

The Lutheran Church of the Covenant
“Reaching Out, Reflecting Christ, Renewing Lives”



Tranfiguration of Our Lord
February 14, 2021



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



We welcome you to worship here at the Lutheran Church of the Covenant! We continue to do our best in providing the safest environment possible for you to worship our Lord with your whole heart, even during these COVID-19 times. Here are the precautions we are taking on behalf of our whole community of faith, so that we best care for one another and those we are around during the week.

- We ask you wear a mask the entire time you are in the building, unless you have a medical condition preventing you from doing so.
- Bulletins and individual Communion elements are available for you to pick up as you enter from the back of the sanctuary. The Communion elements are available in wine and grape juice form as well as wheat and gluten-free wafers. We will partake of the body and blood of Christ together from our respective seats.
- There will not be a separate time for an offering to be collected for supporting our congregational and wider-church ministry, and so an offering basket is placed beside the bulletins and Communion elements, for those who wish to give this day.
- We are asking you to refrain from singing, as we do our best to minimize the spread of droplets and aerosols around our masks. You may do so in your heart, where we believe God hears just as well as if spoken or sung aloud. We, also, ask that you continue participate throughout the worship by speaking the **bold** print, but doing so in a whisper voice.
- There will not be a time for sharing of the peace, but we encourage you to do so with one another before or after the worship (while maintaining the physical distancing recommendations of six feet).
- There will not be a processional or recessional of the cross, nor will there be a receiving line with the pastor after the worship. If you wish to speak for Pastor Brad, for any reason, please do not hesitate to contact him through email, text or calling him directly.

We thank you for your patience and understanding as we will always err on the side of caution while knowing that we can still transmit the virus even with the full vaccination.

Transfiguration of Our Lord

The Sundays after Epiphany began with Jesus' baptism and end with three disciples' vision of his transfiguration. In Mark's story of Jesus' baptism, apparently only Jesus sees the Spirit descending and hears the words from heaven. But now Jesus' three closest friends hear the same words naming him God's Beloved. As believers, Paul writes, we are enabled to see the God-light in Jesus' face, because the same God who created light in the first place has shone in our hearts to give us that vision. The light of God's glory in Jesus has enlightened us through baptism and shines in us also for others to see.

Prelude *Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies* (LANG)

*Confession & Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as we take time to recognize our shortcomings, while also remembering God's relentless grace.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
whose voice is upon the waters,
whose mercy is poured out upon all people,
whose goodness cascades over all creation. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin, trusting in the abundant grace of God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy God,
you search us and know us.
You are acquainted with all our ways.
We confess that our hearts are burdened by sin—
our own sins and the broken systems that bind us.
We turn inward, failing to follow
your outward way of love.
We distrust those who are not like us.
We exploit the earth and its resources
and fail to consider generations to come.
Forgive us, gracious God,
for all we have done and left undone.

Even before the words are on our tongues,
you know them;
receive them in your divine mercy. **Amen.**

How vast is God's grace!
Through the power and promise of † Christ Jesus,
our sins are washed away
and we are claimed as God's own beloved.
Indeed, we are forgiven.
In the wake of God's forgiveness,
we are called to be the beloved community
living out Christ's justice
and the Holy Spirit's reconciling peace. **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn *Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies*

#553

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

- 1 Christ, whose glory fills the skies,
Christ, the true and only light,
Sun of righteousness, arise,
triumph o'er the shades of night;
Dayspring from on high, be near;
Daystar, in my heart appear.
- 2 Dark and cheerless is the morn
unaccompanied by thee;
joyless is the day's return,
till thy mercy's beams I see,
till they inward light impart,
glad my eyes, and warm my heart.
- 3 Visit then this soul of mine,
pierce the gloom of sin and grief;
fill me, radiancy divine,
scatter all my unbelief;
more and more thyself display,
shining to the perfect day.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, the resplendent light of your truth shines from the mountaintop into our hearts. Transfigure us by your beloved Son, and illumine the world with your image, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Lesson

2 Kings 2:1-12

Today's reading centers on the transfer of power and authority from the prophet Elijah to Elisha. Their travels, which retrace the path of Joshua back to Moab (the place where Moses died) and the parting of the waters, demonstrate that Elisha and Elijah are legitimate successors of the great prophet Moses.

