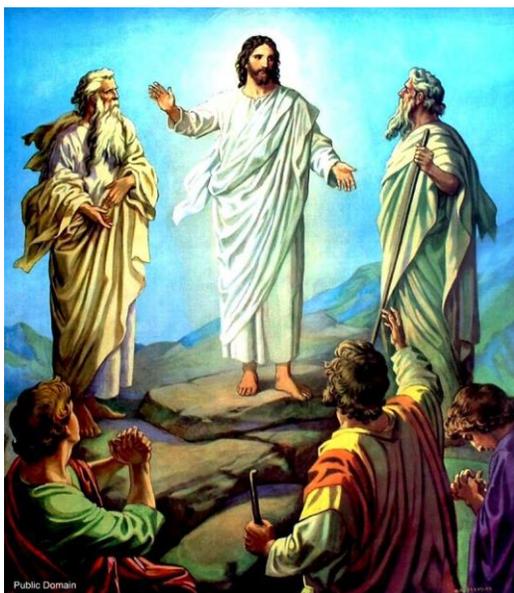


FESTIVAL OF TRANSFIGURATION FEBRUARY 27, 2022



St. John United Church of Christ
10207 Lincoln Trail, Fairview Heights, IL
397-6323

***CALL TO WORSHIP:**

Something drew us together this morning
Something we can't name but which we experience
in worship

Some holy mystery we call God
Some sacred calling we hear in the life of Jesus
Some indescribable hope we feel when we gather in
the Spirit

All: May our experience of the Divine transform our
doubts and fears and prepare us to love the world.

***INVOCATION:**

One: O God, you are beyond words and description,
your love is beyond knowledge and explanation.

Make our hearts ready to receive you.

Change us, we pray, that our lives may reflect the
glory of your transfiguration.

We rejoice in the power of your Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

***CALL TO CONFESSION:**

Peter, James, and John went up on the side of a
mountain with Jesus and experienced glory.

But then Peter wanted to stay. "It's good for us to be
here. Let's get comfortable."

We are also often tempted to keep the experience of
the Divine to ourselves, to enjoy the company of the
saints instead of going back down the mountain
to continue the work of the Kingdom of God.

God knows this temptation of our hearts,
so let us confess and pray for forgiveness.

God of glory and light, forgive us when we are complacent and comfortable with keeping the riches of your love to ourselves. Keep calling us down from our mountains of privilege. Keep expecting more of us as your disciples. Keep reminding us to listen to your Son, in whose name we pray. Amen. Silence

ASSURANCE OF GRACE:

Whether we hear a voice from the heavens or a still small voice in our hearts, listen carefully for the love of God. Believe and accept God's love and live in God's freedom.

We believe! Thanks be to God!

***GLORIA PATRI: NCH 759**

Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit, Three- in-One; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 34:29-35

Moses' brightly shining face

²⁹ Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two covenant tablets in his hand, Moses didn't realize that the skin of his face shone brightly because he had been talking with God. ³⁰ When Aaron and all the Israelites saw the skin of Moses' face shining brightly, they

were afraid to come near him. ³¹ But Moses called them closer. So, Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and Moses spoke with them. ³² After that, all the Israelites came near as well, and Moses commanded them everything that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. ³³ When Moses finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face. ³⁴ Whenever Moses went into the LORD's presence to speak with him, Moses would take the veil off until he came out again. When Moses came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, ³⁵ the Israelites would see that the skin of Moses' face was shining brightly. So, Moses would put the veil on his face again until the next time he went in to speak with the LORD."

FIRST MESSAGE:

This is from "Living the Lectionary".

"This is a strange story, but then the Bible is no stranger to strange stories. A burning bush, a plague or ten, fire and smoke on a mountain, a glowing face; the Holy shows up and things happen that can't be explained and people change. That's the whole point of a theophany or a close encounter of the Holy kind. You are supposed to be changed and people are supposed to notice. But we tend to take the unknowable, undefinable, indescribable and contain

the Holy in a nice, neat doctrinal box. Like the veil that hid the effect of the Holy, all our musings on the mystical are ways we come to God on our own terms. "With the effect of Holy hidden behind the veil we can keep our religion hidden less we practice it and people notice. But when in an encounter of the Holy kind we catch a glimpse such that we see as we are seen, and know as we are known, if only for a moment, then like Moses we are changed and people are supposed to notice."

