



Sunday Feb 27th, 2022 - Transfiguration Sunday The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Gathering & Lighting the Candle

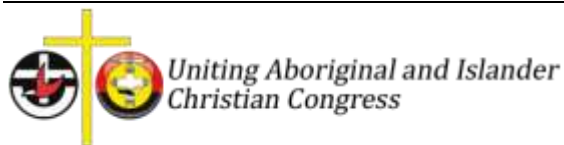
We have travelled together through Epiphany and looked for where God is revealed in our world, and even in us. We have explored where the light of God is shining. Today we come to Transfiguration Sunday where we celebrate God revealed in such light that we have veiled our eyes. As we light the candle this day, we pray that God will be revealed to us in truth, in love and in grace. And that we have eyes to see and ears to hear. We come with all our senses alive to the revelation of God. May the flicker of this candle remind us of the light of Christ, ever present in us and in our world.

Call to worship

God IS present with us this day, we come to worship our God, Holy and Righteous.

The Psalm today speaks of God as Lover of Justice, establishing equity and righteousness. We approach today with our eyes open and attentive, our faces unveiled. We come to worship God in whom we find true freedom and transformation.

Acknowledging



As we gather, we acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and these waters. We pay respect to elders past, present and emerging. As First and Second Peoples walking together, we commit ourselves to be people of the covenant, listening, truth telling and seeking justice for all.

Singing: Immortal, invisible ... TiS 143

Listening

Read: Psalm 99

For these words of faith and for Jesus the Word: **Thanks be to God.**



Prayer

We are so tempted to cover ourselves, to wrap ourselves in a veil, to hide, for to be truly revealed before you O God feels shameful and fearful. But the Scriptures speak to us of your forgiveness. Your love brings us out into the light of your light and of your presence. You are indeed a Holy God, but you offer us grace and mercy and share your glory with us. Transform us, bring us into ever greater degrees of your glory. Help us to reflect and reveal your image to others, faithfully, generously and freely.

Unveil our hearts and reveal yourself to us in your holiness, the glory of your character.

Listening

Read: 2 Corinthians 3:12 – 4:2

Luke 9: 28-43a,

For these words of faith and for Jesus the Word: **Thanks be to God.**

Reflecting - Rev. Sandra Houghton

Mount Tabor, which is widely believed to be the scene of today's Gospel story, rises abruptly, almost vertically, out of the plain. So, it would have been a long, steep and demanding climb to the top for Jesus, Peter, James and John. No wonder the crowd stopped at the bottom of the mountain.



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Today you get whisked to the top up a steep winding road, with lots of hairpin bends, by a taxi shuttle service. As the taxi drivers drive alarmingly fast on the rather poor road, the trip is more a test of courage than stamina! But the view from the top, then as now, is wonderful with the Sea of Galilee to the east, Nazareth to the north, and the Jezreel valley to the west.

But it wasn't the view from the top that was important on that long ago day, rather the mysterious events that unfolded there. These days there are beautiful mosaics in the church atop the Mount of Transfiguration that make an attempt to portray these events, but it must be said that no portrayal could possibly capture the sheer awesome, dazzling mystery and power of the transfiguration.

Nor can words adequately convey the glory and the power of God at work as Jesus was changed into a dazzling white figure and was joined in the spotlight on the mountain by two heroes of long ago- Moses and Elijah. Moses was the great lawgiver and great leader of the Exodus, and Elijah was the great prophet, who it was believed, had never died but rather been taken directly up into heaven. They had stepped through the veil of history and out of time onto the mountain.

Moses and Elijah talked with Jesus about his coming death, although the word they used was his 'exodus' (translated in most Bibles as departure), and they did not speak of it as something that would happen to him, rather they spoke of it as something that he would 'accomplish'. It is like a mysterious handing on of the baton from the Old Testament patriarchs to Jesus.

And with Moses standing right there, the parallel is hard to miss. Jesus was, like Moses

before him, going to set God's people free. But whilst Moses freed the people of Israel from slavery, Jesus' mission was to set people free from captivity to sin and overcome the power of death. And whilst Moses met God on a mountain to receive the Ten Commandments, on this mountain Jesus is affirmed in his mission and in the rightness of his proclamations.

This confirmation comes not only from the presence of Elijah and Moses, but also from God's presence and voice from the cloud saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" These words, and the presence of Moses and Elijah, must have been a marvellous confirmation for Jesus that he had rightly discerned God's will for him. After all, this is something that he in his humanity must have struggled to understand.

