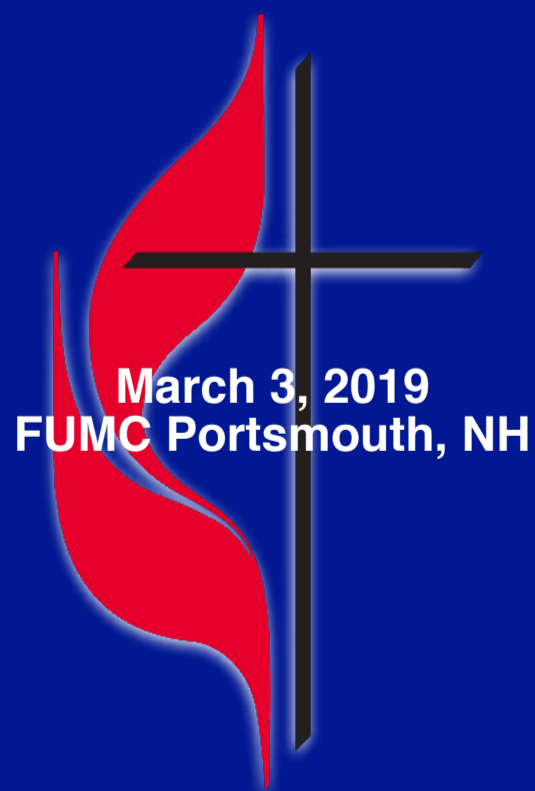


# TRANSFIGURATION *of* Jesus



March 3, 2019  
FUMC Portsmouth, NH

We Gather for Worship

**Prelude & Entrance of Christ's Light**

**Celebrations**

**\*Call to Worship**

L: Turn our thoughts away from the busy-ness of the world;

**P: Turn our minds to you, O Christ.**

L: Turn our hearts away from the desires of this world;

**P: Turn our love towards one another and you, O Christ.**

L: Turn our whole selves away from ways of this world;

**P: Turn us to love, compassion, and justice, O Christ.**

L: In this time of worship,

**P: May we be one in spirit, mind, and body, worshiping Christ Jesus, who calls us to love. Amen.**

**Hymn: "Shine, Jesus, Shine"**

TFWS #2173

**A Time for the Child in all of Us**

**Prayer (unison)**

**Almighty God, we confess we are still setting our mind on worldly things even though you give us glimpses of the heavenly kingdom. You show us great love and mercy but we are unwilling to show love and mercy to others. You share with us a vision of eternal life but we are focused on our lives now and worldly gains in this lifetime. Forgive us for being shortsighted. Renew in us the call to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with You, so we may also live in the kingdom now, with eternal life that begins now. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

L: Christ sees you as one of his own. You are God's beloved. You are forgiven and loved, and given the strength and courage to love and forgive others. Let your love shine, as God's love shines in you.

**ALL: Amen.**

**Sung Response**

"Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying"

TFWS #2193

**Ministry of Music**

We Proclaim the Word

**Reading the Word: Luke 9:28-43a**

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

**P: Thanks be to God.**

**Message: "Transformation"**

Rev. Deb Hanson

*We Respond to God's Word*

**Hymn:** "Here, O My Lord, I See Thee," vv. 1,3,5

UMH #623

**Concerns and Joys**

**Silent Prayer and Pastoral Prayer**

**The Lord's Prayer** (unison)

**Our Father, who art 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 in 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)

**Great and glorious God, thank you for revealing your Son, and for showing the light of his glory. Let us always reflect his glory. And as Jesus was willing to die for us, may we give of ourselves to others. Amen.**

**A Service of Holy Communion**

*insert*

*We Go Forth to Serve*

**Hymn:** "Holy Ground" (twice)

TFWS #2272

**Choral Benediction** (*Congregation encircles the Sanctuary*)

**May the Lord, gracious God bless and keep you forever. Grant your 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*

*Large print bulletins are available from the greeters*

Holy Communion for Transfiguration Sunday

L: God is with you.

**All: And also with you.**

L: Lift up your hearts.

**All: We lift them up to God.**

L: Let us give thanks to God, our God.

**All: It is right to give God thanks and praise!**

L: It is right, God, to give you thanks, and to celebrate, here at your table.

