

Order of Worship for March 2, 2025
Transfiguration Sunday

Prelude:

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

Opening Hymn: “O Wondrous Type! O Vision Fair” – Hymn #413

The Call to Worship

P: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

P: The season of Epiphany reaches its climax this day of Transfiguration. We now hear of the first Transfiguration from Luke’s Gospel: Luke 9:28–36

Now about eight days after these sayings [Jesus] took with Him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. And as He was praying, the appearance of His face was altered, and His clothing became dazzling white. And behold, two men were talking with Him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His departure, which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw Jesus’ glory and the two men who stood with Him. And as the men were parting from Him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for You and one for Moses and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said. As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!” And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.

P: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

C: **Praise to You, O Christ.**

C: Lord Jesus Christ, You are the light of the world. Wise men, guided by light, came to worship You, and we kneel in spirit with them. You calmed the storm, healed the hurting, and released the imprisoned soul; You gave to us the peace of God, the power of hope, and the liberty of forgiveness.

P: Now, with Your disciples, You ascend the Mount of Transfiguration, there to converse with Lawgiver Moses and Prophet Elijah. Prepare our hearts to hear the Father’s words that place His signature on You: “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to Him!”

C: Through You, Lord Jesus, God places His signature on us. By faith we are chosen children of the heavenly Father.

P: The time comes when our Lord must descend the mountain and enter the valley—the valley of rejection, of denial, and of crucifixion. Lent must come soon.

C: Lord, grant that we follow You into the valley, for even in the valley of the shadow of death, life does not end. Easters follows, and life begins again. Teach us to live as Your resurrection people, O Lord, and let the joy of Easter victory that always follows the time in the valley transform this service of worship into a celebration on the mountain of faith, that we may all say, “’Tis good, Lord, to be here.”

Hymn of Praise: “*Tis Good, Lord, to Be Here*” - **Hymn #414**

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray. O God, in the glorious Transfiguration of Your beloved Son You confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the testimony of Moses and Elijah. In the voice that came from the bright cloud You wonderfully foreshowed our adoption by grace. Mercifully make us co-heirs with the King of His glory and bring us to the fullness of our inheritance in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Old Testament Lesson: Deuteronomy 34:1–12

R: Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land, Gilead as far as Dan, all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the western sea, the Negeb, and the Plain, that is, the Valley of Jericho the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. And the LORD said to him, “This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, ‘I will give it to your offspring.’ I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there.” So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD, and God buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor; but no one knows the place of his burial to this day. Moses was 120 years old when he died. His eye was undimmed, and his vigor unabated. And the people of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days. Then the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended.

And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. So the people of Israel obeyed Joshua and did as the LORD had commanded Moses. And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, none like him for all the signs and the wonders that the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, and for all the mighty power and all the great deeds of terror that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.

R: This is the Word of our Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle Lesson: Hebrews 3:1–6

R: Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, who was faithful to His Father who appointed Him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God’s house. For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) Now Moses was faithful in all God’s house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but Christ is faithful over God’s house as a son. And we are His house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.

R: This is the Word of our Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Sermon Hymn: “*Swiftly Pass the Clouds of Glory*” **Hymn # 416**

Sermon: “*The Exodus*” - Luke 9:26-38

Jimmy Carter passed away in January as the oldest president in history—100 years. Carter seemed to come out of nowhere in 1976 to win the election. In 1980 he lost by a big margin to Reagan. But Carter through his efforts as a champion for Habitat for Humanity and other charitable causes, including the initiative that led to the near eradication of Guinea Worm infection, became known as one of the best ex-presidents. He died peacefully at his home, honored by many. He seemed to go out the right way.

We can contrast him to FDR who ran in 1944 only because we were still in World War 2. With his poor health Roosevelt may have been overwhelmed by Stalin at Yalta and died in 1945, leaving Harry Truman ill-prepared for taking over. We could also look at his cousin Teddy Roosevelt who made the mistake of saying in 1904 that he would not run for reelection in 1908, something he regretted the rest of his life. He became a frustrated politician who did not go out in style.

