

Fourth Sunday of Easter

April 21, 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 Easter

April 21, 2024

Our Gathering

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

Prelude "Pastorale" - D. Zipoli Scott Horton, organ
"Sheep May Safely Graze" - J.S. Bach

Welcome Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

***Call to Worship** Wayne Brown, Liturgist

One: When we are scattered, Jesus our Good Shepherd gathers us in.

Many: When we are lost and lonely, we can depend on Christ's love.

One: When we are oppressed, Jesus our Good Shepherd cares for us.

Many: When we are threatened because of who we are, we can depend on Christ's protection.

One: We know Christ, because Christ's tenderness has guided us for generations.

Many: Christ knows us by name. Christ will lay down his very life for our sake.

One: Let us worship our Good Shepherd, who cares for all of us with fierce love.

Many: Let us give thanks for Christ's presence with us.

***Hymn** "Rejoice, Give Thanks and Sing" #303, pew hymnal

Prayer of Transformation Wayne Brown

You call to us through the voices of the poor and the powerless,
But we close ourselves off from their need:

Lord have mercy

You call to us through the cries of those who struggle
to change structures of oppression, but we turn away from their challenge:

Christ have mercy

You hint, you invite, you surround us with calls to love you more fully,
and follow you more faithfully, but we cling to comfort and safety:

Lord have mercy

Words of Grace

Anthem "Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us" - Bradbury/Ehret 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.

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

"My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less"

#403, pew hymnal

Scripture

Acts 4:5-12

Wayne Brown

The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family. They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. Jesus is

"the stone you builders rejected,
which has become the cornerstone."

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

Liturgist: 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.**

Invitation to Generosity

Wayne Brown



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.*
- ⇒ *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

“My Shepherd” - arr. Page and Shafferman

Chancel Choir

***Doxology (Tune: LASST UNS ERFREUEN)**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
 Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!
 Praise God, the source of all our gifts!
 Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!
 Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

***Dedication**

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

***Closing Hymn**

“The Church’s One Foundation”

#386, 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**

“Toccata” (1912) - Gaston Bélier

Scott Horton, organ

It is our tradition to be seated for the Postlude.



- PorchFest Venue -

BIG RED PORCH

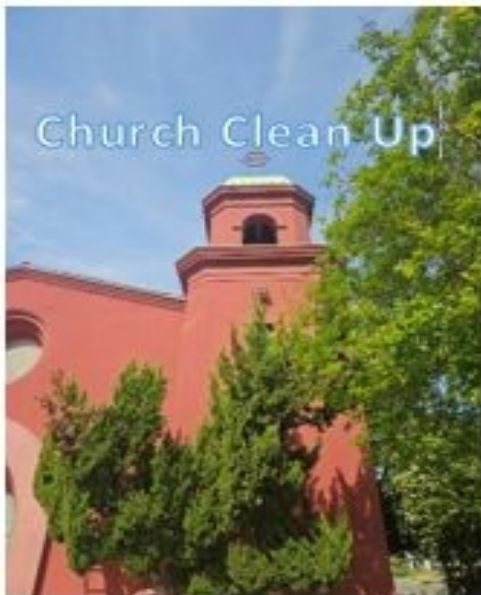
2131 N. Van Ness Blvd.

**Matt Shaver | Awhanichi | Brother Luke
Jackie Boot Straps | The New Old Man**

April 27th

1-5pm

Food & Drinks Available for Purchase



Church Clean Up Day

May 4th at 8am. You bring your gloves, we will bring the donuts!

This Week at Big Red

Monday, April 22

- ◆ 5:00pm: Yoga - Room 1

Tuesday, April 23

Wednesday, April 24

- ◆ 8:00am: Bible Study - Zoom
- ◆ 4:00pm: Yoga - Room 1
- ◆ 6:00pm: Handbell rehearsal - Music Room
- ◆ 7:00pm: Chancel Choir rehearsal – Sanctuary

Thursday, April 25

Friday, April 26

- ◆ 9:30am: BRC Pantry Saturday food prep

Saturday, April 27

- ◆ 10:00am: BRC Pantry “Free Food Saturday” - Fellowship Hall
- ◆ 1:00pm: PorchFest - Front Lawn

Sunday, April 28

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

Upcoming Events

- ◆ Campus Clean-up - May 4 - 8:00am
- ◆ Congregational Meeting - May 19 - 11:00am



We believe God wants to liberate those in bondage. If you are a victim of domestic violence we encourage you to find safety. 559.233.HELP
Help@MMCenter.org

First Congregational Church of Fresno

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

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Assisting in Today's Service

Organist: Scott Horton

Liturgist: Wayne Brown

Ushers: Bruce Owdom, Sue Karibian, Bob McParland

Acolytes: Hudson and Selena

Technician: Brad Jenkins

Coffee Hour: Jacquie Shore

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.

