



Trinity United Church of Christ

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Trinity United Church of Christ
February 11, 2024
8AM and 10:30AM Worship
Transfiguration Sunday

Awakening joyful service guided by our still speaking God!

*If this is your first time with us, or if you have come to this sacred space your entire life, we are glad to be on this journey of faith with you. Trinity believes that **whoever you are, and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!** To enhance your worship experience, we have large print bulletins and hearing support devices available.*

Please ask an usher or greeter for assistance.

Enter to worship today but stick around to see what God is doing in this place!

*Congregational responses in **bold print**. * Denotes standing as you are able.*

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TIME OF SHARING AND GREETING

PRELUDE – “Majesty” – arr. M. Hayes

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Gathering in this sacred place we anticipate new wonders each week.

**Wherever two or three are gathered to worship,
The Holy Spirit is present.**

Open our eyes to witness the fantastic
love and wondrous joy waiting to be revealed, in this place.

**We will want to linger and camp in this sanctuary
but when we leave today may our hearts be open
to all the wonders of God's beautiful world.**

*HYMN #104 “We Hail You God's Anointed”

*PRAYER

**O Holy One, on mountaintops and valley floors
you reveal to us the light of your love.**

Our hearts desire is to bask in the amazing glory of the divine presence.

With each encounter we are changed and transformed.

Draw us nearer that we might receive a double portion of your Holy Spirit.

Help us, O Holy One, to live our lives as a reflection of divine glory. May we walk among our siblings and friends as a blessing, bearing light into dark places, hope to displace despair, and love that casts out hate. Our world is hurting and we need to follow Jesus more closely. Maybe then we will hear your voice speaking to us and saying, "Listen to my Child, the Beloved!" Amen.

***RESPONSE TO PRAYER "We Hail You God's Anointed"**
We hail you God's anointed, the long awaited One!
Hail in the time appointed, your reign on earth begun!
You come to break oppression, to set the captive free;
To take away transgression, and rule in equity.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of Mercy and Grace, you come to us in Jesus of Nazareth
to break down the dividing walls of hostility between us:

Yet we maintain walls that separate and isolate.

You give us the ministry of reconciliation:

Yet we nurse our wounds and withhold mercy and forgiveness.

You invite us to join with Peter, James, and John
on the mountain of Transfiguration:

Yet we deny the wonders you have worked in our own lives.

You ask us to acknowledge and share our wealth:

Yet we refuse to recognize and relieve the poverty around us.

You bless our lives with boundless love:

Yet we fail to witness to that love, and to keep others from knowing you.

Forgive our selfishness, and division we pray. Transform us by your Spirit and your Word into that which pleases you, a people united, the image of Christ. Amen.

(Moment for Silent Prayer)

#750 KYRIE

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

Jesus cautioned Peter, James, and John not to tell of what they witnessed on the mountain until he was resurrected. But we can tell what we have seen and heard of God's glory!

Here is the good news: Jesus lives! He is raised! We are forgiven!

Go, share the vision! Tell of God's love! In this, God is well pleased! Amen.

ANTHEM (10:30am)

"Be Thou My Vision"

arr. A. Parker

Senior Choir

A TIME FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART

SCRIPTURES

Psalm 50:1-6

The mighty one, God the Lord, speaks and summons
the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

²Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth.

³Our God comes and does not keep silence, before him is a devouring fire,
and a mighty tempest all around him.

⁴He calls to the heavens above and to the earth, that he may judge his people:

⁵"Gather to me my faithful ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!"

⁶The heavens declare his righteousness, for God himself is judge. Selah!

Mark 9:2-10

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. ¹⁰So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead could mean.

SERMON
Grace Winakor

HYMN #502 “Dear God, Embracing Humankind”
(Remain Seated)

PRAYER/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 sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power and the Glory, forever. Amen.**

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**We believe in God, the creator of all things, the giver of life and breath.
We believe in Jesus Christ, born Emmanuel, God with us, baptized and
revealed the most beloved Son of God; he sought to heal humanity by
taking our brokenness upon himself, suffering for us, dying for us and
being raised from the dead for our sake and for the sake of all the world.
We believe that he will come again. We believe in the Holy Spirit,
continually poured out refreshing our lives, leading us into a new day,
ever-birthing the church, the body of Christ in the world. This Spirit is our
soul companion and counselor of truth reminding us of the gift of faith,
the ever presence of God and the promise of eternal life. Thanks be to God! Amen.**

*CALL TO OFFERING

In the same way that Miriam, Moses, Aaron, and Samuel
called on God’s name in their need, so do God’s beloved ones
call on the Divine from atop a mountain.
May our offerings serve as an example of God’s loving response.