We see that in sports. Aaron Rodgers had been a disaster for the Jets when he could have retired at a much higher point. Bill Belichick could have retired from the Patriots when Tom Brady left and be seen as the greatest coach in NFL history. Instead, the Patriots had mediocre seasons after Brady left, Belichick got divorced and married a young girl, and people wonder how he can coach in the college ranks where recruiting is everything. In contrast Ted Williams last at bat was a home run. John Elway retired with a Superbowl win. There was a funny commercial showing Bret Favre at a restaurant and a waitress asking him, “Do you want another piece of pie?” His answer is, “No, a man has to know his limits.”

How do we want to go out?

Our worship this morning focuses on Jesus’ Transfiguration. Luke Gospel tells us about this event, “Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about His departure, which He was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.” The word “departure” is literally “exodus,” the same word used to describe how Moses and people of Israel left Egypt. We remember how God parted the waters of the Red Sea so the people of Israel could cross over on dry ground. Then when the Egyptian army went after them, the waters came back and drowned them. Now that is “going out” in style! We read later in the book of Joshua that as spies are sent into the city of Jericho they are hidden by a local woman, Rahab, who said she took that risk because she and her people had heard what God had done to the Egyptians. Later that same Moses was not allowed to enter into the promised land, but he was buried personally by God. Our Old Testament says about him:

There has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, none like him for all the signs and the wonders that the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, and for all the mighty power and all the great deeds of terror that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.

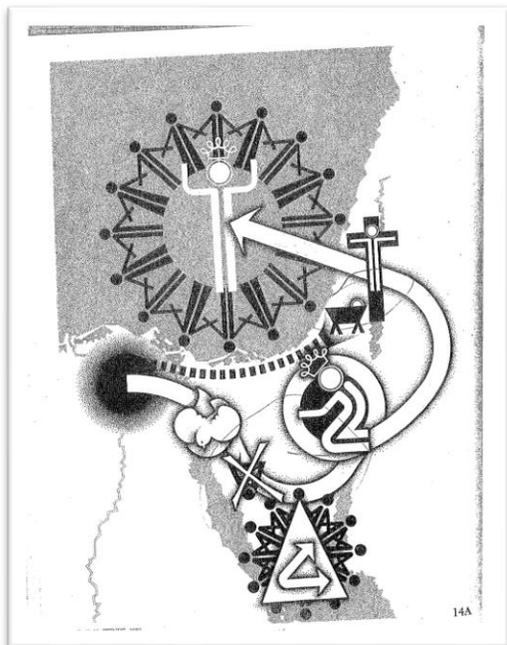
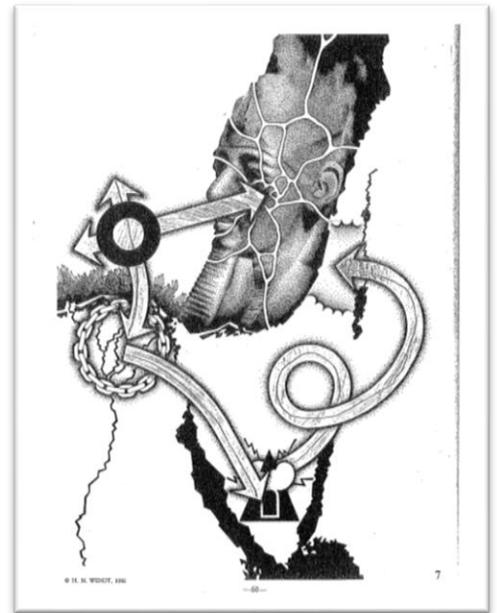
Elijah also seemed to go out the right way. Only he and Enoch are mentioned as the people in the Bible who did not die, but went straight to God. In Elijah's case it was by a chariot of fire. Now that's the way to go out!

But for the rest of us death waits. Jimmy Carter may have done much as an ex-president, but his last days were spent lying helpless in a bed. No matter how dignified a death may be, it is still death.

