

## **God Revealed: in the Sacred**

---

### **Gathering**

---

*Create a space for worship - perhaps with a small table with a bible, cross and candle.*

*This week, it would be appropriate to find a **white cloth** or scarf to signify that today is a special celebration.*

*Take some deep breaths as you gather your thoughts towards God.*

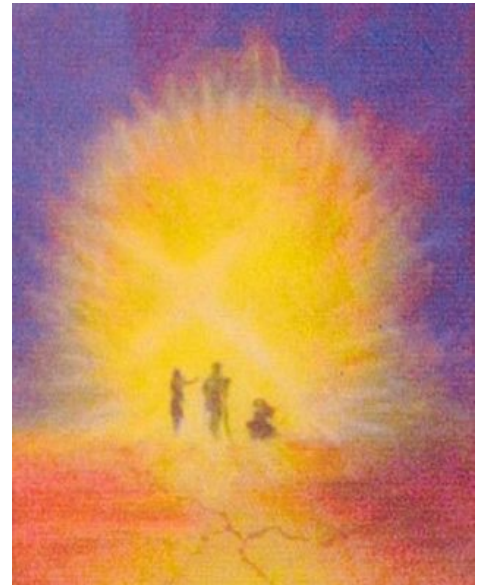
#### **Introduction**

Today is one of the pivot points in the church year.

Today we celebrate the Transfiguration.

In the shadow of war in Ukraine, the gospel reading this morning takes us up a mountain as Jesus prepares his disciples for what lies ahead as they begin their journey towards Jerusalem where Jesus will collide head-on with the Jewish and Roman authorities.

On Wednesday, we start our own preparations for Easter. It is called Ash Wednesday and we will gather at Kiama to worship. Then next Sunday, Lent begins with Jesus in the wilderness.



Since early January, the time after Christmas is known as Epiphany - God's revealing. We have thought about how God is revealed in extravagant love and grace, in good news, in agitating for justice, in community, in turning the expectations of the world on its head, in relationship. Today we think about how God is revealed, how we recognise God, in the sacred moments of our lives.

#### **Light Candle**

We light a candle to centre us and to draw us towards Christ.

The writer of the gospel attributed to John assures us:

Jesus spoke to them, saying,

“I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”

*John 8:12*

#### **Acknowledgement of Country**

As we gather in this place, between the mountains and the sea, we give thanks for the Wodi Wodi people of the Dharawal nation.

We acknowledge the commitment their ancestors made, across the generations, to nurturing this land.

Together, may we walk into the future,

recognising the sacred footsteps that continue to lead us to the promise of [God's Way].

*Amelia Koh-Butler, Wide and Deep, p.11*

## **Call to Worship**

Inescapable God, majestic and bright,  
***shine upon us.***

Immeasurable God, majestic and bright,  
***shine upon us.***

Transcendent God, majestic and bright,  
***shine upon us.***

Everlasting God, majestic and bright,  
***shine upon us.***

Let your light be found,  
***reach into us illuminating our souls,  
as we worship together.***

We pray...

Dazzling, shining, glowing, on fleek.  
What a day to witness,  
to see God's glory shining through Jesus,  
how amazing it must have been.

Serving, teaching, healing, from love.  
Yet every day Jesus shone with God's love,  
if you had the eyes to see it.

Help us to see, to experience,  
your glory, your presence  
in the everyday,  
in the lives of those around us,  
in every act of loving-kindness. Amen.

*Spill The Beans, Issue 41, Resources for 27 February 2022, p.134*

## **Sing - Here In This Place (TIS 474)**

*We sing of our hope and trust in the light of Christ shining in the dark places of the world,  
gathering us and singing new light in this place.*

Here in this place new light is streaming,  
now is the darkness vanished away,  
see, in this space, our fears and our  
dreamings,  
brought here to you in the light of this day.  
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken;  
gather us in, the blind and the lame;  
call to us now, and we shall awaken,  
we shall arise at the sound of our name.

Here we will take of wine and the water,  
here we will take the bread of new birth,  
here you shall call your sons and your  
daughters,  
call us anew to be salt of the earth.  
Give us to drink the wine of compassion,  
give us to eat the bread that is you;  
nourish us well and teach us to fashion  
lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

We are the young, our lives are a mystery;  
we are the old, who yearn for your face;  
we have been sung throughout all of  
history,  
called to be light to the whole human race.  
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty,  
gather us in, the proud and the strong;  
give us a heart so meek and so lowly,  
give us the courage to enter the song.

Not in the dark of buildings confining,  
not in some heaven light years away,  
but here in this space, the new light is  
shining,  
now is the kingdom, now is the day.  
Gather us in, and hold us forever;  
gather us in, and make us your own;  
gather us in, all peoples together,  
fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

### **Reading: Luke 9:28-43a**

<sup>28</sup> Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. <sup>29</sup>And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. <sup>30</sup>Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. <sup>31</sup>They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. <sup>32</sup>Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. <sup>33</sup>Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah'—not knowing what he said. <sup>34</sup>While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. <sup>35</sup>Then from the cloud came a voice that said, 'This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!' <sup>36</sup>When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

<sup>37</sup> On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. <sup>38</sup>Just then a man from the crowd shouted, 'Teacher, I beg you to look at my son; he is my only child. <sup>39</sup>Suddenly a spirit seizes him, and all at once he shrieks. It throws him into convulsions until he foams at the mouth; it mauls him and will scarcely leave him. <sup>40</sup>I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.' <sup>41</sup>Jesus answered, 'You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here.' <sup>42</sup>While he was coming, the demon dashed him to the ground in convulsions. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. <sup>43</sup>And all were astounded at the greatness of God.

For the Word of God in Scripture,  
for the Word of God among us,  
for the Word of God within us,  
***Thanks be to God!***

### **Reflection**

What just happened?

One minute we were alone,  
The next, there was Jesus with Moses and Elijah.  
And it was all a bit dazzling.

We had woken from a nap.  
I know, I know,  
who naps when Jesus is with them...  
but we were tired.

It was just so weird.  
Peter, of course, went all action man,  
just as he always does,  
talking of tents and shelters.

And then there was that voice.  
"This is my Son, whom I have chosen.  
Listen to him!"

I was still half asleep,  
in a bit of a daze,  
but that voice soon woke me.

Before we knew it,  
we were alone again.  
I am not sure I fully understand what happened.  
And I have no intention of speaking about it.  
Nope, not to anyone.  
Just too weird.  
And yet something in me has changed.  
I feel like I have been witness to something,  
something quite extraordinary.  
I am not sure what.  
So yep, not going to say a word.  
What just happened?

*Spill The Beans, Issue 41, Resources for 27 February 2022, p.136*

### **Prayer - Praise and Confession**

God of transfiguration and transformation,  
we worship you this day with songs of praise,  
with words of prayer, with listening ears,  
and open hearts.

As we reflect on Jesus' transfiguration  
in the presence of Peter, John and James,  
may we too be dazzled by your brilliance once more.

Lord Jesus,  
you chose to come back down off the mountain.  
Forgive us when we limit ourselves to looking for you in elevated places when you are, in fact, among us right here - in everyday moments and everyday challenges.  
Forgiven, loved and free, open our eyes anew to see you as you continue to walk with us on our journey of life and faith.  
Hear us, we pray,  
in the name of Jesus your son,  
your chosen,  
to whom we open our ears to listen and offer our praise  
now and always.  
Amen.

*Spill The Beans, Issue 41, Resources for 27 February 2022, p.134*

### **Assurance**

Sometimes our silence is all that is needed in the face of God's wonder and mystery.  
A grateful heart and willing hands is all that is needed in response to God's love and grace.

### **Sing - Can We See Jesus (tune: Morning Has Broken)**

*This song speaks of the way God is revealed in the wonder but also in the mundane and suffering. Can we see Jesus?*

Can we see Jesus,  
high on the mountain,  
brighter than sunlight,  
whiter than white?  
Yes. We see Jesus  
unmasking for us  
God in such wonder,  
boundless in light.

Can we see Jesus,  
eating with outcasts,  
touching the lepers,  
friends with the poor?  
Yes. We see Jesus  
unmasking for us  
God as compassion,  
gracious and more.

Can we see Jesus  
dying so slowly,  
speaking no malice  
with his last breath?  
Yes. We see Jesus  
unmasking for us  
God as forgiveness  
in life and death.

We can see Jesus  
on our faith journey,  
dazzling charisma,  
humble and meek.  
We can see Jesus  
God's revelation,  
close and inviting  
each time we seek.

© George Stuart, used with permission

<https://worshipwords.co.uk/transfiguration-hymn-can-we-see-jesus-george-stuart-australia/>

---

## Listening for God's Voice

---

### Reading: 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2

<sup>12</sup> Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness, <sup>13</sup>not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside. <sup>14</sup>But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside. <sup>15</sup>Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; <sup>16</sup>but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. <sup>17</sup>Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. <sup>18</sup>And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. <sup>2</sup>We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practise cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God.

For the Word of God in Scripture,  
for the Word of God among us,  
for the Word of God within us,  
**Thanks be to God!**

### Reflection

Let us pray...

God of all Creation, as your light shines and transforms how the disciples understood who Jesus is, so we look for ways your light reveals the wonder and mystery of your love, your way, in the world today. Help us to be open to your prompting and revealing, in our lives, we pray. Amen.

As I mentioned earlier, today is a pivot point in the church year.

The story of the Transfiguration of Jesus is one we return to every year - held in importance alongside Jesus' birth, baptism, death and resurrection, and the story of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Like so many of the stories of Jesus, each of the [synoptic] gospel writers (Matthew, Mark and Luke) record the event in a way that is imbued with symbol and sign and connections to other parts of God's relationship with the Hebrew people.

Jesus' clothes turned white and bright - Mark adds that they are "dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them" (Mark 9:3)!

Two of the great prophets of Israel appear - Moses and Elijah (Luke 9:30)

A cloud envelops them, from which a voice speaks (Luke 34-36).

The story parallels the experience of Moses on Mt Sinai when he went to speak with God and returned to his people with his face glowing (Exodus 24-34); and the experience of Elijah when he is taken up in the clouds at the end of his ministry (2 Kings 2).

Jesus, here, is embraced by God and affirmed: "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" (Luke 9:35).

All of the gospel writers place this story at the point where Jesus begins speaking of his death and the way of the cross and begins the journey towards Jerusalem.

It's kind of like God saying - can I make it any clearer? This person, this Jesus, my Son, is showing you the path that has been shown to you for generations - since the time of Moses and the prophets - what he is showing you is the way I have intended since the world began!

So what is this way that Jesus shows us?

First, it is all about love - love that it is without limit or restriction, love that reaches every part of God's good creation.

And this love heals body, mind and heart.

This love seeks justice for people and lands that are oppressed.

This love longs for, prays for, and works for reconciled relationships and peace - between individuals, groups and nations.

This love challenges bullies and people who misuse their power - and remains engaged regardless of the cost, perhaps even at the cost of reputation and life itself.

This love knows that death is never the end - that new life and endless love can never be defeated.

And Paul, in the reading we just heard from 2 Corinthians reminds us that we, Jesus' followers today, are not just called into a life and ministry that reflects the way of Jesus but we are being *transformed into* the image of Jesus, a reflection of Jesus (2 Cor 3:18). Our vision, then, does not need to be shrouded or veiled, because we have a clear picture of who Jesus is and who he calls us to be.

So Paul puts it like this:

We do not lose heart. <sup>2</sup>We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practise cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God. (2 Corinthians 4:1-2)

Today, we gather in the midst of a war on the other side of the world (the reminders of previous wars hang on the walls), and the reality of an ongoing pandemic and the struggle to maintain employment and a roof over our heads.

It is in the midst of all of this, perhaps more than ever, that we join with Peter and James and John, wondering what we should do?

For generations, souls have come into this space, gathered around this table, for refreshment and renewal.

They have come to worship the God of Creation, the Christ of boundless love, the Spirit who breathes life and freedom to all.

To this place, they have brought their beloved to be blessed;  
their children to be baptised;

and, in time, their friends have brought them to sing them home on their final journey into everlasting Love.

Here, together, we gaze once more on the figure of Jesus, with face and clothes shining, and God's voice encouraging us to keep our eyes fixed on him, to open our ears to his teaching and to imitate his life in our own living.

Here, together, we will be reminded of Jesus' invitation to keep meeting together, to share bread and wine together, to remember him, to remember his way of living in the world. Here, together, as we share in bread and wine, we resolve once more to commit ourselves to the the way of love in the world, to the way of peace and justice and reconciliation with our God, with our neighbours, with all of Creation.

---

## Responding

---

### Prayer for Others

*We are going to sing our prayer for others today...*

*As you sing (or speak) the words of this beautiful hymn, we think about the particular people, places and circumstances that are on our hearts - particularly we pray for peace across the world, for people in Ukraine caught up in violence, we pray for those left homeless or dispossessed of their land, separated from their families - in those places of war and turmoil, and here in our own town - we pray...*

### Sing - Christ Be Our Light (All Together OK 313)

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.  
Longing for truth, we turn to you.  
Make us your own, your holy people,  
light for the world to see.

*Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.  
Shine through the darkness.  
Christ, be our light!  
Shine in your church gathered today.*

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.  
Longing for hope, many despair.  
Your word alone has power to save us.  
Make us your living voice.  
*Christ, be our light...*

Longing for food, many are hungry.  
Longing for water, many still thirst.  
Make us your bread, broken for others,  
shared until all are fed.  
*Christ, be our light...*

Longing for shelter, many are homeless.  
Longing for warmth, many are cold.  
Make us your building, sheltering others  
walls made of living stone.  
*Christ, be our light...*

Many the gifts, many the people,  
many the hearts that yearn to belong.  
Let us be servants to one another,  
making your kingdom come.  
*Christ, be our light...*

© 1993 Bernadette Farrell

### Holy Communion

*If you would like to share in Communion and are unable to join with us in-person, please let Rev Kath or Rhonda Back know. We would love to bring Communion to you in your home at a time that suits you.*

### Offering

*In responding to how we have heard God speak to us, we commit ourselves to moving with God's Spirit, breathing life in the world around us.*

*Let's pray...*  
Merciful, giving God,  
we come to you,  
as Peter, James, and John, did before us,

in awe and in love,  
shrouded in your grace and thankful for your gifts,  
seeking to grow in compassion and to care for all who we meet.  
We offer these our gifts,  
of money, time, and talent,  
given back to you as a sign of our commitment to your church,  
in the hope that its mission and ministry will continue to flourish,  
to transform our communities  
and grow your kingdom,  
here and everywhere.  
Amen.

*Adapted from Spill the Beans, Resources for 14 February 2021, p.115*

---

## Sending

---

### **Sing** - Where The Spirit Is, There's Freedom (TIS 421)

*Where the Spirit is there's freedom.  
Where the Spirit is, there is life!*

Not by the world can our freedom be  
nourished,  
not by our things, only by Spirit.  
Practise, my children, to live by the  
Spirit,  
drop all your masks, take freedom's  
clothing!  
*Where the Spirit is there's freedom.  
Where the Spirit is, there is life!*

Heaven on earth, here we live free to  
love and to share, carried by joy.  
Practise, my children, to live by the  
Spirit,  
daring today to taste God's future!  
*Where the Spirit is there's freedom.  
Where the Spirit is, there is life!*

Wounds will be healed, eyes will be  
opened,  
imaging God, reflecting Jesus.  
Practise, my children, to live by the  
Spirit,  
heaven is here, time made eternal!  
*Where the Spirit is there's freedom.  
Where the Spirit is, there is life!*

© Per Harling

### **Benediction**

In the gospel attributed to Matthew, Jesus says this:

“You are the light of the world...

Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory  
to [the God for all Creation].”

*Matthew 5:14-15*

So go into the world  
shine Christ's light into the dark places;  
hold the light for those who are struggling and vulnerable.  
And the light of God's love will guide your path,  
the love of Christ will embrace you;  
and the breath of God's Spirit will give you the strength you need.

Rev Kath Merrifield  
27 February 2022