

## **Feb 14 2021 Transfiguration of Our Lord~ Worship with Holy Communion**

***Today at 10 a.m.is St John's Annual General Meeting on line by ZOOM or by phone in.***

**Preparing for worship:**

**We will have Holy Communion together - separately this worship time.**

**You will need either wine or grape juice and bread of some kind.**

**You may use what cups & plates you have – do not go out & purchase.**

**Here is a list: a white cloth, large cup or individual ones, a large paten(plate) for bread or small – depending on the size of your family. A cross and a candle.**

**Good morning – welcome to worship,**

Gather everyone in your household together this morning. If you are not alone - assign parts of this beforehand. If you don't have a Bible you can google the scripture readings and print them out too. Perhaps print out copies of this for everyone present. This Liturgy is from the Lutheran Book of Worship and the modified prayers this morning are based on those from Sundays & Seasons Hymns are from the ELW & LBW. Shut off all the distractions in your home. Sit in the quiet for a bit – take some deep breaths. Light the candle.

### **GATHERING TOGETHER**

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.**

**Call to Worship:** God gives us strength to carry on, one day at a time. As we wait for the Lord, we gather together and come into His presence. We set aside our complaints and instead make a note of gratitude for all that we have and all that we are. We pray for renewed hope and that our personal resilience may be strengthened. We know above all else that God loves us. Amen.

**Hymn: WOV 652 / ELW 314 - Arise, Your Light has Come**

**The Lord be with you – and also with you**

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

## The Word

The scriptures today are read today by Karen Prince.

The Old Testament lesson is from **2 Kings 2:1-12**

**Psalm 50:1-6** found on page 238

The New Testament lesson is from **2 Corinthians 4: 3-6**

Please rise for the gospel lesson. *Holy, Holy, Holy, our hearts adore you. Our hearts are glad to say the words: you are Holy God.*

We are fortunate, on our AGM Sunday, to have the gospel and sermon delivered by Bishop Michael Pryse, from the Eastern Synod.

The Holy Gospel according to Mark:

Six 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, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then 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." He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore, but only Jesus. As 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!

Hi everybody! It is a real delight to be here with you today and to be a part of your Sunday worship and to give your pastor this small bit of relief. Our rostered ministers have been doing a magnificent job of providing opportunities for us to worship over the course of this long pandemic. But friends, it is very hard work and anything we can do to help lighten the load they are carrying is well worth supporting!

Today I'd like to share a few thoughts with you concerning the subject of vision. And I'm sure that most of you would agree that vision is a very important thing. You know very well from your own experience, both individually and as a congregation, that you need vision to carry a task through to completion. You need vision to sustain you and refresh you as you press through the bumps, turns and valleys we will inevitably encounter in life.

There is, however, a potential danger involved in this vision business. Vision is good, but the line between being visionary and being delusional can sometimes become very fine! Let me spell out the differences I see by way of an incident that happened to me some years ago on a golf course.

Now, for those of you who know not the pleasure of chasing a little bouncy ball over hundreds of acres of mixed terrain, let me tell you that all golfers carry a common vision. It is the vision of the perfect shot, a drive to the pin, a smooth effortless stroke and perfect backswing. You can imagine the gentle arc of the ball as it climbs into the sky. Perhaps a few astonished oohs and aahs from the gallery. And then lastly, you imagine the final, graceful drop of the ball, pin high and just a few feet from the cup.

Well, one day it actually happened for me. The vision became a reality. A perfect shot on a 265-yard par three followed by a gentle, dare I say casual, tap-in for birdie! It had never happened before nor since!

In retrospect, I now know that I should have accepted that vision, that unique experience, for what it truly was. I should have enjoyed this brief glimpse of golfing glory and then set it aside in my mind for future inspiration and guidance. But I didn't do that. Instead, I immediately adopted the delusional posture of a naïve visionary.

I was no longer Michael, the intimate friend of sand trap and water hazard. I now stood among the great ones; a veritable Tiger Woods! And, of course, I encountered the end which ultimately comes to all naïve visionaries; and by the time I had finished the fourth hole I had lost seven balls; torn up enough divots to generously sod my front lawn and was seriously contemplating how much my clubs would fetch at our next neighbourhood garage sale!

My vision was left in tatters. Not because there was anything wrong with the vision itself, but rather because I had naïvely assumed to have claimed and contained that vision rather than allowing myself to be carried forward, guided and inspired by it.

Do you see the distinction? In our Gospel lesson we see elements of this dynamic played out in more sacred terms. Jesus and his disciples go up a mountain. Jesus moves on ahead and then, suddenly and unexpectedly, apparent magic starts to happen. Jesus form starts to change, he becomes like pure energy, pure light. Glorified beings seem to appear; Moses and Elijah. And then finally the whole

episode is dramatically concluded by a mysterious voice from the heavens that proclaims this same Jesus to be God's own Son.

