

Fifth Sunday of Easter

April 28, 2024



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

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi
Pastor

Fifth Sunday of Easter
April 28, 2024

Our Gathering

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

Prelude

Scott Horton, organ

Welcome

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

***Call to Worship**

Vanessa Valdez, Liturgist

One: We delight ourselves in the presence of Christ and his love for all creation.

All: Let us open our hearts to receive Christ's abundant love.

One: Christ calls us to see him as the vine and for us to become the branches.

All: Let us seek to produce much fruit in God's Garden where all are welcome.

One: Come, let us worship the Master Gardener, Creator of all that was, is and forever will be.

All: Amen

***Hymn**

"All People That on Earth Do Dwell"

#7, pew hymnal

Prayer of Transformation

Vanessa Valdez

Creating God, we are grateful for the hope that you offer to us and all creation. Prune us so that we may have a cleansed heart. Help us to grow your garden of love. Water our despair so it can be transformed into your hope. Feed our minds so that all may glean from your wisdom. Nurture our spirits so that we can become more fruitful in our lives. Give us new life, we pray. Amen.

Words of Grace

Anthem

"This Is the Day" - J. Althouse

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**

“Take Me to the Water”

#322, pew hymnal

Scripture

Acts 8:26-40

Vanessa Valdez

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over to this chariot and join it.” So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” He replied, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

“Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,
and like a lamb silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.

In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth.”

The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

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.

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Prayers of the Church

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

Invitation to Generosity

Vanessa Valdez



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

“I Will Awaken the Dawn” - Williams/Martin

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

“Christ Will Come Again”

#608, 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.**

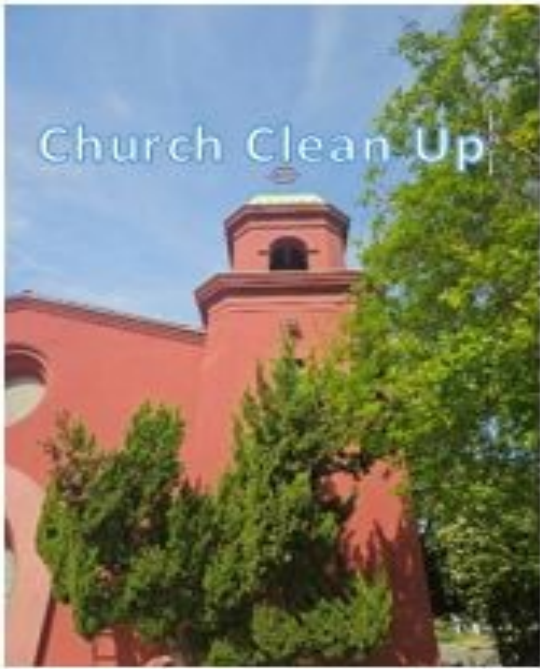
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***Postlude**

“Rondeau” - Jean-Joseph Mouret

Scott Horton, organ

It is our tradition to be seated for the Postlude.



Church Clean Up Day

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

Congregational Meeting

May 19th immediately after worship service.



This Week at Big Red

Monday, April 29

- ◆ 5:00pm: Yoga - Room 1

Tuesday, April 30

Wednesday, May 1

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

Thursday, May 2

Friday, May 3 **Office will be closed**

Saturday, May 4

- ◆ 8:00am: Church Campus Clean-up - Fellowship Hall

Sunday, May 5

- ◆ 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

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Bigredchurch.org

Pastor

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Caretaker/ Event Coordinator

Pat Morales

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Technicians

Karisa Garza
Brad Jenkins

Assisting in Today's Service

Organist: Scott Horton

Liturgist: Vanessa Valdez

Ushers: Rebecca Kliewer, Gene Kliewer, Teresa Fuentes

Acolytes: Olivia and Faith

Technician: Karisa Gaza

Coffee Hour: Pat Morales

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.

All People That on Earth Do Dwell

7

William Kethe, 1561

Ps. 100

Adapt. Thomas H. Troeger, 1992

1 All peo - ple that on earth do dwell, sing
2 Know that there is one God, in - deed, who
3 En - ter the sa - cred gates with praise, with
4 Pro - claim a - gain that God is good, whose

out your faith with cheer - ful voice; De - light in God whose
fash - ions us with - out our aid, Who claims us, gives us
joy ap - proach the tem - ple walls. Ex - tol and bless our
mer - cy is for - ev - er sure, Whose truth at all times

praise you tell, whose pres - ence calls you to re - jice.
all we need, whose ten - der care will nev - er fade.
God al - ways as peo - ple whom the Spir - it calls.
firm - ly stood, and shall from age to age en - dure.

Old Hundredth is perhaps the best known and most widely used of all psalm tunes. It came into English use in 1561 with Kethe's paraphrase of Psalm 100 and has been associated with it ever since.

Tune: OLD HUNDREDTH L.M.
Attrib. to Louis Bourgeois (c. 1510–c. 1561)
Trente quatre Pseaumes, Geneva, 1551

*Acts 8:36-39; 10:47-48**African-American spiritual*

1 Take me to the wa - ter, take me to the wa -
 2 None but the righ - teous, none but the righ -
 3 I love Je - sus, I love Je -
 4 Je - sus is my Sav - ior, Je - sus is my Sav -

ter, take me to the wa - ter to be bap - tized.
 teous, none but the righ - teous . . . shall see God.
 sus, I love Je - sus, . . . yes, I do.
 ior, Je - sus is my Sav - ior for - ev - er more.

