

Sixth Sunday of Easter and Communion May 5, 2024



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

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi
Pastor

Sixth Sunday of Easter
May 5, 2024

Our Gathering

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

Prelude Hymn Sing

Welcome

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

*Call to Worship

Jessica Berzac, Liturgist

One: Christ gives us a new commandment:

All: "Love one another as I have loved you."

One: When we love one another as Christ has loved us, we will live lives full of joy.

All: We will live with God's love deep in our hearts.

One: Let us worship the one who shows us how to love.

All: Let us worship with joy! Alleluia!

*Hymn

"All Creatures of Our God and King"

insert

Prayer of Transformation

Jessica Berzac

Jesus, our sibling and friend, we confess that we do not always love one another. Our divisions and disagreements so often prevent us from knowing the joy of meaningful relationships. Even as we seek to follow your example, we forget that we are chosen and appointed by you to bring hope to a weary world. Help us renew our focus and live by your will...that we may follow you with joy in our hearts.

Words of Grace

Anthem

"In Remembrance" - B. Red

Chancel Choir
Nancy Mack, flute

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.*

Holy Communion

***Hymn of Preparation** “As We Gather At Your Table” #332 pew hymnal

Invitation to the Table

The Sharing

Communion Music “Canon in D” - Pachelbel, arr. Stent Nancy Mack, flute
Scott Horton, piano

Prayer of Thanksgiving

***Hymn** “Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart” #290, pew hymnal

Scripture Acts 10:44-48 Jessica Berzac

While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, “Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

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

Jessica Berzac



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

“Offertory on ROYAL OAK” - arr. Harmon Scott Horton, organ

*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

“In Christ There is No East or West”

#394, 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**

“Earth and All Stars” - arr. Osterland

Scott Horton, organ

It is our tradition to be seated for the Postlude.



*Mother's Day Brunch
is next Sunday,
May 12, in the
Fellowship Hall,
immediately*

following worship.

*Come and enjoy a delightful array of tea sandwiches,
pasta and Cesar salads with a yummy cake for dessert
and mock mimosas to toast all the special people that we
call mom.*

**Congregational Meeting
May 19th, immediately after
worship service**



This Week at Big Red

Monday, May 6

- ◆ 5:00pm: Yoga - Room 1

Tuesday, May 7

Wednesday, May 8

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

Thursday, May 9

Friday, May 10

Saturday, May 11

Sunday, May 12

- ◆ 9:00am: Exploration Hour - Roots and Branches - Fireside Room
- ◆ 10:00am: Worship - Sanctuary
- ◆ 11:00am: Mother's Day Brunch - Fellowship Hall



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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Accountant

Dary Rezvani

Assisting in Today's Service

Organist: Scott Horton

Liturgist: Jessica Berzac

Ushers: Harold Householder, Richard VanWyhe

Acolytes: Olivia and Hudson

Technician: Karisa Gaza

Coffee Hour: Pat Morales and Paula Roberts

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 Creatures of Our God and King

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Unison

1. All crea- tures of our God and King, lift up your voice and with us
 2. O rush- ing wind with voice so strong, you clouds that sail in heav'n a-
 3. O flow- ing wa- ter, pure and clear, make mu- sic for your God to
 4. And all for- giv- en ten- der hearts, for- giv- ing oth- ers, take your

Harmony *Unison*

sing; Al- le - lu - ia, Al- le - lu - ia! O burn- ing sun with gold- en
 long, O praise God, Al- le - lu - ia! O ris- ing morn, in praise re-
 hear, Al- le - lu - ia, Al- le - lu - ia! O blaz- ing fire who lights the
 part, sing prais - es, Al- le - lu - ia! You who long pain and sor- row

Refrain (Harmony)

beam, O sil - ver moon with soft- er gleam,
 joice, you lights of eve - ning find a voice, O praise God,
 night, pro - vid - ing warmth, en- hanc - ing sight,
 bear, praise God, who knows your ev - 'ry care.