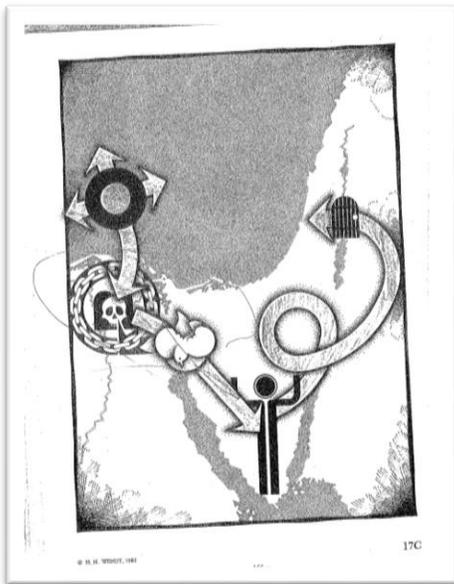
But Moses and Elijah were not talking about their end, but the one that Jesus would take. Jesus didn't go out in style. He didn't lie in state at the Capitol Rotunda. He didn't have a special day at the stadium where he could make a speech like Lou Gehrig to say he was the "Luckiest man in the world," He didn't hold an academy award or a NCAA trophy or his grandchild in His hands. The "Exodus" Jesus faced was to the cross. Jesus didn't go blindly on that journey. No, He knew from prophecies of the Old Testament that God's chosen, the Messiah, would have to bear the sins of the world.

Look at this picture:

We see here a picture describing the Exodus Moses and the people of Israel took out of Egypt. They passed through the waters of the sea, went to Mt. Sinai, and wandered in the wilderness before entering the Promised Land 40 years later.



Next, we see Jesus' life on earth, a life where He "relived" the story of the Exodus. He too went to Egypt with Mary and Joseph to escape from King Herod. He too left Egypt. He went through the waters of baptism by John the Baptist and preached on a mountain the Sermon on the Mount, which is about the very same commandments that God gave Moses at Sinai. Then He traveled into the wilderness to be tempted, as we will hear next week, by Satan. Then, by way of the cross, He entered into the Promised Land by His resurrection and ascension.



Now because He took that Exodus our lives retell the Exodus in a new way. We are called out of the slavery of sin through the waters of baptism. We are put in a relationship with God like the people at Mt. Sinai to live as God's people. We may wander in the wilderness of this life. But we follow Jesus through death into the resurrection on that Last Day when our Exodus will be complete forever with God.

That is the end that awaits all of us. That is what turns our Exodus from misery to joy.

Creed: 2nd article of Creed, page 322

Prayer of the Church

P: "Lord in your mercy,"

C: "Hear our prayer."

ALL: O Lord, graciously receive our prayers and supplications which we bring before You with thanksgiving; and grant that we, whom You in grace have heard, may be genuinely thankful to You, praise Your holy Name, and ever increase in Your love and service through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Sharing Our Ministry

Offering

The Confession

P: God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all.

C: If we walk in the light as God himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin.

P: God does not want us to perish, but to come to His life-giving light.

P: Almighty God,

C: You dwell in light unapproachable. Unprotected, we perish in Your presence. For our hearts are darkened, our minds beclouded; we call for night to cover our deeds; we have loved darkness rather than the light.

P: Jesus Christ is the light of the world, the light no darkness can overcome.

C: For His sake we beg forgiveness.

P: For His sake God hears your prayer. God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

C: We have seen the Lord's glory; we have heard the Lord's voice.

P: The darkness of your sins is gone. Walk, then, as forgiven children of light in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

The Preface

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up unto the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks unto the Lord our God.

C: It is good and proper so to do.

Prayer of Thanksgiving (Pastor)

Lord's Prayer:

The Words of our Lord:

P: When we eat this bread we share the body of Christ. When we drink from this cup we share the blood of Christ.

C: Reveal Yourself to us, O Lord, in the breaking of bread, as You once revealed Yourself on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Distribution of Holy Communion:

"Jesus on the Mountain Peak" – Hymn #415

"Alleluia Sing to Jesus" – Hymn #821

Dismissal

Prayer after Communion

P: Almighty God, on the mountain You showed Your glory in the transfiguration of Your Son. Give us the vision to see beyond the turmoil of our world and to behold the King in all His glory; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord.

C: Amen.

Blessing (pastor)

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: "Alleluia, Song of Gladness" – Hymn #417

(We sing this hymn to remind ourselves that we will not sing "Alleluia" again until Easter as we journey through Lent.)

Postlude