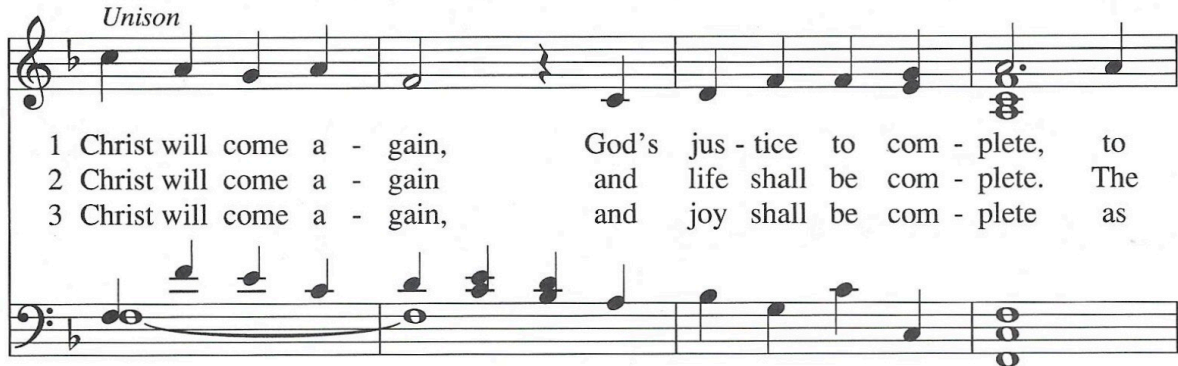
During the antebellum era the enslaved either worshipped secretly in the woods or in small one-room churches built on the plantations. This spiritual reminds us that in either case baptisms were done down at the riverside.

Tune: African-American spiritual
 Arr. Jeffrey Radford, 1993

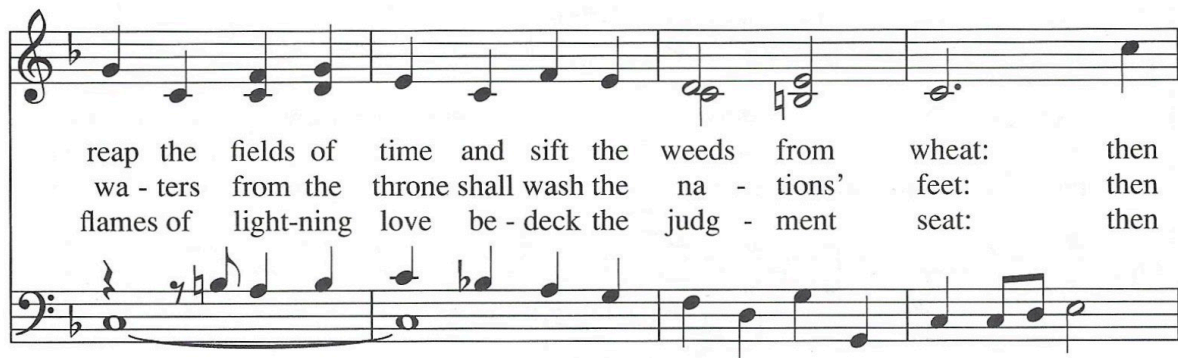
Matt. 13:24-30; John 14:3

Brian Wren, 1987

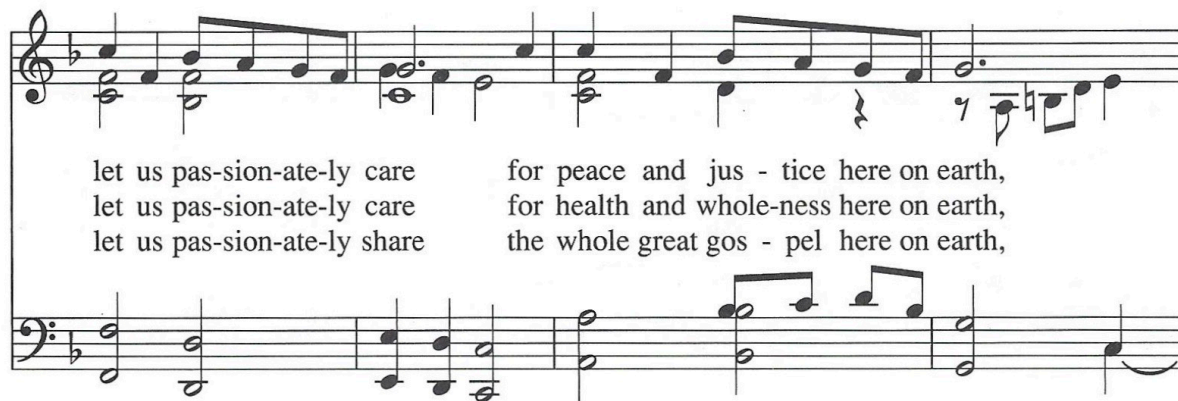
Unison



1 Christ will come a - gain, God's jus - tice to com - plete, to
 2 Christ will come a - gain and life shall be com - plete. The
 3 Christ will come a - gain, and joy shall be com - plete as



reap the fields of time and sift the weeds from wheat: then
 wa - ters from the throne shall wash the na - tions' feet: then
 flames of light - ning love be - deck the judg - ment seat: then



let us pas - sion - ate - ly care for peace and jus - tice here on earth,
 let us pas - sion - ate - ly care for health and whole - ness here on earth,
 let us pas - sion - ate - ly share the whole great gos - pel here on earth,



and e - vil's rage re - strain with love, till Christ shall come a - gain.
 and ease our neigh - bor's pain with love, till Christ shall come a - gain.
 un - til all things at - tain their end, when Christ shall come a - gain.

This hymn was written during a Seventh Day Adventist Musicians Convention in 1987. Brian Wren wanted to honor his hosts with "a hymn on the Second Advent which, whether understood literally or symbolically, would connect ultimate hope with present action."

Tune: IDA 5.6.6.6.8.8.8.6.
 Joan Collier Fogg, 1987