

**February 14, 2021**

**Transfiguration Sunday**



**Witness to Wonders**

**St. John United Church of Christ**

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Fairview Heights, IL  
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Secretary – Judy Hartman  
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Prayers and Liturgy by  
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*Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6;  
2 Corinthians 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9*

**CALL TO WORSHIP:**

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

**Wherever two or three are gathered to worship,  
a holy spirit is present.**

Open our eyes to witness the fantastic love and  
wondrous joy waiting to be revealed, even this day,  
even 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.**

**INVOCATION:**

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 the followers of  
Jesus to follow more closely. Maybe then we will hear

your voice speaking to us and saying,  
... “listen to my Child, the Beloved!” Amen.

#### **CONFESSION:**

Forgive us, God, when we linger too long by the waters, and on the mountain tops, enthralled with the glory that flows from you. When we fail to listen to your voice, leading and guiding us, shake us from our contentment and send us forward endowed with your power. **Amen.**

#### **ASSURANCE OF PARDON:**

The God of Elijah, the God of Moses and the God of Jesus desires mercy more than sacrifice and a contrite heart rather than burnt offerings.  
Love God and do the right thing and forgiveness shall be your friend and mercy your true companion. **Amen.**

#### **SCRIPTURE: Mark 9:2-9**

<sup>2</sup> Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and brought them to the top of a very high mountain where they were alone. He was transformed in front of them, <sup>3</sup> and his clothes were amazingly bright, brighter than if they had been bleached white. <sup>4</sup> Elijah and Moses appeared and were talking with Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Peter reacted to all of this by saying to Jesus, “Rabbi, it’s good that we’re here. Let’s make three shrines—one for you, one for Moses, and



one for Elijah.” <sup>6</sup> He said this because he didn’t know how to respond, for the three of them were terrified.

<sup>7</sup> Then a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice spoke from the cloud, “This is my Son, whom I dearly love. Listen to him!” <sup>8</sup> Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

<sup>9</sup> As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them not to tell anyone what they had seen until after the Human One had risen from the dead.

#### **MESSAGE: “Who is this guy?”**

The word transfiguration comes from a Latin verb meaning to change in shape or appearance or transform, because of the use in verse 2 of the Greek verb from which we derive “metamorphosis.” Implied is not simply a momentary, superficial alteration in outward appearance but a permanent, profound change. The same verb is found in Romans 12:2; “Do not be conformed to this world; but be transformed by the renewing of your minds.”

This transfiguration event is an anticipation, a “sneak preview” of the metamorphosis Jesus will undergo when he is exalted by resurrection to the right hand of God. And the disciples had the opportunity to be witnesses of Jesus’ future heavenly glory. But, of course, they had no idea what they were witnessing or what resurrection meant. How many of us have witnessed a transfiguration or a resurrection? Metaphorically, yes, but not like they saw on that mountain.

If the disciples had any doubts about who Jesus was after they witnessed the transfiguration, all their doubts should have vanished. Whatever they thought about this man from Nazareth before were suddenly changed. Jesus was not just a healer or a teacher or a nice guy; he was the Son of God. There Jesus was, having a chat with Moses and Elijah, two towering figures of the Scriptures, both long dead. And then they heard the voice of God.

What can we learn from this “supernatural” event? (I can think of a few things, but maybe you can think of more.) #1. The disciples learned that Jesus was very special; not just a healer or teacher. #2. We learned that this was a sneak peek of the resurrection of Jesus. #3. We learned that Jesus is God’s Son. #4. Most importantly, next to #3, is that God spoke to the disciples and said, “LISTEN TO HIM!!” God did not say build some shrines or tents. God said to listen to my Son!!! Amen.



**THE LORD’S PRAYER:** Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today 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, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

**OFFERING INVITATION:**

Peter offered to build a tabernacle on the mountain with Jesus. But God does not dwell in houses made with human hands.

Let us offer ourselves in service to those God loves. Let us offer our sacrifices to build community, bring peace, and be a double blessing to those in need throughout the world. Amen

**DEDICATION:**

With these gifts we proclaim not ourselves but Jesus and commit ourselves to follow a way that leads to love and life.

May our sacrifice be witness to our love for each other and the God who loves us all. Amen

**BENEDICTION:**

Now may the God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness” and has shone in our hearts, give us light to bear to the world that all may see and know that God is love. **Amen.**



**PRAYER LIST:** We pray for the health and well-being of all affected by the pandemic and we especially

**pray for:** Urban Baum, Rich Schmitt, Donna Isselhard, Shari Hamilton, Becky Ballard, Pam (Belleville) Bierman, P.J. Bennett, and **all the people of the United States of America and our leaders in Washington, D.C. and Springfield.**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** I will be passing out ashes on Wednesday, February 17 from 12 – 12:30 and 6 – 6:30 in the church parking lot. Just drive around.

**If all goes well,  
we will restart in-person worship on  
March 7. Masks will still be required plus  
sitting 6 feet apart. Still no singing.**



**HAVE A LOVELY VALENTINE'S DAY!  
Remember God is the lover  
you can always depend on.**

“To love someone is to learn the song in their heart and sing it to them when they have forgotten it.” - author unknown

