



TRANSMUTATION  
**OF CHRIST**

FEBRUARY 23, 2020

## We Gather for Worship

### Prelude & Entrance of Christ's Light

### Gratitude Moments

#### \*Call to Worship

L: Jesus is here in our midst again today.

**P: He has promised to be with us always.**

L: Sometimes he is standing right in front of us, but we don't always recognize him.

**P: Today let us seek to recognize Jesus' presence among us in this time and place, and in all of our lives.**

\*Hymn "Shine, Jesus, Shine"

TFWS #2173

### A Time for the Child in All of Us

### Ministry of Music

Prayer (unison)

**Holy and glorious God, one minute Jesus was just as the disciples always saw him and the next he was transfigured right before their eyes. There are times when we wish we could have the same experience, so we can be sure, so we might know him in all his glory. But maybe we are looking in all the wrong places. We could experience him in so many ways: a child's laughter, a gentle touch, a hug, someone sitting by the bedside of a loved one, in the eyes of a homeless person, when a friend comes to comfort us, and so many other ways. Open the eyes of our hearts to make that connection, O God. Thank you for so many opportunities to not only see Jesus in the face of another person, but also to know his presence right here and right now. Amen.**

Sung Response "Glory to God in the Highest"

TFWS #2276

## We Proclaim the Word

Reading the Word Matthew 17:1-9

L: The Word of God for the People of God.

**P: Thanks be to God.**

Message "Transformation"

Rev. Dr. Deb

\*Hymn "We Have Come at Christ's Own Bidding"

TFWS #2103

## We Respond to God's Word

### Prayers of the People

#### Silent Prayer and Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer (unison)

**Our Father, who are in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

#### Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings

\*Doxology (Please join in singing the following)

UMH #94

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below; Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise God, the source of all our gifts! Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts! Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit, Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

\*Prayer of Dedication (unison)

**Light of the World, we come before you with our offerings, trusting that these gifts are only a beginning of the many ways you can touch other lives with them. Bless them to be a blessing. Amen.**

## We Go Forth to Serve

\*Hymn "Christ is the World's Light"

UMH #188

\*Choral Benediction (Congregation encircles the Sanctuary)

**May the Lord, gracious God bless and keep you forever. Grant you peace, perfect peace, courage in every endeavor. Lift up your eyes and seek his face and his grace forever. May the Lord, mighty God bless and keep you forever.**

\*Pastor's Charge

### Postlude

*\*Please stand as you are comfortable*

TFWS = The Faith We Sing    UMH = United Methodist Hymnal  
Large print bulletins are available from the greeters



## UPCOMING EVENTS

2/26 - Ash Wednesday service will begin our Lenten season with a service held in the sanctuary at 12:00 noon.

3/3 - Finance Trustee Meeting at Parsonage at 6:00. All are welcome.

3/7 - Visioning meeting at the church from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

3/10 - Peace Circle meeting 9:30 am at either Yvonne's or Darlene's.

3/17 - Church Council at 6:00 pm at church. All are welcome.

Sundays - Church Service starts at 10 a.m. Sunday School is right after the children's sermon and we look forward to catching up with you during coffee hour after the worship service...see you there.

Everyday - Be a Prayer Warrior and lift up the world and its people in prayer.

Sometime this week - write a note, card or visit one of our family members who are either living in assisted living, nursing care or homebound.

2020 Flower chart - is posted in the Narthex. Bring your own arrangement or have the church order them at a cost of \$25. This is a great way to honor, remember, thank or let someone know they are appreciated.

Altar flowers - Happy Anniversary to Art and Nancy. Congratulations!



## PRAYER LIST

Cassie Heppner Family

Timberland Family

Dave Richards

Dan Strange

Bobbie Noble

The Westcott Family

Julia West

Judy Doyon

Rev. Charles Hartman

Emily - for the Fernandez Family

Our Denomination

Our Church Family

All those living in assisted living, nursing care or homebound



## WORSHIP TEAM

Pastor - Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson

Pastor's Assistant - David Richards

Lay Leader - Susan Sarosiek

Liturgist - Graham Baker

Acolyte - Alexa Langs

Director of Music - Bevan Bloemendaal

Greeters - Langs Family &

Marilyn Stebbins

Ushers - Ken & Jenya Westbrook

Sound Tech - Sue Sarosiek

Worship Service Tech - Steve Scott

Photographer - Dave Atkinson

Sunday School - Dave Atkinson



## **FUMC PORTSMOUTH A RECONCILING CONGREGATION**

We, the congregation of the First United Methodist Church of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, are dedicated in worshipping, learning, and serving with all people as we embrace Jesus Christ's message of love and acceptance. As a United Methodist Church we stand fully behind the statement "Open Hearts, Open Minds, and Open Doors". We celebrate our diversity and invite all persons regardless of age, gender, racial or ethnic background, sexual orientation, marital or socioeconomic status, nationality, physical or mental ability into full membership and participation in the life of this community of faith.