GOSPEL: Luke 9:28-36

Jesus transformed

²⁸ About eight days after Jesus said these things, he took Peter, John, and James, and went up on a mountain to pray. ²⁹ As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed and his clothes flashed white like lightning. ³⁰ Two men, Moses and Elijah, were talking with him. ³¹ They were clothed with heavenly splendor and spoke about Jesus' departure, which he would achieve in Jerusalem. ³² Peter and those with him were almost overcome by sleep, but they managed to stay awake and saw his glory as well as the two men with him. ³³ As the two men were about to leave Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it's good that we're here. We should construct three shrines: one for you, one for

Moses, and one for Elijah"—but he didn't know what he was saying. ³⁴ Peter was still speaking when a cloud overshadowed them. As they entered the cloud, they were overcome with awe. ³⁵ Then a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, my chosen one. Listen to him!" ³⁶ Even as the voice spoke, Jesus was found alone. They were speechless and at the time told no one what they had seen.

SECOND MESSAGE: When young people get close to graduating from high school, everyone asks them what they will be doing after graduating. Should they go out into the work force, go to trade school, go to community college, go to a four-year college, or perhaps join the military? To help make a decision about what is next for them, many of them consult their school counselor. They would also talk with their friends and their family. It's really best that they talk it over with many people before they take their first step.

The same is true for Jesus. He would never take any step without the approval of God. In this scripture text that is what we see him seeking and receiving. He also talked to Moses and Elijah probably for advice and assurance. *(By the Way – this is one interpretation of this story. No one knows for sure why this event happened.)*

Of course, no one really knows what they talked about. All we do know is that Jesus could set out to Jerusalem now, certain that at least one little group of men (Peter, James, and John) knew who he was. Jesus was now certain that what he was doing was the consummation of all the life and thought and work of his nation of Israel, without being certain that God approved of this step that he was taking. And during the experience, Jesus was transfigured and his face turned white and bright, just like what happened to Moses. Jesus' glory shone for all.

If anyone ever doubted as to who Jesus was, this story answers their doubts.

P.S. It's always good to talk things over with God before any of us take big steps. If God approves, God will help it happen, even if it seems there are road blocks in the journey. Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER: God of clouds and streaming light, keep us awake in our discipleship so we are alert witnessing and the devotion of what we are and what we have to the needs of the world in our time.

God of compassion, bring helpful kinds of intervention in families where there is verbal, physical, or emotional abuse. Increase in our society the love of neighbor as one loves oneself. Help all agencies working toward the lessening of violence in

our society. Protect all the people who are in harm's way in the Ukraine.

God of love and comfort, be with all those on our prayer list, and all those we hold dearly in our hearts. We pray all these things in the name of your beloved Son, Jesus . . .

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be your 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, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO SHARE:

The needs of our world are too numerous to name. Shelter, food, clean air and water...

Our gifts touch these needs, but the biggest gift we can give is to love the world so much that we give of ourselves. Nothing will transform need more than sacrificial love. So, as you place money in the offering plate today, don't let your giving be done.

Start planning to go deeper. May God now bless our hopes and dreams.

***OFFERING PRAYER:**

Bless these gifts, we pray. May they represent just the beginning of our journey to show forth your glory to the world. Amen.

BENEDICTION:

May God now send us back down the mountain of our worship. We have been changed. We can't be silent anymore. We have seen the Light of the World. Go and share the radiance of love! Amen.

PRAYER LIST: Urban Baum, Donna Isselhard, Agnes Doctolero, David Seneczyn, Cathy Ganschietz, Warren Neff, Lynn Hursey, Carol White, Dennis Franklin, John Biehl, Cheri Schutzenhofer, Rich Schmitt, Dorothy Wagner.

Beginning on March 16 we will gather for a Lenten study. It will be through Zoom and start at 6:30 pm the last three Wednesdays in March and the first Wednesday in April. If you don't have a computer, you can call in. We will be able to hear each other but not see each other. The Zoom meeting ID is 878-8123-0951 and the pass code is 651278. The phone number is 1-312-626-6799 and use the same

ID and passcode. If you miss one week, its okay. Each lesson will be "self-contained".