**All: Alleluia!**

L: We give you thanks, for your love. Love that created all that is. Love that lives in all that is. Love that surrounds all that is. From the very beginning, you gave us life – and in that life, change – and in that change, wonder. Difficult times, simple times. Times of joy and times of sorrow – all wrapped up in this thing called life.

*A: From the very beginning, you brought us into relationship, with you and with each other. In that relationship, we were changed. In that relationship, you were changed. Sometimes, afraid, we ran away from you. Sometimes, afraid, we run away from you.*

L: But, over and over and over, you forgave us our fear. Your love was so great that you never walked away. You called us back, again and again, through the words of the prophets, through the actions of the judges, through the teachings of the grandmothers and the grandfathers. Through that love you were changed. Through that love we were changed – and, each time, we are made new. Thank you, God of life!

**All: Alleluia!**

*A: When the time was right, you sent Jesus, your Love made human – to walk with us in our journey. Helping us to see the hope of your presence. Helping us to know the love of your life. Helping us to feel the gift of your grace. He taught all that your “kingdom is coming and your kingdom is here!” He laughed with those who laughed and mourned with those who mourned. By his gifts we were set free!*

**All: Alleluia!**

L: On the night before he was put to death, he gathered with his friends, his family, his disciples, to share a meal of joy and thanksgiving, to share in a meal of new life. He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to those gathered, saying, “This is my body, given for you.”



He took a cup of wine, blessed and lifted it, and gave it to those gathered, saying, “This is my blood, my promise to you, for the forgiveness of sins. Each time you eat bread, each time you drink from the cup, remember me.”  
*A: And so we remember him. And so we remember the mystery of our faith:*  
**All: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again!**

*A: Come, Holy Spirit, set your church on fire. Bless this bread and this cup, with your holy love, with Christ’s holy love, with the Creator’s holy love, that it, and we, might be changed – made new – transformed by love into a new people, into new life.*

L: The bread of life.

*A: The cup of love.*

L: The gifts of God, for the people of God.

**All: Thanks be to God!**

*Sharing the Bread and Cup*

**Unison Prayer:**

**Jesus, no words can express our gratitude and amazement that you should die for us. How amazing is it that each of our lives is so valuable to you that you would lay yours down to reach us. May the bread and wine remain with us as we seek to take your message of love and grace into the world. Amen.**  
*(Richard Bott: liturgy.richardbott.com)*

L = Leader    A = Assistant    All = Congregation



Pastor - Rev. Dr. Debra J. Hanson

Pastor’s Assistant - David Richards

Liturgist - Dave Richards

Lay Leader - Susan Sarosiek

Director of Music - Bevan Bloemendaal

Acolyte - PennySue Orr

Greeters - Anne & Mike Coffey & Marilyn Stebbins

Ushers - Ken Young & Ken Westbrook

Sunday School - Sue Richards

Sound Tech - Sue Sarosiek

Worship Service Tech - Steve Scott

Photographer - Dave Atkinson

## Welcome!

Whether you are joining us for worship for the first time or after many years of attending here at First UMC, we want you to know that you are welcome!

We are an inclusive community that invites everyone to be part of our church fellowship. Thank you for being here, and we hope that you have had a meaningful experience of worshiping our God so you leave this place feeling that you have been blessed to be a blessing. Please join us again!

Rev. Deb Hanson



**Month of February** Celebrate and learn about Black History throughout the month of February at the Discover Portsmouth Center located at 10 Middle St. in downtown Portsmouth.

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**March 5th** Finance Trustees meeting @ 6pm at the parsonage.

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**March 6th** Ash Wednesday Prayer Service. @ 7pm

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**March 10th** SPRC meeting after worship.



Today's altar flowers are in celebration  
of our congregation.

