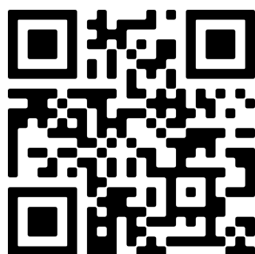
Invitation to Generosity

Melinda Mobley

Offertory

“There is a Balm in Gilead” - arr. Boesiger and McDonald

Chancel Choir



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 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**

***Closing Hymn**

“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

#43, 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.**

1988, Harold Flammer Music. All rights reserved.
OneLicense.net License # A-711732

Postlude

“Allegretto,” from Piano Trio in B flat major KV. 502 - W.A. Mozart

John Morrice, violin; Marilyn George, cello; Dr. David Fox, piano

It is our tradition to be seated for the Postlude.



Maundy Thursday Service

March 28, 2024 - 6:30 p.m.
Commemorate Jesus' Last Supper
with a Meal, Communion, and
Tenebrae Service
Childcare will be provided for
Toddlers through first graders

The last supper centers on Jesus' ministry of true inclusion and belonging. In the spirit of belonging, the Big Red Church opens its doors to all and welcomes you to our table for Maundy Thursday supper. Please join us for an evening of food, drink and prayer, as we anticipate the coming resurrection of Christ.

Please RSVP by Wednesday, March 20: office@bigredchurch.org or
phone 559.227.8489





Flowers for Easter Worship Service

*You are invited to contribute \$15 for a potted plant in the sanctuary for the Easter Worship Service or future flowers in the courtyard flower beds. The donation may be given in memory of or in honor of a loved one or friend. If interested, 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, March 24th**.*

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

_____ and _____
Your name phone number

___ I would like to take home a potted plant after the Easter Worship Service.

___ I would like the donation to go toward maintaining the courtyard flower beds.



Flash Mob Hallelujah Chorus on Easter

Have you ever wanted to sing the “Hallelujah Chorus” from Handel’s Messiah?

We will be singing this masterpiece as the postlude on Easter Sunday! On Easter, all you will have to do is make your way up to the Chancel area, up with the choir during the singing of “Go Now in Peace,” and we’ll be all set to sing our collective “Hallelujah” to the Risen Lord! Every Sunday, we will have a single run-through

practice, from March 3 following worship until Easter. Music and practice CDs will be provided. *Warning - smiles and feelings of joy are side effects.

Please see/contact Scott Horton to get involved or if you have any questions

This Week at Big Red

TODAY AT 11:15am

**Church Council Meeting
Parlor**

Monday, March 11

- ♦ 5:00pm: Yoga - Room 1

Tuesday, March 12

Wednesday, March 13

- ♦ 8:00am: Bible Study - Zoom
- ♦ 5:00pm: Lenten Soup Supper and Discussion - Fellowship Hall
- ♦ 6:00pm: Handbell rehearsal - Music Room
- ♦ 7:00pm: Chancel Choir rehearsal – Sanctuary

Thursday, March 14

Friday, March 15

Saturday, March 16

- ♦ 9:30am: Saturday Lenten Study - "The Compassion of God"
Marie Calendar's - Fresno

Sunday, March 17 - St Patrick's Day

- ♦ 9:00am: Exploration Hour - Roots and Branches - Fireside Room
- ♦ 10:00am: Worship - Sanctuary
- ♦ 11:00am: Coffee Hour - Fellowship Hall



Easter Cupcake Extravaganza!
Bring your Easter cupcakes on Easter Sunday before worship service, for our Annual Coffee Hour Easter Treat

Please bring your Easter candy and plastic eggs to the church for our annual Easter Egg Hunt no later than Friday 3/29/2024



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: Melinda Mobley

Ushers: Cliff Dodd, Pat Morales

Acolytes: Avery and Sarah

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.

As Moses Raised the Serpent Up

605

Versification The New Century Hymnal, 1993

John 3:14-17

1 As Mo - ses raised the ser - pent up, God's
 2 For God so loved the world that God, all
 3 That Child was sent in - to the world not

Child is lift - ed high; And all who in that
 hu - man life to free, Gave to the world God's
 to con - demn but save; Now through Christ's name all

Child be - lieve shall nev - er, nev - er die.
 Child that all might live e - ter - nal - ly.
 are re - deemed— what won - drous love God gave.