Can you imagine having such an experience? And who can really know how or what was happening! Regardless, it was extraordinary and the response of the disciple's is understandable. They are both terrified by and captivated by this vision and want to hold onto it. They want this glorious moment to go on forever. They want to set up tents and live right there on the mountain!

But as quickly as the vision had come, it was gone. In an instant the disciples went from being privileged witnesses of the glories of heaven, back to being tired fisherman huddled on the unfamiliar face of a mountainside! The vision had come, and in spite of the disciples' desire to contain it and hold onto it, it had just as quickly passed. They confused this temporary and transitory vision for that which was eternal. They had confused the means with the end!

This is a danger which we, as a church, also need to continually guard against. We too can become misdirected and confused about the means and the end in ways that can distract us from our primary mission. Let me give you a secular example of what I mean.

In 1960 a Harvard business professor named Theodore Levitt wrote a classic article that focused on the dramatic decline of the railroad industry in early 20th century North America. The decline of the industry, Levitt concludes, didn't come about because people and freight no longer needed to be transported. The railroad declined, rather, because the railway managers came to believe that they were in the railroad business rather than the transportation business. They

confused the means - tracks and engines - with the ends - the transportation of people and freight!

Can you see any analogies for the church? Do we not sometimes function as if we were in the church business instead of the blessing business; the “we exist for ourselves” business as opposed to the “God’s mission to bless the world” business?” Do we not sometimes fall into this same trap of confusing the means with the ends and making it all about us; acting as if the church – our buildings, institutions, practices and beliefs were an end in and of themselves, rather than being a means by which we can support and participate in the ultimate end of advancing God’s mission to bless and save the world.

I believe that there are many people in our communities who are open to experiencing the kind of conversions that many people experienced through Jesus’ life and ministry, many people who are coming to recognize the emptiness and hollowness of the false gospels of contemporary life. But those questioners and seekers won’t look for a renewed life in a community, in a church, that doesn’t provide evidence of having experienced a similar conversion; that doesn’t believably express the new life that we claim to be calling others to embrace. They won’t easily be drawn to the life of a church which appears to be more interested in the church business than in the blessing business.

One of the unexpected, albeit forced, blessings of this time of pandemic has been a reordering of priorities; a renewed appreciation of the means and the ends. During this time where we have been cut off from our church buildings and from the activities and practices that received so much of our attention and care in a pre-pandemic time, we’ve been given the opportunity to focus on the real end

and purpose of everything that we do; advancing the reign of God through faithful proclamation, prayer and service. It's been a kind of forced re-set that we really need to hang onto when the day eventually comes when we can return to some measure of normalcy in our life together.

The same voice that proclaimed Jesus to be "well loved" on the mount of transfiguration speaks that same blessing to us, today. That blessing is a means, and not an end. It is a means by which we are called to aid and abet the ultimate end of God's mission to bless and save the world; a means by which we are empowered to share the Gospel of love and reconciliation that has been entrusted to us; generously, freely and extravagantly for the world's salvation.

AMEN

**Hymn: LBW 80 / ELW 316 - Oh, Wondrous Image, Vision Fair**

### **Our Response**

**The Apostles' 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 THE PEOPLE - LED BY KAREN PRINCE**

Guided by Christ made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.

*A brief silence.*

For the gospel proclaimed in word and deed, for communities of faith far and near, and for all who show the face of Christ throughout the world, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For creation: sun, moon and stars; life forming in the dark earth and ocean deep; mountains, clouds and storms, and creatures seen and unseen, and for the Holy Spirit's guidance in our stewardship of God's creation, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For 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, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For all who suffer this day (*especially*), that Christ our healer transform sickness into health, loneliness into companionship, bereavement into consolation, and suffering into peace, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For companions on life's journey in this worshiping community, for loved ones who cannot be with us this day, and for guidance during struggles we face, that God's glory is revealed around and among us, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

In thanksgiving for the faithful departed who now rest from their earthly pilgrimage, that their lives of service and prayer inspire us in our living, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

**The Peace of Christ be with you always - and also with you.**



## **OFFERING PRAYER**

God of goodness and growth, all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. Water and word, wine and bread: these are signs of your abundant grace. Nourish us through these gifts, that we might proclaim your steadfast love in our communities and in the world, through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song. **Amen.**

## **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✙ one God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Faithful God,

**have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways.**

**We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves.**

**We place our own needs before those of our neighbors. We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves. Make us humble, cast away our transgressions, and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims: Your sins are forgiven in the name of ✙ Jesus Christ. Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness to do God's work in the world. **Amen.**

## **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 in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life .And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name.

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.

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**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**

Please take time now to have your Communion at home.

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

We give you thanks, gracious God, that you have once again fed us with food beyond compare, the body and blood of Christ. Lead us from this place, nourished and forgiven, into your beloved vineyard to wipe away the tears of all who hunger and thirst, guided by the example of the same Jesus Christ and led by the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

**Hymn: WOV 649 / ELW 815 - I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light**

**BLESSING**

Mothering God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life. **Amen.**

**DISMISSAL** Go in peace. Be the light of Christ. **Thanks be to God.**