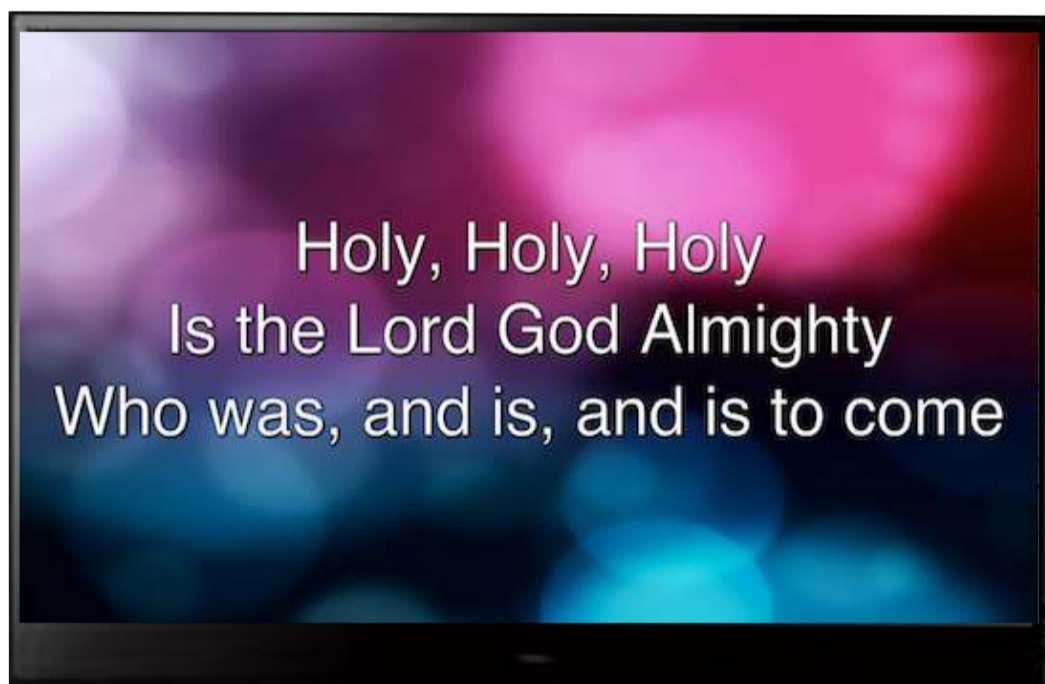
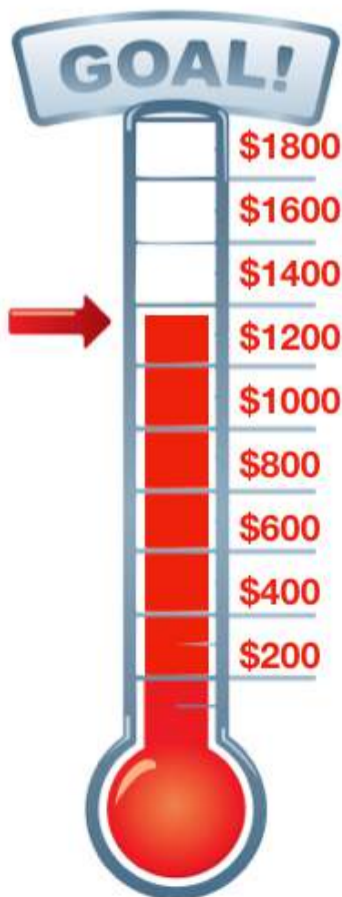


# WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER

Barbara & Jim Slater  
Barbara Sylvester  
Pauline Boynton  
Barbara Millar  
Irene Derosier  
Barbara Clement  
Malia Broe  
Joette MacKenzie  
Vicky Fernandez  
Alissa Fernandez

Rev. Bill Gardei  
Gayle Gardei  
Marion Collishaw  
Sue Goodhue  
Hunter Pinkley  
Sylvia Bartlett  
BrianThompson  
Our Church family  
Gil Stebbins

Woodie Lange  
Roseanne  
Rev. David Kerr  
Jim New  
Kim Hishop  
Pastor Sue Ellery  
Nancy Chesser's family  
Gabor [Brianna's father in-law]  
Family of Trudy Parkhurst



The Finance Trustees are looking for donations to replace the outdated screen and projector being used each Sunday with a large LED monitor. Please see John VanReenen for details.

**FUMC PORTSMOUTH  
A RECONCILING CONGREGATION**

**We, the congregation of the First  
United Methodist Church of Portsmouth,**



**New Hampshire, are dedicated to worshiping, 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. James McPhee, 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 GIVEN 3/3/19 BY  
REV. DR. DEB HANSON

SCRIPTURE: Luke 9:28-43a

THEME: We are transformed by both the mountains and the valleys.

