

Transfiguration Sunday
February 19, 2023

Today's festival is a bridge between the Advent-Christmas-Epiphany cycle that comes to a close today and the Lent-Easter cycle that begins in several days. On a high mountain Jesus is revealed as God's beloved Son, echoing the words at his baptism. This vision of glory sustains us as Jesus faces his impending death in Jerusalem. We turn this week to Ash Wednesday and our yearly baptismal journey from Lent to Easter. Some churches put aside the alleluia at the conclusion of today's liturgy. This word of joy will be omitted during the penitential season of Lent and will be sung again at Easter.

Greeting

The Grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.
And also with you.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who makes all things new,
whose mercy endures forever.

Amen.

Trusting in God's mercy, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy One, source of our renewal,
**we confess that we are wrapped up in sin,
and cannot free ourselves.
We have not practiced your righteousness.
Our hearts have turned away from you.**

**For the sake of the world you so love,
forgive us,
that we may be reconciled to one another
for the glory of your holy name.**

Amen.

Thus says our God:

"The former things have come to pass
and new things I now declare."

God's mercy makes us new.

We are forgiven in the name of † Christ our Savior.

Amen.

Gathering Hymn "Our God"

Prayer of the Day

O God, in the transfiguration of your Son you confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the witness of Moses and Elijah, and in the voice from the bright cloud declaring Jesus your beloved Son, you foreshadowed our adoption as your children. Make us heirs with Christ of your glory, and bring us to enjoy its fullness, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Reading: Exodus 24:12-18

The Lord said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain, and wait there; and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction." ¹³So Moses set out with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God. ¹⁴To the elders he had said, "Wait here for us, until we come to you again; for Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a dispute may go to them."

¹⁵Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. ¹⁶The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud. ¹⁷Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. ¹⁸Moses entered the cloud, and went up on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

Children's Message

Gospel: Matthew 17:1-9

¹Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. ²And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴Then Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” ⁵While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, “This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!” ⁶When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. ⁷But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Get up and do not be afraid.” ⁸And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone. ⁹As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, “Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to You, O Christ

Sermon

People of God, grace to you and peace from God, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. AMEN

If you've ever been in the mountains, you know that the process to get there is long and drawn out. On internship our High School Youth went on a Mission Trip to Denver. The travel out there, whether it be because we were going west through Nebraska, or if it was really this way, but it seemed a slow gradual incline that would never end.

Along the way we saw and experienced things that reminded us that we were headed to the mountains, but the process was a slow one.

Once there we experienced a truly mountain top experience. We spent our week staying at a church in Columbine and we could walk around the property and simply take in the breathtaking views that surrounded us. On our last day, when the projects we had worked on were completed, we got to spend some time soaking in the breathtaking scenery of the Red Rocks State Park.

It was good to be there. It would have been great to stay there.

In Hawaii a year ago. With the advice of those who had been there before, we decided to make the trek up the Waimeai Canyon to the State Park at the top. The road up to it was windy and car-sickness inducing. But we did it. And the views were unmatched.

It was good to be there. We wanted to remain. That whole trip. At one point I found myself convinced that I could live life as a catamaran captain, because it was that good to be there.

But.

We come down from those mountaintop experiences. And sometimes the comedown isn't the easiest.

The drive down from the Red Rocks of Colorado found us in a packed coach bus going around cliffs edge corners being told at times to get to the other side of the bus.

The trip home from Hawaii had us on a full flight for the first leg, which is the typical sleeping portion of the journey.

But we had to make those treks.

We had to come down from those mountaintop experiences and return to life in the foothills. Because that is where most of life is spent.

And Jesus knows this.

On that mountaintop that day the disciples thought it would be good to remain there. After all, 6 days prior Jesus told them that anyone who wants to follow him should deny themselves, take up their cross, and do the work. Life on a mountaintop is a very appealing alternative. And it isn't difficult to imagine the conversation. The disciples make a compelling case.

"It would be good for us to remain here."

But the work of the kingdom doesn't happen on the mountaintop. It happens in the foothills. It happens in everyday life. It happens in the moments and experiences that we'd rather avoid.

And Jesus knows this.

We hear God's proclamation in this story that we have heard before. "This is my Son, my beloved. With him I am well pleased."