Unison

O praise God, Al- le - lu - ia, Al- le - lu - ia, Al- le - lu - ia!

Matt. 22:1-10; Luke 14:16-24

Carl P. Daw, Jr., 1989

1 As we gath - er at your ta - ble, as we lis - ten to your word,
 2 Turn our wor - ship in - to wit - ness in the sac - ra - ment of life;
 3 Gra - cious Spir - it, help us sum - mon oth - er guests to share that feast

help us know, O God, your pres - ence; let our hearts and minds be stirred.
 send us forth to love and serve you, bring - ing peace where there is strife.
 where tri - um - phant Love will wel - come those who had been last and least.

Nour - ish us with sa - cred sto - ry till we claim it as our own;
 Give us, Christ, your great com - pas - sion to for - give as you for - gave;
 There no more will en - vy bind us nor will pride our peace de - stroy,

teach us through this ho - ly ban - quet how to make Love's vic - tory known.
 may we still be - hold your im - age in the world you died to save.
 as we join with saints and an - gels to re - peat the sound - ing joy.

In this hymn, commissioned by an Episcopal parish in Virginia for the celebration of its tricentennial, Carl P. Daw, Jr., utilized a familiar phrase from Isaac Watts' "Joy to the World," which was the motto for the celebration: "Repeat the sounding joy."

Tune: BEACH SPRING 8.7.8.7.D.
 The Sacred Harp, 1844
 Harm. The New Century Hymnal, 1992

Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart

290

George Croly, 1854; alt.

Gal. 5:25; Matt. 22:37; John 1:32

1 Spir - it of God, de - scend up - on my heart;
2 I ask no dream, no proph - et ec - sta - sies,
3 Have you not bid us love you ev - ery way?
4 Teach me to feel that you are al - ways nigh;
5 Teach me to love you as your an - gels love,

wean it from earth, through all its puls - es move;
no sud - den rend - ing of the veil of clay,
All, all your own: soul, heart, and strength, and mind;
teach me the strug - gles of the soul to bear,
one ho - ly pas - sion fill - ing all my frame;

Stoop to my weak - ness, might - y as you are,
No an - gel vis - i - tant, no o - pening skies;
I see your cross— there teach my heart to stay:
To check the ris - ing doubt, the reb - el sigh;
The bap - tism of the heaven - de - scend - ed dove,

and make me love you as I ought to love.
but take the dim - ness of my soul a - way.
O let me seek you, and O let me find.
teach me the pa - tience of un - an - swered prayer.
my heart an al - tar, and your love the flame.

George Croly, ordained in the Church of Ireland, was well known in London literary circles and served a poor parish. This hymn is from a collection he compiled for that congregation. Hellsfont was the original name for the tune Morecambe.

Tune: MORECAMBE 10.10.10.10.
Frederick C. Atkinson, 1870

In Christ There Is No East or West

1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:14-22

John Oxenham, 1908; alt.
St. 3, Laurence Hull Stookey, 1987

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of two systems. Each system has a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are as follows:

1 In Christ there is no East or West, in Christ no South or North;
 2 In Christ shall true hearts ev - ery - where their high com - mu - nion find;
 3 In Christ is nei - ther Jew nor Greek, and nei - ther slave nor free;
 4 In Christ now meet both East and West, in Christ meet South and North;

But one com - mu - ni - ty of love through - out the whole wide earth.
 God's ser - vice is the gold - en cord close - bind - ing hu - man - kind.
 For men and wom - en live in God, and all are kin to me.
 One joy - ous, true com - mu - ni - ty through - out the whole wide earth.

Singer and composer Harry T. Burleigh studied at the National Conservatory of Music from 1892 to 1896. He is recognized as the first African-American composer to employ spirituals in concert arrangements. This tune is named after the rector of St. George's Episcopal Church in New York City, where Burleigh served as baritone soloist for more than fifty years.

Tune: McKEE C.M.
African-American melody
Arr. Harry T. Burleigh, 1939
Alternate setting: ST. PETER