



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Transfiguration of Our Lord

February 27, 2022

ELW Holy Communion, Setting Eight

Witnesses to the glory of God in the face of Jesus reflect that glory in the world. It was true for Moses. It was doubtless true for Peter, James, and John. We pray that it will be true of all of us who see God's glory in the word and in the supper and who are being "transformed into the same image" by God's Spirit.

A warm welcome back to those who are here worshipping with us in-person and to those on-line! Here at Grace Lutheran we believe God is active in your life. Even you being here now is testament of God's calling and leading in your heart, which you have faithfully heeded. So we welcome you, and pray that today you will be nurtured and that the gifts that God has graciously given you will be stirred for the sake of God's mission in the world.

Grace Lutheran worships, prays, and serves on the traditional and unceded lands and territories of the hən̓q̓əmiñəm̓ (Musqueam) and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) peoples.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP (Paraphrase of Psalm 99)

We gather together in the name of the Lord our Sovereign, enthroned upon the cherubim in Zion, high above all peoples, to confess God's great and awesome name: the Holy One. For our God loves justice and has established equity and righteousness in all the world. So we proclaim God's greatness, as God answers our cries, leads us with wisdom, and forgives us with a grace that surpasses all understanding.

Yes, we together proclaim God's greatness as we worship our Lord God, the Holy One!
Amen. Thanks be to God.

GATHERING SONG: Lord of Light (#688) verses 1, 2, 4

GREETING

The beautiful grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the radiant love of God, and the transfiguring fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy God, you are present in our midst, with us, among us, and abiding with us, yet you are beyond all comprehension by your love and your grace. It is by your light that we can see light, it is by your healing that we are made whole, and it is by your mercy that we might know greatness. Stir in us a boldness in your name, that we might be able to proclaim you in the world with unveiled faces, love all people unabashedly, and serve you with the faith you give us, through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Exodus 34:29-35

A reading from Exodus.

Moses' face shone with the reflected glory of God after he received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. The sight caused the Israelites to be afraid, so Moses wore a veil to mask the radiance of God's glory, taking it off when he spoke directly with God.

²⁹Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. ³⁰When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him. ³¹But Moses called to them; and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses spoke with them. ³²Afterward all the Israelites came near, and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. ³³When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face; ³⁴but whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would take the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, ³⁵the Israelites would see the face of Moses, that the skin of his face was shining; and Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2

A reading from 2 Corinthians.

In his debates with the Corinthians, Paul contrasts the glory of Moses with the glory of Christ. The Israelites could not see Moses' face because of the veil. But in Christ we see the unveiled glory of God and are transformed into Christ's likeness.

¹²Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness, ¹³not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside. ¹⁴But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside. ¹⁵Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; ¹⁶but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. ¹⁷Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

^{4:1}Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. ²We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 188)

GOSPEL: Luke 9:28-36

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

The conversation about Jesus' suffering and death is enclosed in a dazzling foreshadowing of the resurrection. God affirms Jesus' identity, the disciples are stunned speechless, and Jesus resumes his mission with a demonstration of his power over evil.

²⁸Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³⁰Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. ³¹They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. ³²Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. ³³Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" —not knowing what he said. ³⁴While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. ³⁵Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" ³⁶When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

By your Spirit, O God, enlighten our hearts, open our minds, and fill our vision with your radiance and love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

What a week this has been. Among all the ups and downs that come with really any week, this particular week we saw of course the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. Now I have to admit that I haven't been totally keeping up with this story as the stuff on our own shores has been occupying my mind, pun intended. But I know people who have family in Ukraine, and they aren't doing ok. They haven't been the most vocal about it all, but of course it is worrying as no one knows how this is going to escalate and what number of casualties will come as a result of this senseless violence.

I mean, isn't the world in enough pain? Why do people need to cause more? Why is power so intoxicating that humans would be willing to hurt or even destroy other humans to get it? How can people be so closed minded and only see what they want to see, interpret things only for their own benefit, and not give a damn about anyone else but themselves and those who might be on their side?

These are the kinds of questions that keep me up at night. These are the thoughts that, on some days, make me want to roll up in a little ball and hide in a corner. These are the things that go through my mind that cause me to sometimes dream about just picking up my family and moving to some remote island, maybe owned by me, and live completely away from the horrors that this world has to offer... as long as the island has an internet connection so we can still binge on Netflix and watch Tiktok videos.