¹Now when the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. ²Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. ³The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take your master away from you?" And he said, "Yes, I know; keep silent."

⁴Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here; for the LORD has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. ⁵The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take your master away from you?" And he answered, "Yes, I know; be silent."

⁶Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here; for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. ⁷Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. ⁸Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground.

⁹When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you." Elisha said, "Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit."

¹⁰He responded, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not." ¹¹As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. ¹²Elisha kept watching and crying out, "Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm

Psalm 50:1-6

- ¹The mighty one, God the LORD, has spoken;
calling the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.
- ²Out of Zion, perfect in its beauty,
God shines forth in glory.
- ³Our God will come and will not keep silence;
with a consuming flame before, and round about a raging storm.
- ⁴God calls the heavens and the earth from above
to witness the judgment of the people.
- ⁵“Gather before me my loyal followers,
those who have made a covenant with me and sealed it with sacrifice.”
- ⁶The heavens declare the rightness of God’s cause,
for it is God who is judge.

Second Lesson

2 Corinthians 4:3-6

The spotlight of Christian ministry is not on the people who carry out ministry but on the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as God made light shine at creation, God makes the light of Jesus Christ shine in our lives through Christian ministry.

³Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus’ sake. ⁶For it is the God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

*Gospel

Mark 9:2-9

Mark’s gospel presents the transfiguration as a preview of what would become apparent to Jesus’ followers after he rose from the dead. Confused disciples are given a vision of God’s glory manifest in the beloved Son.

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.”⁶ He 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!”⁸ Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, 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.

This is the holy Gospel of our Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Hymn of the Day *God, When Human Bonds Are Broken*

#603

Text: Fred Kaan, 1929-2009

- 1 God, when human bonds are broken
and we lack the love or skill
to restore the hope of healing,
give us grace and make us still.
- 2 Through that stillness, with your Spirit
come into our world of stress,
for the sake of Christ forgiving
all the failures we confess.
- 3 You in us are bruised and broken:
hear us as we seek release
from the pain of earlier living;
set us free and grant us peace.
- 4 Send us, God of new beginnings,
humbly hopeful into life.
Use us as a means of blessing:
make us stronger, give us faith.

(Verse 5: next page)

5 Give us faith to be more faithful,
give us hope to be more true,
give us love to go on learning:
God, encourage and renew!

*Prayers of Intercession

On this last Sunday after Epiphany, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need, responding to each petition with the phrase, “for your mercy is great.”

A brief silence.

O God of light, strengthen communities of faith around the globe: for our own Covenant family, and for all Christians who cannot gather for communal worship. Show us your face in the darkness, and speak your word of power to all your precious children. Hear us, O God, **for your mercy is great.**

O Morning Star, continue to nourish the earth: for life forming in the dark earth and ocean depths, for creatures seen and unseen, including for the animals who require cold and ice. Guide us in our stewardship of the planet. Hear us, O God, **for your mercy is great.**

O Son of righteousness, watch over those responsible for safety and protection: for emergency responders and security guards, attorneys and advocates, civil servants and leaders of governments, that they witness to mercy and justice throughout the world. Give to them all integrity in service and courage to choose what is right. Hear us, O God, **for your mercy is great.**

Beautiful Savior, care for all who suffer from COVID-19, for medical workers, and for all who await the vaccine. We also lift up those enduring famine, for those experiencing homelessness, and for all who live in war zones. Be with those who are ill, for all who receive no medical care, and for those we name here before you. Heal them with your loving might. Hear us, O God, **for your mercy is great.**

Love divine, we remember those who, especially on this Valentine’s Day, feel lonely, for those who are abandoned, and for those who must live apart from their dear ones. Embrace all who are alone with your care. Hear us, O God, **for your mercy is great.**

Eternal God, in thanksgiving for the faithful departed who now rest from their earthly time, may their lives of service and prayer inspire us in our living. Hear us, O God, **for your mercy is great.**

O holy Trinity, Light-Creator, Light of Light begotten, and Light-Revealer, receive our praise and hear our prayers, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

*Thanksgiving at the Table

Blessed are you, O holy God:
you are the Life and Light of all.
By your powerful word you created all things.
Through the prophets you called your people to be a light to the nations.

Blessed are you for Jesus, your Son.
He is your Light, shining in our darkness
and revealing to us your mercy and might.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore,
his preaching and healing,
his dying and rising,
and his promise to come again,
we await that day when all the universe
will rejoice in your holy and life-giving light.