**New England Annual Conference Tri-State District**  
The Rev. Sudarshana Devadhar, Bishop  
The Rev. Taesung Kang, District Superintendent

**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
**129 Miller Avenue - Portsmouth, NH 03801**  
Office Phone 603-436-6038 [office@fumcportsmouth.net](mailto:office@fumcportsmouth.net)  
Pastor office hours - Tuesday and Thursday 9 am - 12 pm  
[call to ensure availability]  
Pastor - Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson

Check out our website at [www.fumcportsmouth.com](http://www.fumcportsmouth.com)

Like and Follow Us On:





SERMON TRANSCRIPT GIVEN BY  
REV. DR. DEB HANSON

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 17:1-9

THEME: How does Jesus' transfiguration change the disciples and us?

**Monologue: Peter's account of the Transfiguration** found at <https://www.rootsontheweb.com/lectionary/2004/09-january-february-2004-c/last-after-epiphany-transfiguration/explore-respond/drama-monologue-peters-account-of-the-transfiguration> Peter recalls the amazing experience of witnessing the Transfiguration of Christ

What can we imagine it was like to be on the mountaintop with Jesus on that day when he was transfigured? Whenever we read about mountaintop experiences in the Bible, it is an indication that God is there and something important is about to happen. A few chapters before this happened, Jesus and the disciples had been among the people, and Jesus had been healing. The crowds had grown with the word that a healer was in their town, and at times, they nearly overwhelmed Jesus and his disciples. So, when Jesus decided to go up the mountain, most likely to pray, three disciples were invited to go along. Instead of prayer, Jesus was transfigured, shining brighter than any earthly light. Here is a monologue someone wrote imagining what Peter might have said:

As we came down from the mountain, James, John and I were still shaking. I was so confused and trembling so much that I kept stumbling and John would reach out a hand to steady me. Jesus had told us not to say anything to anyone else about it, not to the rest of the twelve, not to anyone, until after he was 'raised from the dead'. But we couldn't help discussing it between ourselves, James, John and I. What on earth did he mean? He'd been saying some strange things recently. In a way, it was easier to accept what he did than what he said. I mean, the healings, casting out demons, making people well and whole: who could disagree with that? The crowds loved him, they followed us everywhere. It was difficult to get away from them - if he wanted to spend time with us alone, the twelve, he had to take us away to a mountain top or some out-of-the-way place... but even then, sometimes they'd run ahead of us. And if Jesus wanted to be by himself, he'd have to rise long before dawn; sometimes we'd wake and find him gone.

He was doing so much good, the people said he must be a prophet: John the Baptist or Elijah, the one who was to herald the coming of the kingdom, what we'd been waiting for, for so long. But I'd seen this man, we'd all spent so much time with him, we twelve, and especially James and John and I: we'd seen him close up, watched his every move, shared every meal, seen him tired and weary, yet still willing to heal those who pressed after him in the crowd, those who begged him to come and heal their son, their daughter.

Over the weeks and months, it dawned on me: he wasn't a forerunner of the one who was to come, he was the one: the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God. So when he surprised me by asking me directly, I blurted it out: I told him he was the Christ. He seemed pleased, but then he did something odd: he told us not to tell anyone else. And then, he started saying the weird stuff: that he would suffer at the hands of others, that he would be rejected by the religious authorities, that he would be killed and on the third day raised to life, and that some of us would see the kingdom of God in our lifetimes.

We didn't understand what he meant: wasn't the Christ, the Messiah, meant to rule in glory, to overcome those that hated us, to help us throw off the oppressors? How could he die then? Wouldn't that be the ultimate failure? How could he bring in the kingdom of God if he wasn't going to be around for much longer? He probably saw us whispering among ourselves, trying to work out what it all meant.

Maybe that's why, the following week, he took the three of us, James and John and me, up the mountain to pray. We rose long before dawn, while it was still dark, to make sure that we would be alone and not disturbed. We were all quite tired. Maybe I was a bit sleepy, but I tried to focus my mind in prayer.

I thought at first that I must have drifted off. Again! why did that keep happening! why couldn't I keep awake for five minutes? I saw Jesus. I knew it was him, but he looked different: his face a ball of white light, his clothes so dazzlingly white that it hurt my eyes to look at them and I shielded them with my arm (dreams can seem so real sometimes). Then I saw the other figures, two of them, and they were talking to him. It seems strange, but I knew straight away who they were: Moses and Elijah.

They were all in white too, all three of them enveloped in this amazing light, brighter than the sun. And they were talking with Jesus, like they knew him already, like it was something they did every day. But it was more than that: Jesus was at the center of the three; he was the greatest of them. I thought a lot about that later: imagine it, the Jesus we'd walked with, eaten with, spent so much time with: greater than the greatest of our prophets.

And suddenly I realized I wasn't dreaming, that this was real. It felt like somehow, I'd slipped into another world. And I was terrified. Typically for me, I started babbling, blurting out anything that came into my head, trying to make the situation seem normal: some nonsense about building shelters for them, James told me afterwards.