God speaks these words at Jesus baptism, and at our own. But here he adds to it.

"Listen to him."

They had already made their case to him as to why they should stay there when God makes this proclamation. And they are terrified. Falling to the ground in fear their descent down the mountain begins.

Jesus first words after God's decree, "listen to him" are "Get up, do not be afraid."

God calls us from the mountaintop experiences to get back down the mountain and do the work in the foothills. Because that is where life happens.

But, God doesn't send us alone.

God send the disciples with the assurance to "get up, do not be afraid."

People of God, we live our lives as people of faith knowing that the mountaintop exists. That is our why. We do the foothills work because the mountaintop has been promised to us.

That is God's grace.

God's grace sends us into the foothills knowing that we are going to mess up. God knows that we are going to make mistakes and not every mission is going to be a successful one.

But. God says, "get up, do not be afraid. There is still work to be done.

We are urged to come down from the mountaintop, not because we don't belong there, but to share the good news of what is store for us. Yes, Jesus tells them not to tell anyone about it, but guess what, it got written down, so here we are.

It is easy to remain in the comfort. It is easy for us to want to make a dwelling in the moments that are easy. And it is good to be in those moments,

But God says there is more. To get up. To not be afraid. And to do the work. Get out into the foothills spreading the promise of the Good News of the mountaintop that exists.

Thanks be to God. AMEN

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

Called together to follow Jesus, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

Embolden your church as it witnesses to the majesty and mercy of your Son. Equip lay preachers, deacons, and pastors. Move us to share our stories of your faithfulness and forgiveness; may our lives proclaim your greatness. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Dwell with your whole creation, from the tallest mountain peak to the deepest valley. Bless the work of conservation organizations and protect vital habitats (*locally threatened waters or lands may be named*).

Support the work of disaster relief agencies around the world. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Guide and give wisdom to all in authority: our mayor (*name*) and local leaders, our governor (*name*) and state legislators, our president (*name*) and national legislators. Bring freedom and justice to all nations. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Give shelter to those lacking safe homes. Spur communities to work for fair housing for all. Protect our neighbors whose dwellings do not keep out dangerous cold or heat; accompany with your touch those who are homebound, sick, or isolated (*We pray especially for Peyton, Matt, David, Verna, Irene, Connie, Clarice, Steve, Kathy, Val, Jacob, Keith and JoJo, Bob and Joanne, Bill and Bonnie, Frank and Heather, Bob and Sonja, Bill and Betty, Tom and Kay*). Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Make us eager to receive your Word in scripture. Help us recognize Jesus' voice in the needs of our neighbors; make us confident to follow the way of the cross. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Receive our thanksgiving for the holy ones who have guided us in faithfulness and gathered even the unlikely as your people. With our forebears in faith and all who have hoped in you, teach us to wait with courage until the promised day dawns. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

We bring to you our needs and hopes, O God, trusting your wisdom and power revealed in Christ crucified.

Amen.

Offering

Offertory Prayer

Liberating God,
you break the bonds of injustice
and let the oppressed go free.
Receive these offerings in thanksgiving
for all your works of merciful power,
and shape us as people of your justice and freedom.
You we magnify and adore, through Jesus our Savior,
Amen.

Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer

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

Communion

Prayer

Holy One,
we thank you for the healing
that springs forth abundantly from this table.
Renew our strength to do justice,
love kindness,
and journey humbly with you.
Amen.

Blessing

The God who faithfully brings forth justice
and breaks the oppressor's rod
✠ bless, strengthen, and uphold you,
today and always.
Amen.

Sending Song

"Your Grace is Enough"

Dismissal

Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.
Okay! We will! Thanks be to God!
And all of Good Shepherd said,
AMEN!

February Financial Snapshot

The numbers thru February 14:

Total Revenue **\$10,775**

Total Expenses **\$10,787**

Current Difference **-\$12**

What's to come:

2 more Sundays Offering
Payroll & Benefits Payment

\$6,500 XCel Bill

Last February Offering:

\$20,667

Budgeted Expense/Revenue

\$29,017



Two opportunities to worship



Join friends for soup and then worship.



Sign up by calling the church or signing up at the

Endowment Committee table.