*OFFERTORY RESPONSE

#164 “Arise, Your Light Is Come” (v1)
*Arise, your light is come! The Spirit’s call obey;
Show forth the glory of your God which shines on you today!*

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION
God of Awe and Glory,
receive these gifts as symbols of our trust in you.
Bless the givers and those who desired to give.
Multiply these offerings and the blessings they represent.
Guide the disbursement of them according to your will.
These things we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

*HYMN #182 "We Have Come at Christ's Own Bidding"

*FINAL BLESSING

*POSTLUDE

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Portions of today's liturgy have been adapted from the UCC's on-line resource:

Worship Ways. **God of Awe and Glory: Service Prayers for Transfiguration Sunday** was written by the Rev. Dr. Renee C. Jackson, Southeast Area Minister for the Michigan Conference, UCC.

And from...

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Today's Worship Participants

Rev. Dr. Frederick A. Young		Pastor
Cindy Blevins	8:00am	Lay Liturgists
Nancy MacMeekin	10:30am	
Sara Shank		Organist
John McKay		Senior Choir Director
Mark Luckenbaugh	8:00am	Percussion
Jen Mickelson	8:00am	Ushers
JoyceAnn & Edwin Hamilton	10:30am	
Mary Jane & Harry Hilbert	10:30am	Greeters
Bonnie smith	10:30am	Acolyte
Georgia Hollabaugh, Kara Young, Luke Milhimes, Sue Churchill,		Tech Team
Russell Bailey, Carl Barrick, Stacey Rushwald, George Steckert, Garrison Redding, Terry Krietz		

James Montgomery, 1821; alt.

1. We hail you God's a-noint-ed, the long-a-wait-ed One!
Hail in the time ap-point-ed, your reign on earth be-gun!
You come to break op-pres-sion, to set the cap-tive free;
to take a-way trans-gres-sion, and rule in eq-ui-ty.

2. You shall come down like show-ers up-on the fruit-ful earth;
and joy and hope, like flow-ers, spring in your path to birth.
Be-fore you on the moun-tains shall peace, the her-ald, go,
and righ-teous-ness, in foun-tains, from hill to val-ley flow.

3. The wise shall bow be-fore you and gold and in-cense bring;
all na-tions shall a-dore you, and praise all peo-ples sing;
To you shall prayer un-ceas-ing and dai-ly vows be said,
your realm is still in-creas-ing, with you, O Christ, as head.

4. O'er ev-ery foe vic-to-rious, you on your throne shall rest;
from age to age more glo-rious, all-bless-ing and all-blessed:
The tide of time shall nev-er your cov-e-nant re-move;
your name shall stand for-ev-er, your change-less name of Love.

Ps. 72

Dear God, Embracing Humankind

502

John Greenleaf Whittier, 1872; alt.

Mark 1:16–20; Matt. 14:22–23; 1 Kings 19:11–12

1. Dear God, em-brac-ing hu-man-kind,
for-give our fool-ish ways;
Re-clothe us in our right-ful mind,
in pur-er lives your ser-vice find,
in deep-er rev-erence, praise.
2. In sim-ple trust like theirs who heard,
be-side the Syr-ian sea,
The gra-cious call-ing of your word,
let us, like them, by spir-it stirred,
rise up and fol-lowers be.
3. O sab-bath rest by Gal-i-lee!
O calm of hills a-bove!
There Je-sus met you prayer-ful-ly:
the si-lence of e-ter-ni-ty,
in-ter-pret-ed by love.
4. Drop your still dews of qui-et-ness,
till all our striv-ings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
and let our or-dered lives con-fess
the beau-ty of your peace.
5. Breathe through the puls-es of de-sire
your cool-ness and your balm;
Let sense be numb, let flesh re-tire;
speak through the earth-quake, wind, and fire,
O still, small voice of calm.

182 We Have Come at Christ's Own Bidding

Carl P. Daw, Jr., 1988

1. We have come at Christ's own bidding
to this high and ho-ly place,
Where we wait with hope and long-ing
for some to-ken of God's grace.
Here we pray for new as-sur-ance
that our faith is not in vain,
Search-ing like those first dis-ci-ples
for a sign both clear and plain.
2. Light breaks through our clouds and shad-ows,
splen-dor bathes the flesh-joined Word,
Mo-ses and E-li-jah mar-vel
as the heav-enly voice is heard.
Eyes and hearts be-hold with won-der
how the Law and Proph-ets meet:
Christ with gar-ments drenched in bright-ness,
stands trans-fig-ured and com-plete.
3. Strength-ened by this glimpse of glo-ry,
fear-ful lest our faith de-cline,
We, like Pe-ter, find it tempt-ing
to re-main and build a shrine.
But true wor-ship gives us cour-age
to pro-claim what we pro-fess,
That our dai-ly lives may prove us
peo-ple of the God we bless.

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Matt. 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, my rock and my redeemer. Amen.

The gospel reading we heard today is one of amazement, peculiar beauty, fear, and confusion. We are told the story of the select individuals (John, James, and Peter) going up the mountain with Jesus. When they reached the top of the mountain, Jesus' "clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them." Then appear Moses and Elijah on the mountain with Jesus shining and the three disciples in awe.

On second thought—Maybe not awe—but fear. It states in this story that Peter "did not know what to say," he was so fearful of Jesus that stood before him practically glowing. Peter offered to Jesus to make dwellings for Him, Moses, and Elijah...and then, the miraculous happens: Through the clouds above, God's voice booms:

"This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!"

