**transfiguration sunday- February 14, 2021**

**zion evangelical lutheran church philipsburg**

Welcome to everyone on this Transfiguration Sunday where we continue to gather in love for one another from the safety of our homes. Happy Valentine’s Day! We are now more than halfway through winter, the days are getting longer, and we again had some beautiful sunshine this week along with some colder temperatures just to remind us that it is indeed still winter. Waterloo Region is returning to the Red Zone as of Tuesday, your Church Councils will be in discussion to decide when to reopen our churches in the coming weeks.

Council met online this past Tuesday to prepare the 2021 budget, as we are not able to have our AGM, copies will be found in the March Messenger.

If you have not received your Lent in a bag activity you will do so by Wednesday. Some of our folks will receive a Lenten pamphlet instead of the bag, it contains the same wording, so you can follow along as well. Please note that there is an Ash Wednesday activity in the bag, you will have received either a tattoo or a qtip with ashes on it. You may do this as part of the activity in the bag or you may wish to participate in the online Ash Wednesday prepared by the Eastern Synod staff. The service will be available both on the Eastern Synod website and Facebook page at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday February 17. We will send out a link in an email before Wednesday.

Our GoTo meeting coffee hour takes place today at 11, please consider joining us! Please remember that Zion relies on your continued support to meet our monthly expenses. Sincere thanks to everyone who remembers us in your prayers.

**GATHERING**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,

and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

Almighty God, the resplendent light of your truth shines from the mountaintop into our hearts. Transfigure us by your beloved Son, and illumine the world with your image, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG*Beautiful Savior* (ELW 838)**

1 Beautiful Savior,
King of creation,
Son of God and Son of Man!
Truly I'd love thee,
truly I'd serve thee,
light of my soul, my joy, my crown.

2 Fair are the meadows,
fair are the woodlands,
robed in flow'rs of blooming spring;
Jesus is fairer,
Jesus is purer,
he makes our sorrowing spirit sing.

3 Fair is the sunshine,
fair is the moonlight,
bright the sparkling stars on high;
Jesus shines brighter,
Jesus shines purer
than all the angels in the sky.

4 Beautiful Savior,
Lord of the nations,
Son of God and Son of Man!
Glory and honor,
praise, adoration,
now and forevermore be thine!

**WORD**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

**FIRST READING: 2 Kings 2:1-12**

A reading from 2 Kings.

1Now when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. 2Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here; for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel.” But Elisha said, “As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they went down to Bethel. 3The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, “Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?” And he said, “Yes, I know; keep silent.”
  4Elijah said to him, “Elisha, stay here; for the Lord has sent me to Jericho.” But he said, “As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they came to Jericho. 5The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, “Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?” And he answered, “Yes, I know; be silent.”
  6Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here; for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.” But he said, “As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them went on. 7Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. 8Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground.
  9When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.” Elisha said, “Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.” 10He responded, “You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not.” 11As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. 12Elisha kept watching and crying out, “Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

**PSALM: Psalm 50:1-6**

 1The mighty one, God the Lord, has spoken; calling the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.
 2Out of Zion, perfect in its beauty, God shines forth in glory. R
 3Our God will come and will  not keep silence; with a consuming flame before, and round about a raging storm.
 4God calls the heavens and the earth from above to witness the judgment of the people.
 5“Gather before me my loyal followers, those who have made a covenant with me and sealed it with sacrifice.”

 6The heavens declare the rightness of God’s cause, for it is God who is judge.

**SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 4:3-6**

A reading from 2 Corinthians.

3Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus’ sake. 6For it is the God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

**GOSPEL: Mark 9:2-9**

The holy gospel according to Mark.

2Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, 3and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. 4And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. 5Then Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” 6He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. 7Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!” 8Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.
 9As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

The gospel of the Lord.

**SERMON**

 The Transfiguration story is one of my favourites! I think the reason why I enjoy it so much is because of the rich imagery it provides. You can almost imagine yourself being there in the moment. I invite you to close your eyes and relax and envision that you are Peter climbing Mount Hermon with Jesus, James, and John.

 You have been walking for hours, but the walk has done little to relax your mind. For it was only last week that Jesus informed you and the rest of the disciples of the struggle he was about to face. He said that he was going to greatly suffer, be rejected by the chief priests and elders, be hung on a cross where he would die, but then rise again three days later. You were very upset and angry when Jesus told you of his future, and you responded harshly to him. Jesus rebuked you saying that you were setting your mind on human things, not the divine. You know he is the Messiah, but you do not fully understand.

 As you make your way up the mountain, you cannot get Jesus’ words out of your mind. This man called Jesus has become your best friend, you have watched him preach and teach, he has healed hundreds if not thousands of people. He has fed the multitudes with nothing more than 5 fish and some bread. The work you did with Jesus was just beginning. There is still so much more to do, but now he says that he is going to die, and then be resurrected. You see the pain and oppression of a broken world all around you. How will Jesus dying make the world a better place?

 No one speaks as the journey continues, it is now mid-afternoon, and the sun's heat is unrelenting. You are glad for the light breeze that cools you every now and again. There is a faint smell in the air of wildflowers, and you notice the bees hovering nearby, gathering nectar to take back to their hive. All you hear are the footsteps of your friends and the gentle swoosh of Jesus’ darkly coloured tunic moving in rhythm to his footsteps. Why did Jesus ask you to come with him today? Why is this climb so important? You look ahead and see that you are nearing the top of the mountain, you will be glad to sit and rest for a while.