*Phil. 4:4; Rev. 3:7; 19:6-7**Charles Wesley, 1746; alt.*

1 Re - joice, give thanks and sing; your Sov-ereign God a - dore!
 2 Our Sav - ior Je - sus reigns, the God of truth and love;
 3 Christ Je - sus can - not fail to rule both earth and heaven;
 4 Re - joice in glo - rious hope, for Christ the Judge shall come,

For Christ has robbed death's sting and tri - umphs ev - er - more. Lift
 The Lamb who purged our stains is crowned with power a - bove. Lift
 The keys of death and hell are to the Sav - ior given. Lift
 And take the faith - ful up to their e - ter - nal home. We

up your heart, lift up your voice! Re - joice, a - gain I say, re - joice.
 up your heart, lift up your voice! Re - joice, a - gain I say, re - joice.
 up your heart, lift up your voice! Re - joice, a - gain I say, re - joice.
 soon shall hear a heaven-ly voice a - bove the trum-pet's sound, "Re - joice!"

This Ascension text, one of the festival hymns by Charles Wesley, was published originally in John Wesley's Moral and Sacred Poems (1744). Somewhat altered, it appeared in this familiar version in Charles' 1746 collection, Hymns for Our Lord's Resurrection.

Tune: DARWALL'S 148th 6.6.6.6.8.8.
John Darwall, 1770

Matt. 7:24-27; 1 Cor. 3:11; Heb. 6:19; Rev. 11:15

Edward Mote, c. 1834; alt.

1 My hope is built on noth-ing less than Je - sus' love and
 2 When shad - ows veil my Sav-ior's face, I rest up - on un -
 3 Christ's oath and cov - e - nant and blood sup - port me in the
 4 When Christ shall come with trum-pet sound, oh, may I then in

righ - teous-ness; I dare not trust this earth - ly frame, but
 chang-ing grace; In ev - ery high and storm - y gale, my
 ris - ing flood; When all a - round my soul gives way, Christ
 Love be found, Dressed in God's righ - teous - ness a - lone, fault -

Refrain

whol-ly lean on Je - sus' name.
 an-chor holds with - in the veil. On Christ, the sol - id Rock, I stand;
 then is all my hope and stay.
 less to stand be - fore the throne.

all oth - er ground is sink-ing sand, all oth - er ground is sink-ing sand.

William Bradbury met great success by composing hymn tunes and religious songs in a lively, popular style. He also helped establish music programs in New York public schools, served a church, and co-founded a piano company.

Tune: SOLID ROCK L.M. with refrain
 William B. Bradbury, 1863

Eph. 2:13-22; 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 3:11

Samuel J. Stone, 1866; alt.

1 The church's one foun - da - tion is Je - sus Christ our Lord;
 2 E - lect from ev - ery na - tion, yet one o'er all the earth,
 3 'Mid toil and trib - u - la - tion, and tu - mult of our war,
 4 Yet we on earth have un - ion with God, the Three - in - One,

we are Christ's new cre - a - tion by wa - ter and the word;
 one char - ter of sal - va - tion, one God, one faith, one birth,
 we wait the con - sum - ma - tion of peace for - ev - er - more;
 and mys - tic sweet com - mu - nion with those whose rest is won.

From heaven Christ came and sought us in love to set us free;
 One name to - geth - er bless - ing, one ho - ly food we share,
 Till with the vi - sion glo - rious, our long - ing eyes are blessed,
 O hap - py ones and ho - ly! God, give us grace that we,

with pre - cious blood Christ bought us for all e - ter - ni - ty.
 to one hope we are press - ing, at one in work and prayer.
 and the great church vic - to - rious shall be the church at rest.
 like them, the meek and low - ly, may live e - ter - nal - ly.

Like the writings of Ambrose many centuries earlier, this hymn was born out of a doctrinal dispute. The young priest Samuel J. Stone composed twelve hymns on the articles of the Apostles' Creed in support of those reacting against nontraditional views of biblical scholarship. This hymn is based on article nine, "the holy Catholic Church."

Tune: AURELIA 7.6.7.6.D.
 Samuel S. Wesley, 1864