Then it got scarier: we were caught up in the cloud, all three of us. My heart was pounding so hard in my chest I thought it was going to burst and I was quaking all over. If I was going to die, to be struck down because I was unworthy to be in the presence of God himself, I wanted it to happen quickly. And painlessly.

Instead we heard a voice: it seemed all around us, loud and booming, yet it also spoke quietly as a whisper into our ears: 'This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.' I fell at Jesus' feet and when I got up, the cloud had gone and we were alone with him. He didn't give us any explanation: just told us not to say anything to the others, to anyone, until he was raised from the dead. We didn't understand what he meant then - it only made sense a long time afterwards. James, John and I didn't talk about it much among ourselves. I think we were all trying to work out what it meant, but we couldn't quite get there. I only knew that I'd had my confirmation: this man Jesus, my friend and teacher, he was the Christ, the Son of God: he'd come at last! (PAUSE)

The transfiguration of Jesus was a turning point in the lives of the disciples and in his ministry. He was facing betrayal by one of his trusted followers, Judas, being arrested, the abandonment by his closest friends, his trial, sentencing, and death on a cross. The transfiguration was a high moment for Jesus, as well as for the three disciples who were on the mountaintop with him, although they may not have realized it until later. That is probably why Jesus told them not to tell anyone about what they had seen or experienced. Sometimes we don't really understand how we have been changed by an event in our lives until many years after it happens. About sixteen years ago, I went on a mission trip to Nicaragua. At the time, I really wasn't able to process the trip or understand what I had learned from it. Somehow, it just sort of hung there in my mind and heart until about ten years later when I went on another mission trip, this time to Guatemala. As we worked in Guatemala to complete a medical clinic for the people there, my memories of Nicaragua flooded back into my mind.

Although the two trips were relatively different, I had learned about God's work in both countries and the importance of walking with my brothers and sisters in Christ no matter where they lived, what they looked like, if they spoke a different language, or what their economic status was. In fact, I was transformed as I realized the importance of caring about people over having things - possessions. In spite of having known that in my mind before the trips, being among people who had almost nothing, and who praised God with all their hearts moved the idea in my head to my heart. First and foremost in my faith journey was God, and then people, and the rest was just stuff.

Sometimes transformation takes place slowly, like the caterpillar spinning a cocoon, and then eventually emerging as a butterfly. Transformation means change. Change is necessary for life, but it is often hard to do. Rev. Rick Morley writes: "The mission of the Church is to be a vessel where transformation can happen. Where lives may be changed by the Presence of God. Where people are reconciled to God in Christ, and to each other as neighbors. That transformation isn't a small thing. . . And, to be honest . . . it's not always something I want. I like how I am. I like my sinful indulgences . . . The way I am, as broken and flawed as it is, is at least comfortable. I know it like the back of my hand. It's easy. I don't even have to think about it. Other times, though, I want to change. I want to do a new thing. But, summoning the energy to begin that change, or sustaining the energy past a few days or so, seems nearly impossible." (Text This Week, under commentaries for today's lesson.)

The disciples struggled to understand Jesus as they followed him. Maybe they had some issues with listening. Maybe that's why the voice from heaven that affirmed Jesus' identity, just as it had at his baptism,

and added, "Listen to him!" (v. 5) Maybe change begins with listening to Jesus so we have direction and a better understanding of why the change is needed and where it is going. Following Jesus isn't easy because we need to be giving of ourselves a lot, we need to open to hearing what he would have us do as his followers, and we need to be willing to make the changes that have to be made in order to continue carrying on his ministry.

I suspect that many of my metamorphosis moments have been more of a process, like the caterpillar turning into a butterfly. I was reminded of that again when some of my clergy friends were posting pictures and thoughts on Facebook about their journey to Israel this past week. When I saw the picture of the West Wall of the Temple, I remembered writing a prayer on a piece of paper, wadding it up, and pushing it into a crevice in that wall. There were thousands of prayers wadded up and in those crevices. I was moved to tears as I realized that I was standing where Jesus might have stood, and I felt his presence more powerfully than I ever had before. I couldn't speak, but I was filled with awe and joy, and I'm grateful for the reminder of that experience because, in truth, I'm still carrying that trip with me. It informs how I read the Bible and reminds me of little I really know, as well as the trust I need to have in the God I love and trust above all.

May all of us have transforming moments, as the disciples did. May we be reminded today and every day of the love of God in our lives and Jesus, the Christ, who was God in the flesh and who died for us and saved us from our sins. As we enter the season of Lent, may this journey be one of traveling with Jesus and learning from him, of listening for him to speak in our hearts, and of being willing to change as he guides us.

There are Lenten devotional booklets that are written by my friend and colleague Carroll Moore. Please feel free to take one - if we run out, we can make more. May it lead you on the journey this season and may your heart be transformed as you continue the journey with Jesus.

Let us pray:

Thank you, God, for teaching us, for leading us, for loving us, and for transforming our lives through your Son, Jesus. May we put our hand in his and walk the journey of faith, of life, of ministry together. Amen.