Rev. Debi Thomas tells today’s story this way:

*On the mountain, a man bent in prayer erupts in sudden light. As glory leaks from every pore, three sleepy disciples cower in the grass and watch their Master glow. Two figures appear out of time and space; in solemn tones they speak of exodus, accomplishment, Jerusalem. The disciples, comprehending nothing, babble nonsense in response — "Let's make tents! Let's stay here always! This is good!" A cloud descends, thick and impenetrable. As it envelops the disciples, they fall to their faces, certain the end has come. But a Voice addresses them instead, tender and gentle. "This is my Son, my Chosen." The Voice hums with delight, and the disciples, braver now, look up. They gaze at their Master — the Shining One — and a Father's pure joy sings with the stars. "This is my Beloved Son. Listen to him."*  
\* \* \*

*In the valley, a boy writhes in the dust. He drools, he cannot hear, and his eyes — wide-open — sees nothing but darkness. Around him a crowd gathers and swells, eager for spectacle. Scribes jeer, and disciples wring their hands in shame. "Frauds!" someone yells into the night. "Charlatans!" "Where's your Master?" the scribes ask the disciples an umpteenth time. "Why has he left you?" "We don't know," the disciples mutter, gesturing vaguely at the mountain. Panic wars with exhaustion as they hear the boy shriek yet again. He flails, and his limbs assault his stricken face. A voice — strangled, singular — rends the night. "This is my son!" a man cries out as he pushes through the crowd to gather the convulsing boy into his arms. Everyone stares as the father cradles the wreck of a child against his chest. "Please," he sobs to the stars. "Please. This is my beloved son. Listen to him." (found at Text This Week under commentaries)*

The two stories seem to hardly have anything to do with each other – or do they? As we consider this Sunday, which has been designated to remember the Transfiguration of Jesus and a pivoting point into our season of Lent, I think it’s helpful to read the two stories together, to get the entire picture of Jesus, of the mountaintops and the valleys because we have both in our lives. Sometimes, the only way we recognize the mountaintops is when we have walked through the valleys that fill our lives with challenges, loss, and sometimes anguish.

Our story begins with Jesus and three of his disciples going to the mountain to pray, and while Jesus is in prayer, the disciples fall asleep. Throughout the gospels, the disciples were described as asleep; symbolic of the fact that they simply didn’t get it – they didn’t understand Jesus – they didn’t see the glory that was in him – they couldn’t figure out what they were supposed to learn from him. At the foot of the mountain, an epileptic boy shrieks while his father cries to the disciples for help, but they were helpless. They didn’t get it. Up on that mountain – Mount Tabor – Jesus prayed, and in the midst of his praying, he was transfigured. The sleepy disciples didn’t understand.

It’s so interesting that the disciples slept through part of this event! I know that I wake up is there is light in the room at night, and even a small light can eek into my sleeping mind. And in this scripture passage Jesus’ face and clothing are described as being like lightning. With that

kind of light, why didn't the disciples wake up immediately? Maybe Luke was trying to really drive home his point about their lack of understanding Jesus' identity.

This is a defining and important moment that will lead Jesus toward his death, and we begin the transition toward Jerusalem where he will be arrested, tried, and put to death. Maybe Jesus himself needed affirmation because the appearance of Elijah and Moses seems to be one of reassuring Jesus that there is a greater glory beyond the cross. They seem to be offering comfort and encouragement. By this time the disciples are awake and in total awe, as well as afraid. Once Elijah and Moses depart, Peter starts to suggest building altars to memorialize the place – he still didn't understand.

But then – then a cloud surrounds them. Uh oh! Whenever clouds appear in the Biblical story, we know we have a theophany – a moment when God appears on earth. When Moses led the Israelites through the wilderness, a column of clouds led them by day and a pillar of fire led them by night, reminding them that God was with them on the journey. Clouds always signified the presence of God, and the clouds also are a reminder of the mystery of God. Moses disappeared into the cloud when he met with God to get the Ten Commandments, and Elijah was taken up into a cloud in a chariot at the end of his earthly life. Jesus and the disciples were surrounded by the mystery of God who spoke to them, affirming Jesus' identity, in the same way as at Jesus' baptism. "This is my son, the beloved, the chosen one," and God adds, "Listen to him!"