This hymn is a paraphrase of the gospel for Holy Cross Day, traditionally a time for reflection on faith and the meaning of the cross. In this reading, the image of Christ on the cross as the way to eternal life is related to the story of redemption of God's rebellious people in the wilderness.

Tune: MORNING SONG C.M.
 Melody from Sixteen Tune Settings, 1812
 Harm. C. Winfred Douglas, 1940

John 3:16-17

Heiliges Lippen und Herzens Opfer, Stettin, 1778

Transl. August Crull, 1845; alt.

1 God loved the world, and lov - ing gave
 2 Christ Je - sus is the ground of faith,
 3 If you are sick, if death is near,
 4 Be of good cheer, for God in Christ

a won - drous gift, the lost to save,
 who was made flesh and suf - fered death;
 this truth your trou - bled heart can cheer;
 for - gives the flock, by sin en - ticed,

That all who would in Christ be - lieve
 All who con - fide in Christ a - lone
 Christ Je - sus saves us all from death;
 And jus - ti - fied by Je - sus' blood,

should ev - er - last - ing life re - ceive.
 are built on this chief cor - ner - stone.
 that is the firm - est ground of faith.
 your bap - tism grants the high - est good.

Edward Miller, a skilled flutist in G. F. Handel's orchestra,
 adapted Rockingham from the tune Tunbridge. Miller named it
 for the Marquis of Rockingham, a patron and friend, and prime
 minister of Great Britain.

Tune: ROCKINGHAM L.M.

Anon.

Adapt. Edward Miller, 1790

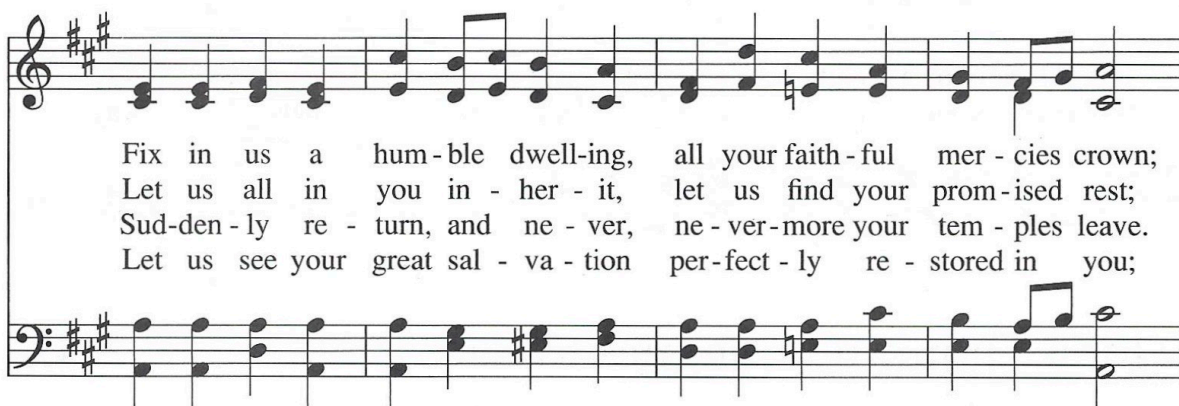
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Mal. 3:1; 2 Cor. 3:18; 5:17; Eph. 5:27

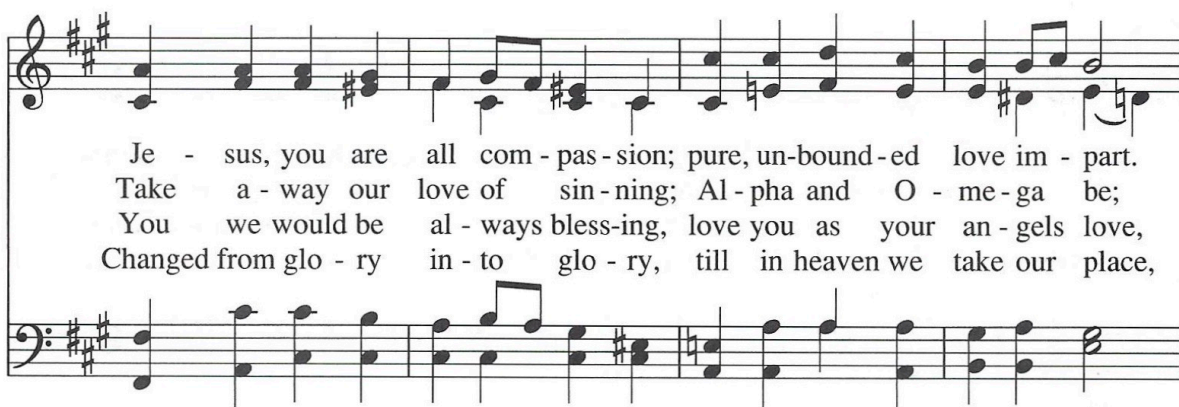
Charles Wesley, 1747; alt.



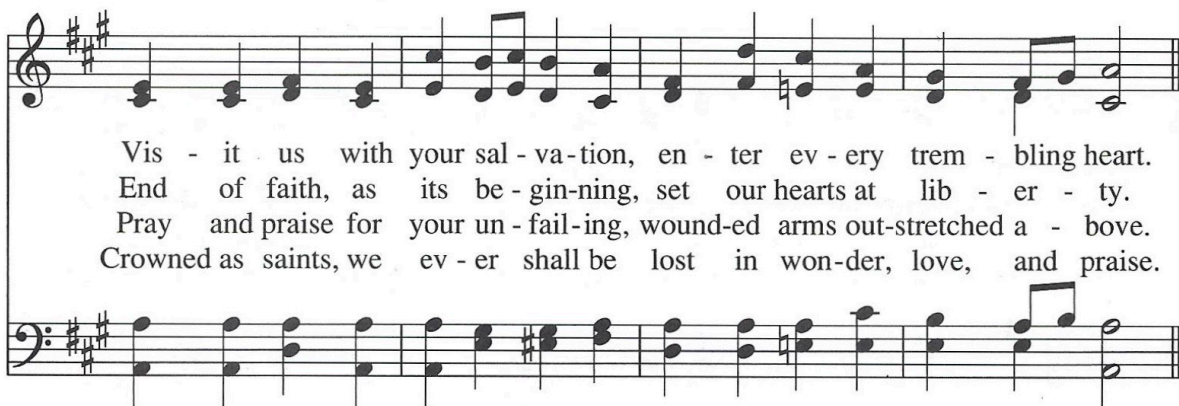
1 Love di-vine, all loves ex-cel-ling, joy of heaven, on earth be found,
 2 Breathe, O breathe your lov-ing Spir-it in-to ev-ery trou-bled breast;
 3 Come, al-might-y to de-liv-er, let us all your life re-ceive;
 4 Fin-ish, then, your new cre-a-tion; pure and spot-less may we prove;



Fix in us a hum-ble dwell-ing, all your faith-ful mer-cies crown;
 Let us all in you in-her-it, let us find your prom-ised rest;
 Sud-den-ly re-turn, and ne-ver, ne-ver-more your tem-ples leave.
 Let us see your great sal-va-tion per-fect-ly re-stored in you;



Je-sus, you are all com-pas-sion; pure, un-bound-ed love im-part.
 Take a-way our love of sin-ning; Al-pha and O-me-ga be;
 You we would be al-ways bless-ing, love you as your an-gels love,
 Changed from glo-ry in-to glo-ry, till in heaven we take our place,



Vis-it us with your sal-va-tion, en-ter ev-ery trem-bling heart.
 End of faith, as its be-gin-ning, set our hearts at lib-er-ty.
 Pray and praise for your un-fail-ing, wound-ed arms out-stretched a-bove.
 Crowned as saints, we ev-er shall be lost in won-der, love, and praise.

This hymn is said to have been suggested by a "Song of Venus" from Dryden's King Arthur. It is one of 6,500 written by Charles Wesley, the "sweet singer of Methodism," who was skilled at interweaving literary and scriptural images.

Tune: BEECHER 8.7.8.7.D.

John Zundel, 1855

Alternate tune: HYFRYDOL

For another harmonization, see 368, 495