



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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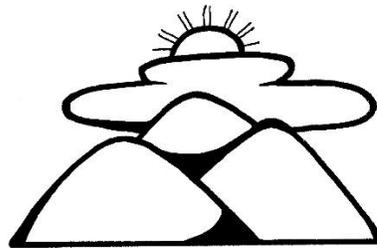
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**Transfiguration of Our Lord
February 11, 2024
ACS Holy Communion, Setting 12**

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.

A warm welcome to those who are here worshipping in-person and on-line with us today! 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

We gather to worship the mighty one, God the Lord, who calls the earth from the rising of the sun to the time that it goes down. For God's glory shines forth and leads and guides us into righteousness and peace, and forgives us into community as citizens of God's kingdom according to God's holy covenant. And let us together declare God's righteousness and faithfulness, and bask in the beauty of God's love. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING SONG: Be Thou My Vision (#793)

GREETING

The life-changing grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the radiant love of God, and the eye-opening communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

SONG OF PRAISE (ACS p. 31)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy and mighty God, gather us among your faithful ones, the people of your covenant, to stand in the light of your glory and listen for the word of the Lord, Jesus Christ our Saviour, through whom we pray. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: 2 Kings 2:1-12

A reading from 2 Kings.

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.

The word of the Lord.

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.
- ²**Out 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.
- ⁴**God 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.”
- ⁶**The heavens declare the rightness of God’s cause,
for it is God who is judge.**

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 4:3-6

A reading from 2 Corinthians.

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.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ACS p. 33)

GOSPEL: Mark 9:2-9

The holy gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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." ⁶He 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!" ⁸Suddenly 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.

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Lord our God, may the light of your Spirit shine brightly in our hearts as you speak to us with your Word, Jesus Christ our Saviour and friend. **Amen.**

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well... this is awkward.

We aren't all that comfortable in the silence, are we? We don't really like it when things aren't happening. It is sometimes awkward to be just there, without anything to do or to say.

Because, we like to do things and we like to say things. But it seems like the level that we like to do and say things in society has come to a fault, in that it seems like we're at a point where we *have* to somehow keep ourselves busy like all the time lest we find ourselves feeling... I don't know... just off. No one wants to feel whatever it is that we feel when we have nothing going on, so we tend to fill up our time doing things that don't really need to be done. We break awkward silences with words that don't really need to be said. We bite our nails, twirl our pens, and buy these fidget toys to keep in our pockets just so we are never not doing anything.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that having things to do or saying things is bad or buying fidget toys is weird. Honestly some of those things are pretty cool, I wish I had more of them. But of course there will always be something that we can do, and there's nothing wrong with that, it's a necessity for life. What I'm saying is that it seems like we're so self conscious of those times when we actually have nothing to do or anything to say. Like it's almost a source of anxiety just to think that we're not being productive or making the most of our time. Time is

precious, there's no doubt about that, but it seems like we fill up this time, this space, these gaps with general stuff not out of necessity, but out of fear.

Fear of not doing enough, maybe. Fear of looking lazy perhaps. Or it could be a fear of being lonely.

Maybe you know what I'm talking about. Maybe you know someone like this. Or maybe you're like this. I know I am, I often say things randomly that don't really make sense or quickly do something that ends up not being helpful. But really, I think that's something that most people do at least on a subconscious level, because society has drilled it in our heads that we need to be doing something... *anything*... or else we're just not doing our part. We're not fulfilling our role as a member of society if we were doing nothing. We're not living up to the expectation that has been set out for us unless we are busy all the time.

So again, we do what we do. I load ourselves up with stuff. We say things without really thinking about what we're saying. We just fill the gaps that we can't stand to leave unfilled.

