

“Happy are all  
who take refuge  
in God.” AMEN!

There are so many thoughts that  
come to mind about our lessons for today.

Of course, the first is... it is Transfiguration Sunday!

The day that divides the Epiphany season of  
teaching and the revealing of God’s  
presence among us with Lent.

Lent, of course, is the season of  
thoughtful reflection of Jesus’ suffering and  
death on the cross.

Sometimes we fast, or make conscious decisions  
to do Spirit-building activities, like prayer  
or food ministries to the hungry.

Transfiguration is therefore like a  
threshold between two rooms in a home.

You probably also noticed the obvious theme  
that runs through the assigned readings for today.

The confirmation voice:

“This is my Son, the beloved...”

Our attention is then moved to Exodus,  
where we are told about Moses being  
swallowed up by God's presence  
on a mountain.

And in Matthew we are told about Jesus,  
and Peter, James, and John being swallowed  
up by God's presence on a mountain.

There is fear and expressions of awe  
in these encounters with God.

Anyone who's been swallowed up by fog, or  
when flying through a cloud in an airplane,  
might get a picture in mind about how  
blinding and fearful such an event can be.

By blinding, I mean, you may still be able to see,  
but you can't really "see" anything, right?

By fearful, because you wonder is anyone  
in control of where we're going? (Pause)

How many think that living in the world today is  
like living in a fog or cloud?

I feel like that sometimes.

I feel uncertain about what  
is around the corner.

There's insecurity...

our military is shooting all sorts of  
things out of the airspace.

There are cataclysmic earthquakes and  
extreme weather events.

Our society is trying to find its way  
through social problems, current and  
past discriminations,

political problems as both parties venture  
further into extremes.

It is enough to feel like our world is barreling  
down a highway at breakneck speed and  
can't see past the hood of the car  
because of the fog. (Pause)

There's an interesting truth about human nature  
and driving in conditions where you can't see  
very far.

Studies show that people tend to speed up  
when visual conditions decline.

That's right!

You heard it correctly.

People, if not aware, tend to speed up  
when visual conditions decline.

If we merely act on that instinct,  
we will go faster in fog and storm  
because our brains are telling us we  
need to get out of it.

Get out of it quickly, so our vision  
can improve again.

It is one of the times when we must NOT  
act on our instinct and instead  
slow down to stay in the fog longer,  
the storm longer,

because it means a better chance of  
avoiding an accident. (Pause)

Now, in thinking this way we may come  
to a bit of understanding why  
Peter wanted to build three tents.

He recognized that something magnificent

was happening... sure he didn't fully understand.

He was swallowed up by God's presence and  
he wanted to stay there.

And take it slow, and find a way to serve.

It is what faithful and aware people do.

They find ways to take it slow and to serve.

(Introduce Jim Christianson and  
talk about Ministry Minute's call to people  
for places to serve.)

Bringing food to people who cannot  
get it on their own is great way to serve.

It is literally bringing life to people in physical ways.

It is also a way to build community  
relationships and that has its own  
way of bringing life.

Transfiguration Sunday, the day we celebrate  
Jesus' metamorphosis, we find that Jesus

was re-affirmed as he moved from  
teaching about God to behaving like God.

The text began with the words,  
“Six days later... they went up a mountain.”

With that phrase we gather a connection  
to the Creation Story, here.

On the 7th day God rested,  
God modeled sabbath.”

So 6 days after Jesus told his followers about  
what it meant to follow him.

And about losing and forfeiting.

He went with his closest followers and  
rested in God’s presence.

Was he as scared as his followers?

Was everything going too fast?

We don’t know, for sure, but we do know  
he transformed... and we will too.

We run away, and then some come back.  
I run away, and then come back.

We’d prefer to stay on the mountain, right?

But we are called to come back, too,  
when the fog clears, we come back  
down the mountain.

There's still confusion, fear, and pain, but  
now there's something else.

An understanding of God's presence with us  
in these times of uncertainty.

God is certain. (Pause)

How reaffirming it is that in today's  
ministry minute about Meals on Wheels, and  
on this day there is the welcome of  
new members into the  
community of St. Stephen.

How reaffirming it is to have these and  
the celebration of the talent show  
after worship today.

A time for laughter, a time to share song and talent,  
but most important to share in community.

There is metamorphosis in community.

A movement from loneliness to relationship,

from sadness to laughter, tears to joy,  
and from death to life.

AMEN!