But this world is broken. Very broken. And I don't have an answer on how to fix it. I don't know what to do to make things better. I don't have the words or the knowledge or the skills to make any change to the oppressive systems that continue to plague all people but especially the poor and working class people. And it's frustrating. Because I want the world to be better. I want people to know peace and security. I want life to be better for our kids and all those that will come after us. And if we're honest, it doesn't really look like we're headed in that direction these days.

So I was feeling kind of down lately. Hopeless, really. And I didn't know how I was going to get out of it. But then something happened, something almost miraculous. I was in our boys' room one night saying goodnight and just about to turn off the light when I heard the unmistakable running footsteps of a certain ball of energy coming down the hall and yelling in excitement. It was our daughter, of course, yelling, "Guys, guys, it's snowing outside!"

My first reaction was more annoyance, because yeah right. It was super sunny all week, freezing cold, but super sunny, I highly doubt there would be snow at this time of year in the Lower Mainland. But as you all know, I was wrong. It was actually snowing. Pretty hard, too. I looked out the window and my heart sank because when you have youngish kids who need to be driven to school in the morning, snow is nowhere near good news. So while they were super excited, I went to bed feeling worse than ever.

Then I woke up Thursday morning hoping that the snow would be melted already, which is typical for these here parts, but no dice, I still had a few hours to go before it all melted. I still

had to drive the kids through that stuff. So I dragged my feet to get ready and make breakfast for them and pack their lunches. I glanced at the news a little bit to see what the situation was like in Ukraine, not good. I checked the weather to see if the snow would need shovelling or if I could just let the Lower Mainland climate do its thing. No, I had to shovel.

More discouragement. More deflation. More depressing news.

But then I opened the door to leave. The snow... was untouched. Yes, there were car tracks on the road in front of our house but not a single footprint from our front door to that road or up and down our walk. It was... perfect, and it was beautiful.

But then I noticed the time and we had to hurry or the kids would be late.

In that moment, that brief and fleeting moment, looking at the untouched snow, taken aback by its beauty, almost in awe of the wonders of this planet we live in, my heart was somewhat filled. I know, it sounds kind of corny, especially for those living in the rest of Canada where they really had their fair share of snow by now, but this was a moment that I wished I could extend for a lot longer than the couple of seconds before the hectic busyness of life crashed back into my mind.

And I didn't even notice the moment at first, but it wasn't until I was sitting in my car after dropping the kids off, waiting for these parent drivers to figure out how to get out of this small residential street in spite of the snow in front of the school, that I realised how significant that moment was for me. Perhaps we can call it a "God moment."

Today's texts give us examples of God moments. They are actual moments too, not just some lame bout with very little snow. Moses spends some time with God and his face is glowing. Paul talks about how our encounters with God lights us up as we bask in God's glory. Jesus goes up a mountain with a couple of disciples and somehow meets Moses and Elijah up there and is transfigured to be dazzling white. These moments, these *God moments* are brief and temporary, but their effects last much longer... if we let them.

In the optional verses that we have for today's gospel lesson that I opted not to include because I was too lazy to read that much, Jesus goes back down the mountain and heals a sick boy. See, life didn't let up for freshly-transfigured Jesus either, Jesus didn't stay up on the mountain extending that moment in the dwellings that Peter wanted to build, Jesus might even have felt frustrated and discouraged by the state of the world as well, but he continued to heal. He continued to love. He stretched the effect of that moment of transfiguration and allowed the declaration of him being God's chosen son to strengthen him for his ministry and service and community. So while this God moment for Jesus was fleeting, the effect of it lasted forever.

And so what are our God moments? Where and when do we encounter the living God in the midst of this hurting and broken world? In what moments do we see God most clearly, so much so that we want to extend that moment to last forever?

Perhaps it was in seeing a love that lasted generations, perhaps our own or that of our parents or grandparents. Maybe it was in the innocence of a child, our own or someone else's, calling out in extreme excitement over something that we might have brushed off as trivial. Or it could

be also in the snow, pure and untouched like tiny crystallized blessings from heaven, reflecting the sunlight with a dazzling radiance. Whatever, wherever, and whenever these God moments happen, let us allow them to not pass as quickly as a momentary moment, but have them and their effect last in our minds, our hearts, and in our lives, informing and reminding us of this good and gracious God that we serve, that even in a world that can be so cruel and evil, we can stand to face it with confidence, boldness, and love.