I see this "fill the gap" mentality a lot in today's readings. Poor Elisha in the first reading is just walking with his master, his teacher, the only mentor that he's ever known, fully aware that this would be the last walk they will take together. And what do their prophet colleagues do? They fill the gap with their "words of comfort." They remind Elisha that he's on the cusp of feeling loss, sadness, and pain. They ask him out of concern if he knows what's about to happen. They're trying to help by not helping at all. So much that Elisha tells them to "be silent" or in our vernacular, to shut up. Clearly their words weren't what Elisha needed, but they used them anyway.

And don't we do that too? We might not know how to comfort those grieving around us, but we want to be comforting because we genuinely care. We want to help them but we might not have the words. We want to say something, anything, that might alleviate the discomfort that we feel in their pain, and so we might fill that gap with our "thoughts and prayers" sentiments.

The gospel has an example of this need to fill the gap as well. We have the transfiguration story of course, it's Transfiguration Sunday. And we're familiar with this story with how Jesus goes up a mountain, turns into something that is whiter than the whitest whites, and good ol' Peter wants to make some huts.

You know, say what you'll say about Peter, but this guy is hilarious. He doesn't disappoint. 10/10, will laugh at him again.

But the text is clear, his suggestion to build these dwellings comes out of his literal not knowing what to say. He doesn't know what to do. So out of his awkwardness and discomfort he just blurts out his great idea. Huts. On a mountain. For three celestial supernatural beings that are seriously freaking them out. Great idea.

So Peter was filling in the gap here just as those prophets were for Elisha. And just like Elisha's response to them, Peter is shut up by a voice from heaven saying, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!"

Jesus, God's beloved son. Listen to him.

I don't know, I think they better do what that equal parts mysterious and terrifying voice says. It seems to mean business.

But it makes sense, though, doesn't it? Jesus has just been miraculously and divinely transfigured before their eyes. They just saw him chilling out with Moses and Elijah, two of the greatest figureheads their culture has ever known. This was just a physical manifestation of the radiant light that they've already seen shining through his care and compassion for people, his wise and wondrous teachings for any who wish to hear, his whole life of love that they know thus far. Listening to him sounds like a good idea.

But... they can't do that if they're too busy talking or doing things. They can't hear if they're caught up in spewing empty words or performing idle actions. They can't experience God in this way without the still and silent moments of life.

You know, those ones that we try to fill up with stuff? Those times that we try to avoid with doing and saying things? Those gaps that we try to fill to stave off the awkwardness and uncomfortable feelings they bring?

It's in those moments that God can be most seen, most felt, most *heard* in speaking to us, leading us, showing us God's ways of peace and contentment.

After my dad passed away almost 7 years ago now, my mom joined this class at her church that was specifically for grieving people and was to teach them how to manage and cope. My siblings and I thought it'd be a good idea for at least one of us to go with her to each of the 5 or 6 sessions they offered. I, being a pastor and very familiar with grief, thought I'd be internally rolling my eyes a lot through the session I agreed to go to because what is this person going to tell *me* about my feelings? As it turned out, it was a lot. It turned out that I was feeling a lot more than I was letting myself acknowledge. As it turned out, I needed to listen. Listen to this guy teaching. Listen to my own heart and feelings. Listen to God, present in community, present in our relationships, present within ourselves, opening our eyes to the world, lifting us up out of shame, and showing us the radiant beauty and joy of life.

At this session I went to with my mom, the instructor kept repeating the phrase "lean into your pain." As in, don't avoid what you're feeling. Don't try to bottle up what's inside. Don't fill the gap with work, activities, and words. But just lean into it, and feel those feels.

There was a woman in the group who at the time had been grieving her husband for 5 years already. And she expressed how she didn't do that, she didn't lean in, she didn't allow herself to feel, she didn't listen. But now she does and it has brought her healing, comfort, and peace.

Now I'm not saying that just taking the time to be quiet is going to make all your troubles go away. It's not some miracle fix-all that we can apply and suddenly life is honky dory. It's not like a get-out-of-jail-free card.

