

Home Worship February 14th Transfiguration

Welcome to worship. This is Saint Valentine's Day. It is a day that we celebrate love. The community of St. Mark's sends love to you in Christ. This Wednesday is Ash Wednesday. I will have a service for Ash Wednesday on-line for viewing worship after 4:00pm this Wednesday.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, whose voice is upon the waters, whose mercy is poured out upon all people, whose goodness cascades over all creation. **Amen.** Let us confess our sin, trusting in the abundant grace of God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy God, you search us and know us. You are acquainted with all our ways. We confess that our hearts are burdened by sin— our own sins and the broken systems that bind us. We turn inward, failing to follow your outward way of love. We distrust those who are not like us. We exploit the earth and its resources and fail to consider generations to come. Forgive us, gracious God, for all we have done and left undone. Even before the words are on our tongues, you know them; receive them in your divine mercy. Amen.

How vast is God's grace! Through the power and promise of ✠ Christ Jesus, our sins are washed away and we are claimed as God's own beloved.

Indeed, we are forgiven. In the wake of God's forgiveness, we are called to be the beloved community living out Christ's justice and the Spirit's reconciling peace. **Amen.**

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, the resplendent light of your truth shines from the mountaintop into our hearts. Transfigure us by your beloved Son, and illumine the world with your image, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading: 2 Kings 2:1-12

Today's reading centers on the transfer of power and authority from the prophet Elijah to Elisha. Their travels, which retrace the path of Joshua back to Moab (the place where Moses died) and the parting of the waters, demonstrate that Elisha and Elijah are legitimate successors of the great prophet Moses.

¹Now when the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. ²Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here; for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel.” But Elisha said, “As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they went down to Bethel. ³The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, “Do you know that today the LORD will take your master away from you?” And he said, “Yes, I know; keep silent.” ⁴Elijah said to him, “Elisha, stay here; for the LORD has sent me to Jericho.” But he said, “As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they came to Jericho. ⁵The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, “Do you know that today the LORD will take your master away from you?” And he answered, “Yes, I know; be silent.” ⁶Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here; for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan.” But he said, “As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them went on. ⁷Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. ⁸Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground.

⁹When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.” Elisha said, “Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.”

¹⁰He responded, “You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not.” ¹¹As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. ¹²Elisha kept watching and crying out, “Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

Psalm 50:1-6

¹The mighty one, God the LORD, has spoken; calling the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

²**Out of Zion, perfect in its beauty, God shines forth in glory.**

³Our God will come and will not keep silence; with a consuming flame before, and round about a raging storm.

⁴**God calls the heavens and the earth from above to witness the judgment of the people.**

⁵“Gather before me my loyal followers, those who have made a covenant with me and sealed it with sacrifice.”

⁶**The heavens declare the rightness of God’s cause, for it is God who is judge.**

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 4:3-6

The spotlight of Christian ministry is not on the people who carry out ministry but on the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as God made light shine at creation, God makes the light of Jesus Christ shine in our lives through Christian ministry.

³Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. ⁶For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The Holy Gospel according to Mark 9:2-9

Glory to you O Lord

Mark's gospel presents the transfiguration as a preview of what would become apparent to Jesus' followers after he rose from the dead. Confused disciples are given a vision of God's glory manifest in the beloved Son.

²Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. ⁵Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁶He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" ⁸Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore, but only Jesus. ⁹As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. The word of the Lord.....**Praise to you O Christ**

Sermon

This Sunday, the story of Jesus Transfiguration is read right before we enter the Lenten season, beginning with Ash Wednesday. We are reminded that Jesus is God and we are dust and to dust we shall return.

Jesus and Peter, James, and John seem to be out for a walk. They go up to the high mountain, a high place where you could see for miles and miles. Then everything changes. Jesus changes from the human friend they know into a brightly lit vision in dazzling white. Jesus shocking appearance reveals him to be divine, godly. The prophets Elijah and Moses appear with Jesus connecting him to the Hebrew ancestors who also shared divine experiences with the creator

God. We remember that Moses saw God in the burning bush and his appearance changed. Elijah and Elisha follow the path to Moab where Moses died. This gives legitimacy as successors of Moses in 2nd Kings, another reading for today. Elijah was taken up into the clouds in a whirlwind leaving Elisha as God's appointed leader. Jesus appears with Elijah and Moses on the mountain top, in divine company, and the voice of God seals the authority of Jesus by saying in a voice from a cloud ***"This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!"***

The cloud appears as another sign of the divine with the voice that reminds us of the voice from heaven at Jesus' baptism in Mark 1:11. Here, the voice does not speak in second person to Jesus (*"You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased"*) but in the third person to the disciples (***"This is my Son ... listen to him"***). The Transfiguration gives the disciples the experience of witnessing a most amazing and terrifying vision that draws them to want to stay there, dwell in that place of wonder, and then to be told by the voice of the divine that their job is not to abide in that wonder but to go back down the mountain. The voice in the cloud is directed at the disciples, to the church, rather than to the Son as it was at his baptism. It speaks to Jesus' identity so that the church can see what Jesus alone heard when he was baptized.