The disciples hear this and look around.

Moses and Elijah are gone. Only Jesus stands in front of them.

As they went down the mountain, Jesus tells them that they cannot tell others of what just happened—the glowing, Moses and Elijah, none of it.

Some of us may be wondering in the storm of questions surrounding this transfiguration story why it was Moses and Elijah who appeared on the mountain conversing with Jesus as he shone bright. But the explanation given in our commentaries makes sense: they are all figures through whom God spoke. Yet, Christ will be the only one to suffer crucifixion out of the three of them.

This Transfiguration Story functions as a transition story liturgically-it falls at the end of epiphany or the beginning of lent. It sits in this *inbetween space* that reflects on where we've been and where we are going in the story of Jesus. In this *inbetween space*, we can hold a sense of awe and really reflect on the emotions at play within this journey in scripture.

The Transfiguration Story can even cause us to reflect not only on the story of Jesus and his disciples, but also makes us think about our own faith journey's and the inbetween places in which we have found ourselves—

maybe in fear

Or maybe in awe

Of what is going on around us, what we have accomplished, learned, or found fruitful.

The Transfiguration Story helps us to realize that we may not always know what to say, or do, or how to act in our own stories-and that *not knowing the full story is okay*.

Peter, John, and James were acting in this story with only partial knowledge and awareness of what was truly going on-of who their great teacher was. They did not know what we know now-that Jesus would be crucified and resurrected-and they did not know before this moment of transfiguration and God claiming Jesus, that Jesus was the Son of Christ. I mean, how could they have known the full story if they are living in their present time-without the knowledge that we (as the readers of the bible) or God does have...

because we are able to see the full picture.

Peter, John, and James were confused and fearful of a shining Jesus, along with Moses and Elijah, at the top of the mountain-with no idea of what would happen next. And then to add to that-they were told by their teacher to not talk about what happened on top of the mountain!

It almost seems that Jesus wanted these select individuals to see and hear that Christ was God's son...for the sole purpose of 'seeing is believing' ...like the opposite of old fashion Santa Clause.

Now we may begin to realize that we are not that much different from Peter in this story...we would be terrified or in awe of Jesus starting to shine in front of our eyes-and even more so when God speaks from the heavens claiming Jesus as His Son. But, in a much more relatable sense, we are like Peter because we don't have the full knowledge of what is going to happen next in our faith journey.

We are in a time of the in between ourselves. We can look back at where we were and look forwards to where we might be going. But we only do this with partial knowledge.

While we may be a step up in perspective compared to Peter-having read Jesus' story- we are none the wiser in our own faith stories.

We too have been scared like Peter. We have experienced awe like Peter. Many of us have also experienced God's presence in the midst of this fear and awe.

Modern day followers of Christ can be seen as the next generation of witnesses, *of disciples*, who are on the mountain as well. We are being put in Peter, James, and John's shoes in our own time.

Looking at this in the big picture...Our world right now is in a time of never ending change, and suffice to say: chaos. We are fearful witnesses of the change,

Of this mountain we are on,
Pushing forward to be witnesses of where Christ is in our world in the inbetween.

*Now let's be logistical here...His clothes are probably not "dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them." **But he's here**...in many forms and facets. God is shining forth on us-the next generation of witnesses and disciples of Christ. In this fear we hold, God is wrapping us in his arms and embracing us...we just may have to ask who is playing the part of Christ for us?*

Maybe in a way it needs to be us. Maybe we need to be this light shining forth.

This story of the Transfiguration and all of the light that is being shone from Christ reminded me of a poem that many of us may remember from the Presidential inauguration read by Amanda Gorman titled “The Hill We Climb.”

Gorman wrote,

“For while we have our eyes on the future,
history has its eyes on us.

This is the era of just redemption
we feared at its inception.

We did not feel prepared to be the heirs
of such a terrifying hour
but within it we found the power
to author a new chapter.

To offer hope and laughter to ourselves.

So while once we asked,
how could we possibly prevail over catastrophe?

Now we assert,

...

We will rebuild, reconcile and recover.

And every known nook of our nation and
every corner called our country,
our people diverse and beautiful will emerge,
battered and beautiful.

When day comes we step out of the shade,
afame and unafraid,
the new dawn blooms as we free it.

For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see it.
If only we're brave enough to be it."

While reflecting on these beautifully woven words by Amanda
Gorman, we are faced with the fact that it isn't easy to say yes to
being a 'witness' on the mountain.

We may not know what to say or do...

But that doesn't much matter...

Because we will work together to figure it out. Because we as the
next generation of witnesses of Christ are called to be this light in
the world. We are called to find this light. It may not be the
shining of Jesus' clothes- but it could be the work we do, the

impacts we make, and where we can see Christ in our ministry as His disciples.

But Amanda Gorman's words ring true, we may find this light-
"If **only** we are brave enough to see it. If **only** we are brave
enough to **be it.**"

Amen.