It is no wonder though that Peter, James and John were shocked and overawed. They had previously struggled to comprehend Jesus' teaching about his need to go to Jerusalem and die, but now the transfiguration events left them completely stunned and bewildered. No wonder they didn't really begin to understand these events (and much of Jesus' teaching) until after the resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

We may, like the disciples, struggle to understand why Jesus had to suffer and die but these events confirm to us that all that Jesus did and said was guided by God.

The transfiguration events also reveal something of the awesome power and majesty of God, far beyond our human comprehension, yet this is the God who loves us and wants us to be God's children. This is indeed good news! Thanks be to God!

Singing: O Laughing Light TiS 255

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Responding:

Prayers for World & Community

We come to you in thanks and gratitude. You reveal yourself to us in so many ways, not least of these through each other. Through nature and through Scriptures you show yourself to us. Even through the tough desert times you come alongside us in the glory of your steadfast love.

Where the Spirit is there is freedom.

We are mindful this day of those in our own church communities who are having a tough time. We hold each of them and the households who support them in our prayers. Help us to sensitively and compassionately care for them.

Where the Spirit is there is freedom.

We are also mindful this day of those in our wider communities. You are a God who seeks justice, and we know that too often life's circumstances are not equal or fair. We pray for those who do not know freedom, for those incarcerated in whatever circumstances, those who are detained

as refugees seeking shelter and sanctuary. For those who are prisoners of the justice system, especially the children and those who are far too heavily represented in the system.

Where the Spirit is there is freedom.

We pray for those who are prisoners in their homes, those whose own minds hold them captive, those held captive by addiction or loneliness, or those who find that medical needs or disability are confining.

Where the Spirit is there is freedom.

Our hearts are sad when we think of the inequality in life. Many of us have lives of privilege and we know that not all people

share equally in having even their basic needs met.

We think of the homeless, and of those in economic hardship and those marginalised and lacking a voice. Forgive us our own part in the systems which allow this inequality and help us to work together to make it otherwise. Enlighten and strengthen the powerful to make change and bring justice.

May your Spirit blow amongst us, flapping her glorious wings, enabling us and leading us into ways of true freedom and enlightenment. May your Kingdom come and your will be done.

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.

Passing the peace

May the Peace of God dwell with you:
and also with you.

Offering

We give you thanks for all your provision for us. May we freely give all that we have and are, in your service loving God. Bless our gifts and reveal yourself through them. May they be used toward justice and equity. May they bring life.



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Notices

As we move through this week and prepare to enter the 40 days of Lent, we celebrate **Shrove Tuesday**. What will you put away, or give up for Lent? What will you take up as a spiritual practice or discipline?

For Lent, as part of this resource, we're offering *Beneath the Fig Tree*, a short daily reading and reflection. Also - It's not too late to register a Pancake Day event:

<https://www.unitingvictas.org.au/event/pancake-day/>

Singing - How good Lord to be here TiS 234

Blessing

May you know the abundance of peace and grace in your own lives.

Go out in love and peace to share freely and generously. May God be revealed in and through you as you serve your community in the love of Christ.

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Beneath the Fig Tree

a daily Lenten space:

For each day of Lent, we will offer a bible reading and a comment or question for you to sit with. You could create a space that you go to each day at a particular time, light a candle, journal the images and thoughts that come to you, listen to music, or simply sit in silence. The prayer words might remain with you for the day and open you to the needs of others and the yearnings within.

Ash Wednesday - March 2nd, begins our Lenten journey for 2022. Traditionally Palm Crosses from last year are burnt and the ashes placed in the shape of a cross on the forehead.

Read: Psalm 51:1-17

What does it mean for you when the psalmist asks for a clean heart and a new and right spirit? *Prayer words: heart / spirit*

Thursday March 3rd

Read: Luke 4: 1

From an experience of spiritual fullness, Jesus is led into wilderness. How do you imagine spiritual fullness? Have you experienced wilderness?

Prayer words: fullness / wilderness

Friday March 4th

Read: Romans 10:8b

The word of faith is very near to you. In fact, it resides on your lips and dwells in your heart. When you listen, what does this word say to you and to others? How is it expressed through your lips from your heart?

Prayer words: near / within

Saturday March 5th

Read Psalm 91: 1 & 2

How might God be a shelter and fortress? What does it mean for you to trust God?

Prayer words: shelter / abide

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