

twelvebaskets



TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY C

A complete Sunday service ready to use
for worship and inspire ideas in your church

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Transfiguration Sunday - Year C
2nd March 2025



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

55 STF – Immortal, invisible, God only wise OR

15 STF – The splendour of the King

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

471 STF – Lord, I come to you, let my heart be changed, renewed OR

20 STF – Be still, for the presence of the Lord

Readings: Exodus 34:29-35; Psalm 99; 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2; Luke 9:28-36

Hymn:

59 STF – Lord, the light of your love is shining OR

319 STF – Christ triumphant, ever reigning

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

261 STF – Transfigured Christ, none comprehends OR

559 STF – Lord, you have my heart and I will search for yours

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

134 STF – Christ, whose glory fills the skies OR

503 STF – Love divine, all loves excelling

Blessing

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Call to worship

Lord, the light of your love is shining,
Shining in this place,
Shining in our hearts.
In the midst of the darkness and fear, the loneliness and hate,
May we be beacons of your love, shining out today.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

55 STF – Immortal, invisible, God only wise OR
15 STF – The splendour of the King

Opening Prayers

Let us begin our service in thanks – noticing what we are grateful for this day.

Would each of you like to shout out or share with us something you are thankful for today?

[Take time to hear from the congregation].

Loving God, you hear our prayers of thanks – thank you for we are richly blessed.

Let us now move into a time of saying sorry: we know we have fallen short of God's hopes for our lives, and missed opportunities to be people of love, today and in the past week. Take a moment now to let go of the guilt, shame and fear you feel about these times.

[Hold a few moments of silence].

Even as we come to you in confession, Lord God, you are already whispering to each of us that we are loved, accepted, forgiven and set free, just as we are.

We thank and praise you, Holy Lord, for your forgiveness, your grace, and your unconditional love for each and every one of us.

As we come into our time of worship, may this be a time where we draw the inspiration, the courage, the wisdom to face the days ahead.

Come, Lord Jesus, by your Spirit we pray,

Amen.²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

¹ Call to worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by Tim Baker

All Age Talk

There is a show on telly called Michael McIntyre's Big Show. One part of the show is where Michael will surprise someone famous whilst they are asleep and wake them up to give them all sorts of challenges. It's a big reveal moment. Have you ever had a big reveal moment?

In today's Bible reading, we hear about one of the biggest reveals of all time—when Jesus showed his true glory to his disciples on a mountain. It's called the Transfiguration, which is a big word that simply means Jesus' appearance changed in a dazzling way.

Jesus took three of his closest friends—Peter, James, and John—up a mountain to pray. Now, I don't know about you, but climbing a mountain sounds like a lot of work! Imagine how tired they must have been. But as they prayed, something incredible happened—Jesus' face started shining like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white!

And if that wasn't surprising enough, two men from the past, Moses and Elijah, appeared and started talking with Jesus. These two were great leaders from the Old Testament—Moses had received God's law, and Elijah was a powerful prophet. But here they were, chatting with Jesus! It was like the greatest Bible study group ever!

Peter, who often spoke before thinking, blurted out, "Let's build shelters for you all!" He wanted to capture the moment. Many of us are quite like that too, but maybe with our mobile phones – I guess the modern day equivalent of this would be 'pose for the picture you three!'

However, before he could say more, a cloud covered them, and a voice from heaven spoke: "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him!" Then, everything returned to normal—except the disciples had seen something they would never forget.

Can you imagine how the disciples must have felt after that experience? The disciples had a moment on the mountain where they saw Jesus as he truly is—the Son of God. But here's the great news: we don't need to climb a mountain to see Jesus. We can see him in our everyday lives—through prayer, through worship, and through acts of kindness and love.

Sometimes, life can feel a bit like walking through fog—we don't always see things clearly. But just like that cloud lifted on the mountain, Jesus helps us see God's love more clearly when we trust and listen to him. Will you tune in to God's love?³

Hymn:

471 STF – Lord, I come to you, let my heart be changed, renewed OR

20 STF – Be still, for the presence of the Lord

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Hymn:

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³ All Age Talk written by Matthew Forsyth

Reflections on the readings

Today we make our final stop before Lent arrives on Wednesday. Alight here for the Transfiguration, a moment in Jesus' life and ministry that we, and our Christian brothers and sisters from across the world and different Christian traditions, celebrate each year, for any number of reasons.

For many Christians, the importance of the Transfiguration lies in the physical representation of all three of the Trinity being present in one moment: God the Father, speaking to Christ the son, as the Holy Spirit is represented by a cloud. Others are drawn to this moment, atop a mountain, in which Jesus bridges heaven and earth, a foretaste of what is to come. For Thomas Aquinas, the Transfiguration is "the greatest miracle", showing "the divinity of Christ" and foretelling "the triumph of grace in glory".

There are many riches to be found in this moment in which heaven meets earth. Today, I'd like to explore the ways that past, present and future are intertwined at this moment, demonstrating that the "triumph of grace in glory" is for all time.