So while Jesus and the disciples have disappeared on the mountaintop, the rest of the disciples are at the base trying to carry on the work of Jesus by healing. But things aren't going so well. In the valley there is a father whose son is overcome with epileptic seizures. This father is in anguish and desperate to help his son. He obviously loves his son very much, and when he finally sees Jesus he hollers at the top of his lungs, "Help me, Jesus! This is my beloved son!"

We have heard those cries – "Church! Help us!" Jesus' patience with the disciples apparently had grown thin because he said, "You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you and bear with you?" (v. 41). Jesus healed the boy and gave him back to his father. While we don't know the father's response, we can certainly imagine it and rejoice with him. Yet, the cry for "Church! Help us!" continues from so many places.

Many of us want so much to feel closer to God, and we think that maybe we just need to be more spiritually in tune, or pray more (of course, that certainly can't hurt!), or take more retreat time, or whatever we might do to feel God's presence. But the mountaintops teach us and help to transform us because we do experience God's grace and God's presence, and when we come down the mountain, we know that we will be assaulted with the world's hunger, warfare, arguing, great need, and in some places, agony. To share Rev. Debi Thomas' thoughts again:

*. . . here's the great challenge to the Christian life — the great challenge to the Church, Christ's body: can we speak glory to agony, and agony to glory? Can we hold the mountain and the valley in faithful tension with each other — denying neither, embracing both? Can we do this hard, hard work out of pure love for each other, so that no one among us — not the joyous*



*one, not the anguished one, not the beloved one, not the broken one — is ever truly alone?*  
(ibid)

Isn't that the challenge to the church: to connect with our brothers and sisters in whatever ways we can, to make the world a better place, to manifest the presence of Christ in the world? This past week, our General Conference voted by a very narrow margin to retain the wording in our Book of Discipline concerning homosexuality. The plan that was voted excludes the LGBTQ people and prohibits pastors from performing same sex marriages. Many are asking what good all the praying did when we ended up causing so much pain, not only by deciding who is worthy of being welcome in our churches but also by the behaviors and vicious words that were spoken during the assemblies.

We might ask, "God why did you allow this to happen? How could this happen following so much prayer and hard work?"

We don't know the answers to those questions. We do know that our denomination is fractured and divided. While the Traditionalist Plan was the one that passed, it will still be reviewed by the judicial committee, and some of it will probably be thrown out, but much of the damage is done, and at the end of the session, there was already discussion on what the next steps will be. This is a time of waiting, and it is a time of praying, supporting each other, particularly our LGBTQ brothers and sisters, and praying with sighs too deep for words. For many of us, we stand at the foot of the mountain wringing our hands and trying to sort through what has happened.

And as we look toward the unknown future, we are charged with continuing the work of Christ in the world. We are called to minister to the sick, the lonely, the imprisoned, the hungry, the homeless, and the marginalized. We continue working for Christ to the best of our ability with hope and knowledge that Jesus didn't stay up on that mountain but came down and re-entered our world to heal, to move on to Jerusalem where he died and was raised for our sake. Jesus will lead us, and we follow his teaching and his leading, and we are transformed. Through struggles, we emerge stronger and better, just as a butterfly needs to work its way out of the cocoon in order to strengthen its wings so it can fly.

We need both the mountaintops and the valleys – they go together, and we are transformed by both. Worship is about renewal and being sent into the world.

Rev. David Lose writes: *The retreat to worship and the time to listen to the Word, to be immersed in the cross, and be gathered in prayer leads inevitably to a return to the "everyday world" of human need where Jesus heals the sick and opposes the forces of evil. If worship is a retreat, in other words, it is not a retreat from the world but a retreat in order to come back to the world in love, mercy and grace. This is what worship is meant to be, a moment of reflection, immersion, companionship, and prayer in order that we might embrace our callings in the world to respond to the needs of God's beloved children with renewed energy, confidence, and determination.* (found at Text This Week under Commentaries "Dear Working Preacher").

We are transformed, shaped, and empowered when we spend time in worship, prayer, Bible study, and with each other as the community of faith. We are transformed, shaped, and

empowered when we live as the Church in the world to bring transformation there, as well. That is our challenge. That is our calling as followers of Jesus.

**Let us pray:**

**Grant us eyes and hearts to see your holiness, your grace, your glory all around us in ourselves, in our communities, in our world, and in our neighbors, through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

(Bishop H. Julian Gordy is the bishop of the Southeastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, found at Day 1 in the sermon section of Text This Week)