And I know, this doesn't solve the current conflict in Ukraine, it probably doesn't fill any of their people with hope, it won't change Russia's mind whatsoever. But the moment when I saw the many protestors in Russia calling to stop the attack, when I saw people around the world petitioning to their own governments to do something about it, when I saw the outpouring of support for good against evil, I knew that God can be seen in the midst of the violence, not supporting it, but empowering the weak, mending the brokenness, and loving the outcast. That was a moment to me that had an effect that will last forever.

On this last day of the season after the Epiphany, may we hold up the moments in which we encounter the living God, and allow them to strengthen us, motivate us, and remind us of how God declares us God's own chosen and beloved children. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: God of Grace and God of Glory (#705) verses 1, 3, 4

CREED

With all basking in the light of Christ, let us confess the Christian faith with the Apostle's Creed:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Called into recognizing and proclaiming Christ in our lives, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "Lord, our Light," and you all may respond with **hear our prayer**. Lord, our Light, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord our King, you are enthroned on high and stand in awe of you. Instill in us a hope in your promises, that we can continue following you and your truth with boldness and faith. Lord, our Light, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you are great in Zion, high above all people, and you come to us in grace and love. Strengthen our proclamation of your greatness, and may the world be touched by our service and ministry. We pray especially for our neighbouring faith communities; our partner Anglican Church of Canada; our bishop Kathy and national bishop Susan; and our companion congregations of the BC Synod. In particular, we pray for the people of Mount Olivet Lutheran Church in North Vancouver as they continue to heal from their church disbanding and as they settle into their new church homes; and for Christ the King Lutheran Church in Surrey and their pastor Lori-Anne Boutin-Crawford on this her last day of her call with them. Lord, our Light, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you are the Holy One, and you have created a world full of wonder and beauty in which we can live in and call our home. Strengthen us in our stewardship of this planet, and bring us into right relationship with you, each other, and all living things. Lord, our Light, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, lover of justice, you have established equity and righteousness in all nations, but because of sin, the hunger and thirst for power has perverted your plan for the world. Grant all world leaders and politicians wisdom in their governing, that they might see the equity that you have planned for us since the beginning. And we especially remember in prayer the people in Ukraine, that they are able to find safety and security in the midst of chaos and that this conflict ends soon. Also we pray for those that we've sponsored to come into our country and away from the threat of danger: Solyana Amanuel; and Mikele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their young children. Lord, our Light, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you are mighty and great, and you bring us into healing and wholeness by your love. Be especially with all among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, and reveal to all the nature of your presence in our lives. We pray in particular for Diana; Paula; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Bev and family; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Cindy; Linda; Charlotte; William; Jenny; Chris; Mr. Cifuentes; Min; those who have been affected by COVID 19; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...

Lord, our Light, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, our God, you are with us always and you invite us into your eternal story with you and all the saints. Remind us of all the lives of faith that have gone before us, and may they inform us of our own faith and give us strength to navigate today's world. Lord, our Light, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the truth of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

MEAL

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, to at all times and places give thanks and praise to you, O God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, whom you have declared as your beloved Son full of truth and grace, and who brings us into the light of your forgiving mercy.

For on the night that he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus sat with his friends for a meal, where he took some bread, gave thanks, broke and shared it and said, "Take and eat, this is my body broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

And then after they ate, he took the common cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them to drink from 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."

It is in this food that we are reminded of our connection to God and each other, living in the light of love and truth, even as we declare this mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

To you, O God, be all glory and honour, for welcoming us into your presence and being with us throughout our lives, as you teach us, lead us, and strengthen us, through Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered by the Holy Spirit into the light of Christ, let us pray as he taught us.

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Taste and see God's love for us all.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMN: Lamb of God (p. 191)

Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love (#708)

What a Friend We Have in Jesus (#742)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, again you have fed us with the nourishing truth of your Word and blessed us with your light of love. Be with us as we go from here and venture out into the world with your healing grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May God's glory shine on you,
God's Word live within you,
and God's Spirit give you peace,
now and always.

Amen.

SENDING SONG: What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine (#774)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, live in the hope of God's light.

Thanks be to God.

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