But what I'm saying is that it's ok to find yourself in the quiet. It's ok to not have anything to say or do in any given situation. It's ok to not fill in the gaps, but just lean in and listen. Allow the experience of the moment surround you. Let God's voice radiate in your life. We might just learn something.

As we end this season after the Epiphany, this season of learning about the person of Jesus and seeing and recognising his role in our lives, community, and world, and move into the season of Lent, a season of penitent reflection and recognition, may we boldly find the space to be still and silent, that we might see, hear, and listen. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light (#815)

CREED

Together with all those touched by 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

Led by the light of God to be the light of God, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "Lord, by your illuminating mercy," and you are invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. Lord, by your illuminating mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O God, you have spoken to us with your mighty voice, and your beauty shines forth through your glory and we stand in awe of your radiance that moves us to serve and minister. May our proclamation of your good news be faithful and be able to reach all people in your name. We pray especially for our neighbouring faith communities; those who use our building for worship, work, and play; our partners Anglican Church of Canada and Moravian Church in Canada; and our bishops, rostered ministers, congregations, and ministries of the ELCIC. In particular, we pray for Hope Lutheran Church in Nanaimo and their pastor Terry Richardson; and all the institutions in our church that care for the elderly. Lord, by your illuminating mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O God, you come to us through creation, and you speak to us through the sights and sounds of nature. Allow us to hear your wisdom, strengthening us to properly care for this planet and all that you've entrusted to us. Lord, by your illuminating mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O God, you judge all people in heaven and earth with wisdom and grace. May all world leaders and politicians learn from this wisdom and grace, that their judgements be fair and for the good of all. We pray for the continued support of those that we've sponsored to come into our country: Abraham Barhane; and Solyana Amanuel; and for those that have not yet arrived: Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; and Filimon Abraha. Lord, by your illuminating mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, we remember your covenant of love and mercy with us, your loyal followers, as we look to you for healing and wholeness. We remember in prayer those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that your love shine in and through us all. Especially we pray for Bryan and Chona; Beulah; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Bev and family; Sukhwant; Cari; John and Betty; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Will; Chris; Walter; Larry; Matt; Lucas; Piet; Julie and family; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...
Lord, by your illuminating mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, the heavens declare that you are righteous and just, and your love endures forever. You welcome us to live with you and all the saints for eternity, reminding us of our everlasting connection and community. May we be inspired by the faith of those we've loved and lost, that we might be strengthened to live our lives with honour and be pleasing to you. Lord, by your illuminating mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your radiant love seen in 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.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and places give thanks and praise to you, O God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who lights up our lives and leads us into community with you and all the saints, joining us with the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the whole church on earth in praising your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (ACS p. 36)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Yes Lord you are holy and mighty, and our praise goes to you. For you are glorious in your works as you illuminate our souls with your love. And when the time was right, you send to us Jesus, your Son, to be among us as one of us to show us the way into your everlasting peace.

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

And after they ate, he took the common cup, gave thanks, and passed it around the table for 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 bread and cup that we can see your love for us, O God, spread through your Word, your kingdom, and your light that shines in the darkness, even as we together proclaim this mystery of our faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

So it is to you, O God, that all honour and glory belong, for all that you have done and continue to do as our God, our Lord, our Shepherd who gathers us into one kingdom, one community, one family under Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (ACS p. 39)

Gathered as God's people in the world, let us pray as Jesus 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 shining in and through us.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (ACS p. 40)

How Great Thou Art (#856)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy Lord, we give you thanks for again feeding us and nourishing us with your Word and truth, and leading us in the paths of righteousness and faith. Continue strengthening us with your promises, that as we go from here we can go empowered and bold to proclaim the good news of your love, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May the love of God bless you and hold tightly,
the light of God shine on you and show you grace,
and the life that is given to us by God always lift us up into joy, community, and peace, now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING SONG: We Are Marching in the Light (#866)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, listen to the Lord of life and light.

Thanks be to God.

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