



**Order of Service**  
**27<sup>th</sup> February 2022**  
**Transfiguration**

**Introit:** 474 (TiS) 'Here in this place.'

**Call to Worship:**

As God called to Moses from the mountain,

**we are called to be God's people.**

As Jesus called the disciples to climb with him to the peak of another mountain,

**we are called to follow wherever he leads.**

As the disciples stood in awe at the sound of God's voice,

**we are called to worship in wonder and praise.**

**Hymn:** 132 (TiS) 'Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty.'

**Prayer of Thanksgiving and Confession:**

O glorious God, we are a people who love the light of your face. We come again this morning to experience your radiance and reflect it with our lives. Look upon us with the glow of your life-giving countenance and shine us into a whole new way of being and doing in the world. We bring into your radiant love the lives of our loved ones, our families, our friends, our communities, our world. Embolden us to shine in the lives of loved ones and strangers with your radiant light.

**Amen.**

Though we want to walk with Moses and see God's holy radiance,

**we hide in the midst of our own desires, unable to perceive the presence of God's grace.**

While we want a world of justice and peace,

**we walk in clouds of selfishness, unable to share God's loving kindness.**

Though we want to follow Jesus up the mountain,

**we cower in fear, unable to bear the light of God.**

**Declaration of Forgiveness:**

In the blazing light of God's grace, Jesus touches us to say, "Get up and do not be afraid."

In the name of Christ, all is forgiven.

**Amen.**

**Doxology:** 772 (TiS) 'Worship, honour, glory, blessing'

**Time with the children:** 'The image of God'

**Readings:** Exodus 34: 29-35, Psalm 99, 2 Corinthians 3:12 – 4:2, Luke 9: 28-36.

**Hymn:** 474 (TiS) 'Here in this place'



**Sermon: "Listen to him."**

Today, we celebrate the Transfiguration of Jesus. A pivotal moment in the story of our salvation where the bible takes us up to a mountaintop, a mountaintop experience you might say, and as with mountain top experiences – there's a certain expectation that something out of the ordinary is going to happen, something mysterious and impressive and even revelatory. That is, something that reveals the truth and deeper meaning about God.

Luke tells us that this revelation of God's glory on the mountaintop took place "eight days" after Peter's confession of Jesus as the Messiah, which could be a reference to the resurrection. Luke is aware of the significance of the eighth day. He is the only evangelist that tells us of the Emmaus Road story, where Jesus is made known to the disciples in the breaking of the bread.

It is possible that this little detail on the timing of the Transfiguration from Luke could be a hint that points toward Easter and the final glorification of God in the Christ.

Eight days from Peter's confession of Jesus as the Messiah, eight days of Jesus openly talking about his impending death, eight days of the disciples seemingly ignoring Jesus's predictions as they wrangle over for power and privilege in Jesus' coming kingdom.

At the time when Jesus most needed the affirmation and support of his disciples, they were unavailable to him in a meaningful way.

In this mountain top experience, Jesus experienced still the indifference to his impending suffering and death. And with no human or earthly encouragement, God the Father steps in to provide new voices to the conversation. Moses and Elijah, servants that were sent by God to speak to a wayward Israel, now joined Jesus on that mountaintop and in the conversation about his departure.

These two significant figures in the history of Israel have joined Jesus to encourage and to remind him that they, too, along with all the hosts of heaven, were gearing up for the fulfilment of all that God had been planning to do to accomplish ever since sin and evil showed up in this creation.

Luke also tells us, that while all of this wonderful and powerful event took place, the three disciples were sleepy! It took a bit before they were fully awake and saw something so strange, they must have wondered if they were not, in fact, dreaming.

How can this spectacular event take place well out of the public eye, and even for those human eyes that did take it in, there was a mixture of confusion, sleepiness, and then reticence to speak of it in the future.

We get a hint from the words spoken from the cloud, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." This most visual, dazzling event that ever took place on this planet, the bottom line from God the Father is "Listen to him."

It might seem odd to many that God the Father follow up this visual display with advice about listening and not looking.

Maybe, that's because we, too, are often caught up on outward appearance, about fame and power and glory as the world defines all those things, and may be that gets in the way of really listening to what Jesus says about humility and sacrifice and being servants of the lowest of the low.

In the Transfiguration, Jesus' face changed. The appearance of his face altered. Maybe the true image of God is what shone through the face of the Son that the disciples missed seeing most days. But then we all often miss seeing that image in each other most days.

The bible tells us that we were all created in the image of God, but as we hurried past people in the shopping centres, we get annoyed with them when they crowd our space, we miss it.

These are moments of transfiguration in all our lives. No, not on a par with what happened to Jesus, but still...As Buechner puts it, "Even with us something like this happens once in a while. The face of a man walking with his child in the park, of a woman baking bread, of sometimes even the most unlikely person listening to a concert or standing barefoot in the sand watching the waves roll in."

Every once and so often, something so touching, so incandescent, so alive transfigures the human face that's almost beyond bearing and at that instant we hear the voice, "This is my beloved Son, listen to him."



**Hymn:** 234 (TiS) 'How good Lord to be here'

**Notices:**

**Joys and Concerns:**

**Offering:**

**Prayer of Intercession:**

Call our lives into the heights and depths of your life, O God. Dazzle our souls with your hopes for humanity as we see it through your eyes from the mountain top.

Give us humility to listen to your voice in one another from the clouds of human relationships and needs.

Give us courage to pray our humble human prayers as we realise a little of the measure of your holiness:

Hold us in your divine silence, O God, as we listen to your response to our prayers. Stay with us on the mountain as we grapple with our fears and sleepiness. Reach out and wait with us when we grow impatient and show us the way onto the plains of justice for all.

Hear our prayers for others now, offered from our hearts in silence, O God.....

Place your hand beneath our lives, O God, that we may be faithful to your hopes for us and your world.

**Amen.**

**Hymn:** 147 (TiS) 'To God be the glory'

**Blessing:**