The appearance of Elijah with Jesus on the mountain signals that God's reign has come! Peter's word "dwellings" is the same word used in Numbers 11 for God's tent of meeting. There Moses gathered people around that tent to be appointed as new officials. God descended and put some of Moses' spirit on them. Perhaps Peter now sees himself as an appointed official of God. And although the disciples were amazed and terrified, when they came down from the mountain they continued to question the actions of Jesus.

Each week that we read and hear God's word, we all hope to have an experience of transformation. We might use the words "transfigure" and "transform" interchangeably, but there is a difference. To be transfigured is to be changed in outward form or appearance. Jesus' transfiguration was an outward change which gives the disciples and us, a new understanding that his is divine, of God. Transformation means an inward change of the person. By seeing Jesus differently we hope to be transformed inwardly to be changed into followers of service and compassion.

When the disciples and Jesus were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered the disciples not to tell anyone about what they witnessed *"until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead."* Jesus knew his outcome. He knew he would die and be raised. This calls the disciples to realize that there is work in the world to come. Jesus identifies with Moses and Elijah so that

the disciples and the church understand that we are called to take up our crosses and follow Jesus.

The church has a responsibility: to listen to God's Son. We cannot stay in the light of the mountain top and ignore the needs of God's people at the bottom of the mountain. We are called to rise up as dust that we are made from, by the breath of God and give life to others, especially those who are neglected or abused.

We may not go up to a mountain for a new view of God however we do constantly look for God. A good friend of mine says this often about where Christians see God:

Where do we see God? In the face of Jesus.

Where do we see Jesus? In the face of those in need.

Be transformed by another seeing, hearing, listening to God's word. Amen.

We share the word of our faith in **the Apostles Creed**

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.* On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Guided by Christ made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need. ***A brief silence.*** For the gospel proclaimed in word and deed, for communities of faith far and near, and for all who show the face of Christ throughout the world, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For creation: sun, moon and stars; life forming in the dark earth and ocean deep; mountains, clouds and storms, and creatures seen and unseen, and for the Holy Spirit's guidance in our stewardship of God's creation, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For those responsible for safety and protection: for emergency responders and security guards, attorneys and advocates, civil servants and leaders of governments, for those in military service especially **Logan, JJ, Bryan, Dustin, Brad and Travis**, that they witness to mercy and justice throughout the world, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For all who suffer this day (*especially* **Brad Shippert and those in care facilities that we know Sibyl, Barb, Tammy, Trudy, Jessica, Hazel, Jeanne, Linda, Ed and Marian**), that Christ our healer transform sickness into health, loneliness into companionship, bereavement into consolation, and suffering into peace, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For companions on life's journey in this worshiping community, for loved ones who cannot be with us this day, and for guidance during struggles we face, that God's glory is revealed around and among us, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

In thanksgiving for the faithful departed who now rest from their earthly pilgrimage, that their lives of service and prayer inspire us in our living, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Offering Prayer

O God, receive these gifts as you receive us: like a mother receives her child, with arms open wide. Nourish us anew in your tender care, and empower us in faithful service to tend to others with this same love, through Jesus Christ, our saving grace. **Amen.**

Gathered into one by the power of the Holy Spirit we pray as Jesus taught ...

Our Father, 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

Beloved: here is bread; here is wine. Here is Jesus. Come and be fed.

Holy Communion Together

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. By the leading of a star he was shown forth to all nations; in the waters of the Jordan you proclaimed him your beloved Son; and in the miracle of water turned to wine he revealed your glory.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Take your bread/cracker	The body of Christ given for you
Take you juice/wine/water	The blood of Christ shed for you
The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in His grace.	

Prayer after Communion

Christ Jesus, at this table we have feasted on your very life and are strengthened for our journey. Send us forth from this banquet nourished in body and in spirit to proclaim your good news and serve others in your name. **Amen.**

Blessing

God the creator strengthen you; Jesus the beloved fill you; and the Holy Spirit the comforter † keep you in peace. **Amen.**

Dismissal Go in peace. Be the light of Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

Thank you to all who continue to support the work of the church.