The past is made present at the Transfiguration through Moses and Elijah, both of whom received words from God on mountaintops in the Old Testament. These Old Testament prophets appear beside Jesus in the present moment, as God declares: "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him." This moment points not only to Jesus' ministry to date, but also serves as a foretaste and foreshadowing of His death and resurrection, which are fast approaching as we look ahead to Lent beginning on Wednesday.

Here in the Transfiguration, as Jesus' face changes and his clothes flash like lightning, the past, present and future meet atop the mountain.

If you'll forgive what may appear to be a tangent, I recently finished reading Richard Flanagan's novel *Question 7*. It's a strange, troubling, genre-shifting novel that is written in the fourth tense; a concept that Flanagan himself learnt of in what he describes as "a remarkable essay by a then eighteen-year-old Yolngu woman, Siena Stubbs, about the use of a fourth tense in the Yolngu language." Yolngu is a language used by the Yolngu, who are a group of Aboriginal Australian people in Northern Australia, for whom the fourth tense is used to describe things that have always been, are always, and will always be happening. As I understand it, the fourth tense is often used to describe the earth and environment, paying tribute to their 'always-ness'.

Question 7 got me thinking about the ways in which we talk about God in the 'fourth tense'. We see this in many parts of scripture, although perhaps best surmised in Revelation 1:8: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, says the Lord God. I am the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come—the Almighty One".

Thinking about the fourth tense as I revisited the Transfiguration, I came to think of it as a 'fourth tense' moment. Whilst we see what God is doing in the moment of the Transfiguration itself, it is also pointing at something that has always been, is always, and will be about the nature of God. The truth of God that was made manifest in Christ's death and resurrection: God's gift of grace poured out for all of humanity, for always.

The fourth tense might be a helpful concept as we understand that the Transfiguration is not just a single moment in time, but a manifestation of God's eternal act of transformation.

As Aquinas puts it, the Transfiguration shows us that "Both grace and glory are available... but only through the Son of God who became man." In this context, this isn't just a demonstration that grace is available through Christ, it is a demonstration that grace, this gift of God, isn't something that we can earn, or work towards, it stretches out behind and before us. God's grace is the eternal water we swim in.

I'd suggest the Transfiguration is a moment in which we, as Christians, are invited to remember that God always has, always is, and always will be inviting us to join in the process of transformation by God's grace.

To move from the abstract to the personal, because I believe this is simultaneously deeply eschatological and deeply personal, what would it mean in your life to fully know that God's grace is fully manifest in your past, present and future?

Have you seen personal transformation in friends or family you've walked alongside in faith? Are there Biblical characters whose transformation story you're drawn to - there are plenty of them, from Saul becoming Paul, to the Samaritan woman at the well who became the first evangelist.

Might I even ask what God's perpetual grace has done in your life? Or, indeed, in the spirit of the fourth tense; what ongoing transformation might God be undertaking in your life? How might we respond to the mystery that God is the Alpha and the Omega, the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come, and who is also the God who so personally and intimately knows and loves each one of us?

The vastness and mystery of God's goodness lies beyond our understanding, but it offers us a real hope for today, for tomorrow and forever.

Discussion questions:

Who do you think of when you think about people being transformed by God's grace?

Does the idea of the 'fourth tense' make you think any differently about God's grace?

How might knowing that God's love came before us and goes beyond us change the way we live our lives today?⁴

Hymn:

261 STF – Transfigured Christ, none comprehends OR

559 STF – Lord, you have my heart and I will search for yours

Prayers of intercession

God who has always been:

We lift up our broken world to you, acknowledging that so much has come to pass that has destroyed, hurt and wounded.

We lift up to you those who are victims of war, of injustice, of marginalisation.

We lift up to you the ways in which we dishonour your creation by prioritising greed and want over care for climate and each other.

And we ask you to transform our world, God; to make it holy.

God who is here with us now:

We lift up to you those who are unwell, those who are sad or lonely or lost.

We lift up to you those in our community, those known to us, and those known only to you, who are in need of your love.

We ask you to bring peace, God; to bring healing and restoration.

God who goes ahead of us:

We lift up to you the parts of our world that are unfolding into something beautiful;

⁴ Reflection written by Lucy Zwolinska

Where there is joy, where there is dancing, where there is newness and light, we give thanks.

We thank you, God, that you are at work in all of creation; that you are working for good, even when we don't see it.

God, for your goodness yesterday, today and forever, we give you praise.

Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

Lord you have blessed me richly, blessed each of us in our own way.

This week, help us to notice your blessings with gratitude, and respond with grace.

Bless these gifts that they might bring justice and joy into the world around us.

Amen.⁶

Hymn:

134 STF – Christ, whose glory fills the skies OR

503 STF – Love divine, all loves excelling

Blessing

Until we stand before him, casting our crowns, lost in wonder, love and praise,
Until then, we have much work to do, to build a kingdom of love here on earth.

Give us the courage this day as we go, O God,

Amen.⁷

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Lucy Zwolinska

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker