

Whitehorse Uniting Church
Written Worship
Sunday 19 February 2023
Transfiguration Sunday



Introit: Be Still for the Presence of the Lord

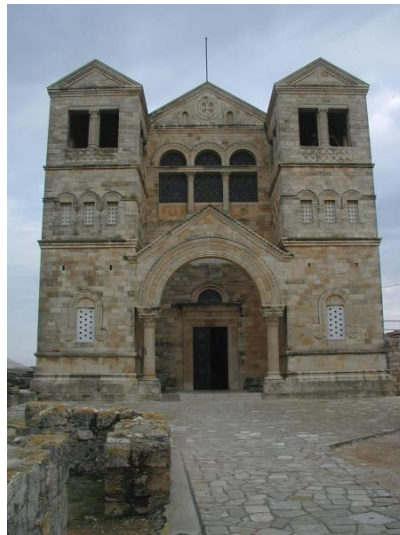
Words and music: David J Evans

Northern Baptist Association 2012

<https://youtu.be/ZugvUQ4m90U>

Welcome

May today's worship bless you



RCL – Church of the Transfiguration on top Mount Tabor

Acknowledgment

We acknowledge those who were here before us, the first inhabitants of this place

We honour them for their custodianship of the land on which we gather today.

Call to Worship

May the day dawn in our lives

May the morning star rise in our hearts



Rubens – RCL

Prayers of Adoration

Jesus, the morning star
Who brings grace, mercy, and love into the world
Rise in our hearts

Jesus, God's beloved Son,
Whom God has sent to us
Rise in our hearts

Jesus on the Holy Mountain, shining like the sun,
transfigured by God's light and fire
Rise in our hearts

Jesus our Lord who loves us with an everlasting faithfulness
Rise in our hearts

Lord, you are there for each one of us bringing blessings
You shine into our hearts so we may know you fully
You open our hearts, our eyes and ears to your glory

Become our beloved
Rise in our hearts

Prayer of Confession

Come before the Lord in reverence and silence
with all that's on your heart

Lord, we come before you now in this moment of silence
with all that's troubling our hearts
seeking your forgiveness and transformation

Silence

Hear then Christ's words of grace to us
"Your sins are forgiven"

THANKS BE TO GOD

534 Love is his Word, Love is his way

Verses 1, 5,6,7

Luke Connaughton 1917-79 *alt.*

James Kilbane Music 2021

<https://youtu.be/FB0ij7Wbs>

Readings – Darren Cram (Bible Gateway)

Exodus 24:12-18

¹²The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and wait there; I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction." ¹³So Moses set out with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up onto the mountain of God. ¹⁴To the elders he had said, "Wait here for us, until we come back to you. Look, Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a dispute may go to them."

¹⁵Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. ¹⁶The glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud. ¹⁷Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the Israelites. ¹⁸Moses entered the cloud and went up on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

2 Peter 1:16-21

¹⁶For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷For he received honour and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, my Beloved,^[a] with whom I am well pleased." ¹⁸We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain.

¹⁹So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's^[b] own interpretation, ²¹because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.^[c]

Matthew 17:1-9

¹⁷Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. ²And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became bright as light. ³Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I^[a] will set up three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁵While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, the Beloved;^[b] with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" ⁶When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. ⁷But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." ⁸And when they raised their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

⁹As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

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Young at Heart – Rev Tina

Knowing our family – Knowing God
 Book: The things I love about Grandparents
 Often grandparents are role models
 We remember and live out the best of them
 Jesus is our role model
 We remember and live out the best of him

Hymn 407: Breathe on me Breath of God

Edwin Hatch 1835-89 *alt.* Northern Baptist Assoc 2013

<https://youtu.be/MmkzSjs9eAw>

Sermon –What happened on the Mountain - Rev Tina

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, amen



RCL

Have you ever stood on top of a mountain?
 It's awe inspiring to look down over all of the surrounding landscape that's below the clouds and mist.

It is said a mountain is a thin place where God meets us. It's a divine place where we can feel closer to God.

I remember walking up towards Everest Base Camp and meeting a man from Europe making a film on why people climb up this mountain. He interviewed and filmed me.

He asked, 'Why are you climbing up the mountain. I haven't met many elderly people climbing up to Basecamp.' I replied, '*I find God on the mountain.*'

He was silent for a moment. Then he put his hand over his heart and said, '*That's profound.*'

We chatted for a while, then thanked each other and I walked on. Later on, it was God who found me on the mountain, not I who found God on that mountain and the experience completely transformed me.



View of Everest Region from helicopter – T. Lyndon

Perhaps the disciples were completely transformed, after seeing and hearing God in Jesus on the Mountain. When God spoke, they fell to the ground in awe. Perhaps their perspective of Jesus was transformed and expanded like my experience of God.

I've heard some people believe mountains are the border between the material and spiritual and others call mountains goddesses.

In ancient times people believed mountains were places where God dwelt in the clouds at the top. It was a place where they felt close to God. People like Moses believed this, Moses who met God on the mountain on Mount Sinai.

God appeared to all who were watching Moses as a devouring fire on top of the mountain and Moses entered the cloud where God dwelled. When Moses emerged from the cloud his face was radiant.

Now Jesus appears on the Mountain and his face shone like the sun and his clothes were dazzling white and he stood talking to Moses and Elijah. He was transfigured, and God shone through him.

But Peter wants to build something concrete when he encounters God on the mountain in Jesus. He wants to make three booths for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. He wants to hang onto the moment. This is when God speaks. God comes in a cloud for they cannot see God face to face. A voice comes from the cloud and says: This is my Son, the Beloved, with him I am well pleased. Listen to him.

We have heard of God's voice speaking at Jesus' baptism and saying this, but God says more. God affirms Jesus' role as teacher. God says: Listen to his Word. Listen to him.

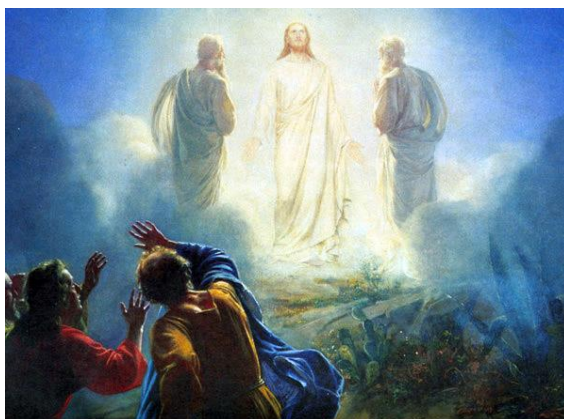
The disciples know God's voice.

They fall to the ground in awe, overcome by Holy fear.

So, what happened on the mountain?

Was their perspective of God transformed?

Like Peter, we cannot hang onto divine moments. They are a glimpse of God meant to change us where we go on to know God on a deeper level and to live our lives in a way that is more focused on God, where we listen to Jesus' words and live his teachings out in our lives.



RCL

Peter witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus. The Second Letter of Peter was written on behalf of Peter around the time he was crucified upside down by the Romans, by order of the emperor Nero. The letter is his Testament to the church. Peter heard the voice of God on the mountain. Perhaps at first his mind was not enlightened. Perhaps over time the light of Christ shone into his mind as Peter came to understand Jesus' teachings and listen to them in his heart.

Perhaps one day the dawn came, and Peter knew and understood that moment on the mountain and all he saw and heard. Perhaps it takes us all time to understand spiritual encounters with God which expand our awareness of God.

When Peter came to know God in Jesus, he said it was like the morning star rose in his heart. I believe we need to be ready to encounter God and it is God's initiative. I climbed Mount Toubkal in the Atlas Mountains on one of my birthdays and the group I was with celebrated my birthday up on the mountain. I wasn't looking for God or ready to meet God.

I was with a group when I went to Mount Tabor, which is said to be the mountain where Jesus was transfigured. Bedouins had limo's that took you to the top. The man organising the drivers would phone the other guy at the top to make sure the road was clear, then the limo we were in was driven at full speed up this narrow road with a sheer drop to God-knows-where, with one of those Greek 'evil eyes' hanging from the rear vision mirror and a crazy driver laughing all the way. Anyway, we survived. Up the top of the mountain is the church of the transfiguration. I got out

through an open window and climbed on the roof of the church. The view was amazing. But no spiritual experiences. It wasn't God's time. I wasn't ready.



RCL – Church of the Transfiguration on top Mount Tabor and Mount Tabor

I went looking for God at Everest, but God found me. I returned home a different person, my perspective of God, profoundly expanded and transformed.

We all have encounters with God that change us. It may not be on mountains. It may be during quiet prayer where we experience the smile of God and know we are going in the right direction. It may be divine reassurance. It may be like Elijah, the sheer sound of silence on the mountain or in our kitchen.

This Lent open your heart to God and pray and listen. Hope that the morning star rises in your heart like it did in Peter's heart.

The morning star is Jesus.

Quiet Moment

Hymn: 585 I heard the Voice of Jesus say

Horatius Bonar 1808-89 *alt.*

Alexander Mc Connell 2020

<https://youtu.be/74kyfROS4q8>

Offering Prayer

Lord and giver of every good thing we bring to you our lives and gifts for your kingdom all for transformation through your grace and love made known in Jesus Christ our Savior, amen

Prayers of the People – Tim Joyce

God of everlasting love, provider of all things, we pray for all people: make your way known to them, your saving power among all nations.

Almighty God we pray for your church, guide and govern it by your Spirit, that we may be led in the way of truth and hold the faith in unity of spirit and in the bond of peace. We pray for our Whitehorse Congregation. Give us a sense of oneness. Help us to get to know each other and give us a shared purpose and vision.

We thank you for the ministry of Tina and Peter (and we pray for Peter's swift recovery). We thank you for the mission and witness of this congregation and we pray that it might become clearer and clearer to us. We pray that we might use our many gifts, abilities and talents in your service.

We pray too, Lord, for other churches in our region; for the All Saints Anglican Church in Mitcham, for the South Camberwell Gospel Hall in Camberwell. We pray for their ministries and witness within and outside their congregations. And we pray for the Home Help Services arm of Uniting AgeWell, for their work, their staff and their clients, that Your hand will be there as they do their work.

Merciful God - We pray for your world. We pray this morning for France, Germany and Monaco.

We pray for –

- overcoming historical fears and suspicions
- churches and governments to effectively counter anti-immigrant populist sentiments in these countries so that they truly will become more multi-ethnic
- economic decisions that will consider the interests of the most vulnerable
- political leaders who will further the common good not only for their country but for the sake of Europe and the rest of world.

Lord - We bring before you those whose lives are without dignity and peace. For the marginalised, for those struggling to make ends meet, for the hungry and homeless, for the lonely and depressed, for victims of violence and war – that there might be a swift and just end to the conflict in Ukraine without further senseless loss of life. We pray for refugees and asylum seekers - that we might see a more compassionate response to those who flee terror and persecution. For the indigenous people - that we might approach this coming referendum in a spirit of goodwill and reconciliation and for victims of oppression and cruelty.

Loving Lord -we pray for peace, justice, tolerance and understanding of difference- racial, cultural and spiritual. We pray to leaders of nations - that above all else governments (at home and abroad) will be guided by a desire for justice and by a sense of compassion and common humanity for their fellows. Merciful Lord, we pray for those in special need at this time and entrust these people to your care.

Refresh and equip us, O God, to be your faithful and obedient people, through Jesus Christ our Lord who taught us to pray:

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.

Hymn 613 Lord of all Hopefulness

Joyce Placzek ('Jan Struther') 1901-53

Squire J7 2017

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= YesmInTMIY>

Blessing

We go in Peace in the love of God in the Power of the Spirit
May the Lord make His face shine upon us and be gracious unto us
as we bring Christ's love and peace to the world this day. Amen

Hymn 778 Shalom to You Now -

Elise Shoemaker Eslinger 1942

CMMM Team, tMt video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2oqiFenpWxY&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLIsLD2rC&index=35>

Pastoral Care tips



Leunig – Used with permission

Joan Chittister in her book called: *The breath of the Soul*, (used with permission) wrote about consciousness. She said:

A lifetime of prayer is a lifetime of intimacy with God. That constancy of soulful conjunction, of awareness of the presence within, is a stage of prayer beyond saying prayers. And yet at the same time, it is surely an effect of saying prayers. The one to whom we reach out to all our days reaches back to us. The one who has been within reach all our lives has begun to come to life quietly, but clearly, within us. There is no distance anymore.

Perhaps this is the union with God that mystics speak of.
 Perhaps this is the morning star finally rising in our hearts.
 It is the work of the Spirit.
 It is the work of God.
 It is an invitation to surrender to God's work within us.
 Pray ceaselessly and wait on God.

Something amazing

New Inmates at CPDRC dance to

I will follow him

Randy Kofani 2008

<https://youtu.be/4ADuLUP4CUU>