Bless us and this meal,
that, refreshed with this heavenly food,
we may be light for the world,
revealing the brilliance of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
both now and forever. **Amen.**

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

Communion

Music Interlude *Be Thou My Vision* (MCDONALD)

You may use this time to offer your own personal prayers to God.

Prayer after Communion

Christ Jesus,
from this table we have feasted on your very life
and are strengthened for our journey.
Send us forth from this banquet
nourished in body and in spirit
to proclaim your good news
and serve others in your name. **Amen.**

Blessing

God the creator strengthen you;
Jesus the beloved fill you;
and the Holy Spirit the comforter † keep you in peace.
Amen.

Sending Hymn *Alleluia, Song of Gladness*

#318

Text: Latin hymn, 11th cent.; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-1866, alt.

- 1 Alleluia, song of gladness,
voice of joy that cannot die;
alleluia is the anthem
ever dear to choirs on high;
in the house of God abiding
thus they sing eternally.
- 2 Alleluia you are sounding,
true Jerusalem and free;
alleluia, joyful mother,
bring us to your jubilee;
here by Babylon's sad waters
mourning exiles still are we.
- 3 Alleluia cannot always
be our song while here below;
alleluia our transgressions
make us for a while forgo;
for the solemn time is coming
when our tears for sin shall flow.
- 4 In our hymns we pray with longing:
Grant us, blessed Trinity,
at the last to keep glad Easter
with the faithful saints on high;
there to you forever singing
alleluia joyfully.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Be the light of Christ!

Thanks be to God.

Postlude *Agincourt Song* (YOUNG)

Praying Together

... for those who are homebound, ill, hospitalized or recuperating: Gayle Agg, Bob Buettner, Alexis Carr, Joan Clarke, John Crawford, Nicole Crawford, Barbara Fossa, Lauren Fossa, Carolyn Frajter, Ken Frajter, Nealie Gage, Barb Gaglione, Michelle Garnett, Rosa Garnett, Judy Jones, Dylan King, Jason Lanese, Andrea Lanzalaca, Sara Mendes, Phyllis Nemeth, Bernice Novak, Don Rusher Jr., Claudia Senderak, Arlene Stoltz, Marie Storms, Tim Susaneck, Tom Susaneck, Phyllis Treichel, Phyllis Welker, Linda Wright, Wilma Dancy, Bill Helmick, Nancy Helmick, Robert Lambrecht, Kim (Novak) Leonhardt, Laura Mele, Judy Morgan, Kris Sandor, Bill Wilkens, Eugene Winfrey, the Copeland/Lane Family

LAST WEEK

General Fund receipts for week ending 2/7/2021: \$3194

To the glory of God, and in loving memory of Don Schirmer, a memorial was given by Penny Sutton.



Given that it would be best for both our congregations not to gather in the same location, in minimizing size of crowds while the vaccines continue to be rolled out, we will worship together virtually with our siblings in Christ of Church of the Master. We will do so through YouTube videos, including for Ash Wednesday.

Ashes are available to be picked up here at Covenant today or before Wednesday.

Lectionary Blog: A Holy Conversation



“The Transfiguration on the Mount Tabor” fresco in church Santa Maria dell Anima by Francesco Salviati (16th century). [iStock.com/sedmak](https://www.iStock.com/sedmak)

Jesus took three of his especially close disciples, Peter, James and John, and ascended a mountain. While there, he was transfigured before them. Moses and Elijah appeared in order to have a conversation with Jesus. Then God spoke, saying, “This is my beloved son. Listen to him.” When Jesus and his disciples went down the mountain, he warned them to keep the messianic secret.

There is so much here! The verb that we translate as “transfigured” (μετεμορφώθη) means some sort of radical change into another form. When we talk about “metamorphizing” (our English word comes directly from the Greek), we think of a caterpillar becoming a butterfly or a pollywog becoming a frog. In other words, metamorphizing is a one-way change that marks a new stage of life. In what ways was Jesus different after that mountaintop experience? I think his life changed as a result of words that were spoken on that mountain.

What did Jesus, Moses and Elijah talk about? Obviously, we can't say anything with certainty. But I would expect that when three people who haven't met each other start a conversation, frequently their talk turns toward common experiences. Moses, Elijah and Jesus certainly had several experiences in common to discuss.

In the Hebrew Bible passage this week, Elijah, Elisha and multiple companies of prophets all know that Elijah is about to be taken away. Elisha spent those last moments with Elijah and literally took up his mantle after the prophet was taken away. Like Elijah, when Moses knew that his time on earth was short, he consecrated his mentee, Joshua, to lead in his stead and proclaimed his own replacement (Deuteronomy 31). In Mark's Gospel, Jesus foretells his own death and resurrection to the disciples (9), who would take up his work after he ascended. Moses, Elijah and Jesus all knew with certainty that the end of their time on earth was coming because the Lord had told them. They made sure to prepare their disciples for what would come next.

Imminent death is a difficult concept to grasp even after a long illness provides plenty of foresight about the end. In the past year, far too many of us have felt the horrible pain of losing someone suddenly after an illness of only a few weeks, or even days, without time to plan or imagine what life would be like for those who continue living.

But the ends of these three men were atypical, to say the least. God told Moses that he would die outside the promised land, but then the Lord buried Moses as one does for an especially close friend. Elijah was said to have not died but was taken in a whirlwind. Jesus, as we know, suffered an excruciating death as a falsely accused criminal. On the mountaintop, Moses, Elijah and Jesus might have been discussing how, even at the end of their times on earth, God's love and embrace was never-ending. God's affirmation of Jesus as the beloved Son during the transfiguration might have been a kind of reassurance of their relationship in the face of his impending death.

But I think the most likely topic of conversation was about entering and emerging from water. Moses raised his staff and watched as God parted of the Sea of Reeds (Exodus 14:15-31). His disciple, Joshua, imitated his master and led the people as God opened the Jordan River (Joshua 3:7). Likewise, when Elijah crossed the Jordan, he struck it with his outer garment to separate the waters (2 Kings 2:8). And on his way back after Elijah was taken up, Elisha used his master's garment to do the same (2 Kings 2:14).

In what way, then, did Jesus enter the water and come out on the other side? Jesus, like Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, entered the Jordan River. But when he did, he got all wet. When Jesus undertook the baptism of his relative, John, the water was not split for him—he entered it on purpose. Jesus pursued God and blessed the people, not by crossing a dry water course but by being baptized to fulfill all righteousness (Matthew 3:15). Jesus’ baptism (we will read about it again next week) is intentionally called to mind in the transfiguration story. In both instances, God proclaims that Jesus is the beloved Son.

Just as Moses’ and Elijah’s disciples imitated their masters in passing through the waters, we, too, have the honor to emulate our master. Jesus’ last commandments in the Gospel of Matthew were to *make disciples* of all people, *baptize* them and *teach* them to obey all of Jesus’ commandments. Being followers of Jesus—Christians—means that we can’t neglect any of these three tasks—*making* disciples (not just converts), *baptizing* disciples and *teaching* them to obey the commandments.

I feel quite certain that Moses, Elijah and Jesus had much to talk about. Maybe one of the similarities they discussed was how God made a way through the waters for them. Moses, Elijah and Jesus all call their followers to do the same and receive God’s grace through the water.

This, and other resources for the journey of faith, available at LivingLutheran.org.



Cory Driver is a minister of word and service, and the director of the Transformational Leadership Academy in the Indiana-Kentucky Synod. He earned his doctorate in Jewish religious cultures from Emory University, Atlanta. Cory lives with his family in Indianapolis.

The Transfiguration

As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Luke 9:29 (NIV)

The puzzle is based on Luke 9:28-36 (NIV).



D Y G M S T A L K I N G I M J
L E N U O E U S G S F P E F O
A T S C S U E M E D T C P A H
B E K E H M N L L W A G M P N
J R S J A A P T G F C U J P I
K O I J I I N N A R G O T E I
M V N G C Z I G J I K P G A B
P X M S H N Q B E Y N Q V R Y
R I I W T T I Y T D J F U E C
A D D H D V R M K P E L G D H
Y E G U H X A F N E K A V E O
W I O D E P X Q B T W S O J S
L L R V E T R R F E E H I Z E
C C L O T H E S H R E E C X N
C D H N P Y E L I J A H E J F

flash
cloud
James
talking

lightning
Peter
pray
face

Moses
changed
chosen
bright

John
voice
clothes
appeared

mountain
Jesus
Elijah
disciples