 Suddenly there is a bright and radiant light directly in front of you. You shield your eyes to try to see what is going on. Jesus is still there, but he has changed; he is surrounded by light, and his tunic has changed to a brilliant colour of white. You are mesmerized and captivated by the brightness of the light! Jesus is then joined by Moses and Elijah, the great Jewish prophets of Hebrew Scripture. Moses who climbed Mt Sinai to receive the laws and commandments from God and Elijah the great prophet who challenged Baal on behalf of God at Mount Carmel in 1st Kings. These great prophets were said to have avoided death and ascended directly into heaven. In this moment, you are on holy ground in privileged company of these prophets who shared an intimacy with God. You have conflicting emotions of fear and astonishment. You are afraid of what you are witnessing, but you also want the moment to last forever, so much so that you wanted to build 3 tents or tabernacles as a shrine or meeting place.

 Then the skies turned dark, and a great cloud appeared. A voice came from the cloud saying, “This is my Son, the Beloved, listen to him." God spoke directly to you, James, and John, proclaiming Jesus’ identity and calling you to trust and listen to him. Then as quickly as the transfiguration began it was over, Jesus is again walking in front of you, and he orders you to remain quiet about the events of the day. You resume your journey down the mountain, knowing that a change has taken place. Jesus has changed and you are changed. You reflect on the mystery and awe of the day, feeling confused, wondering what your call is in the world in response to the glory which was shared with you on this day.

 The mystery of the Transfiguration began with the season of Epiphany, where the manifestation of Jesus’ identity was revealed at Jesus’ baptism. God proclaimed to Jesus in Mark 1:11, stating, “you are my Son, the Beloved, with you, I am well pleased.” On this day, surrounded by the beauty and majesty of the mountaintop, the disciples were witness to the glory and divinity of Jesus Christ in God proclaiming Jesus’ identity to the few who were gathered with him. The light that day revealed who Jesus was and is. Jesus was the Messiah and the struggles, persecution, and death that he would face were essential to his mission as the Messiah. The mission called Jesus to journey towards the cross. The disciples were also called to do so, and we are called to do the same. This coming week, we will celebrate Ash Wednesday. Together we will make the sign of the cross on our foreheads and remember that we are dust, and to dust, we shall return. Our journey will also be full of struggles and challenges, but we have faith knowing that the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ will accompany us throughout our earthly life us giving us hope for all that is to come.

 As we begin the season of Lent this week, we are called to take up our crosses and follow Jesus Christ. We are called to be transformed and changed into a new way of thinking of and understanding our world. The light of that Transfiguration day also shone on the disciples calling them to continue their work in the world. That light shines on us as well.

 As disciples we are called to share the radical and unconditional love of Jesus Christ in loving one another. We are called to listen to the pleas and plights of those around us who suffer and struggle. We are called to raise our voices and offer understanding, compassion, and justice to those who have been othered in society.

 Taking up our crosses is an active act we choose every day. It is forgiving those who have hurt us, it is proclaiming the gospel in word and deed, it is letting go of our pride and the need for power and domination. It is living in the light of Christ that sets our hearts on fire. It is the good news, and for that I say thanks be to God. Amen

**HYMN OF THE DAY How Good, Lord, to Be Here! (ELW 315)**

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

1 How good, Lord, to be here!
Your glory fills the night;
your face and garments, like the sun,
shine with unborrowed light.

2 How good, Lord, to be here!
your beauty to behold
where Moses and Elijah stand,
your messengers of old.

3 Fulfiller of the past
and hope of things to be,
we hail your body glorified
and our redemption see.

4 Before we taste of death,
we see your kingdom come;
we long to hold the vision bright
and make this hill our home.

5 How good, Lord, to be here!
Yet we may not remain;
but since you bid us leave the mount,
come with us to the plain.

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Guided by Christ made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.

For the gospel proclaimed in word and deed, for communities of faith far and near, and for all who show the face of Christ throughout the world, let us pray.

**Have mercy, O God.**

For creation: sun, moon and stars; life forming in the dark earth and ocean deep; mountains, clouds and storms, and creatures seen and unseen, and for the Holy Spirit’s guidance in our stewardship of God’s creation, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For those responsible for safety and protection: for emergency responders and security guards, attorneys and advocates, civil servants and leaders of governments, that they witness to mercy and justice throughout the world, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For all who suffer this day Eddy, Elaine B, Susie, Donelda, Lynette, Barb, Sarah, Alea, Mary Ann, Cheryl, Bonnie, Mary, Ruth, the family of Don McEllistrum, the family of Elaine Stebbins, and those we name in the stillness of our hearts, that Christ our healer transform sickness into health, loneliness into companionship, bereavement into consolation, and suffering into peace, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For companions on life’s journey in these worshiping communities, for loved ones whom we miss when we cannot gather together, and for guidance during the struggles we face, that God’s glory is revealed in, around, and among us, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

In thanksgiving for the faithful departed who now rest from their earthly pilgrimage, that their lives of service and prayer inspire us in our living, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

**PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD**

Let us pray.

O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

**Amen.**

**LORD’S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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 into temptation,**

**but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,**

**and the power, and the glory,**

**forever and ever. Amen.**

**SENDING**

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

**BLESSING**

The God of steadfastness and encouragement

grant you to live in harmony with one another,

in accordance with Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,

so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The God of all grace ☩ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Be the light of Christ!

**Thanks be to God.**

**SENDING SONG*Shine, Jesus, Shine* (ELW 671)**

1.Lord, the light of your love is shining
In the midst of the darkness, shining
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us
Set us free by the truth you now bring us
Shine on me, shine on me

Refrain: Shine, Jesus, shine
Fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze
Set our hearts on fire
Flow, river, flow
Flood the nations with grace and mercy
Send forth your word
Lord, and let there be light

As we gaze in your kingly brightness,

so our faces display your likeness,

ever changing from glory to gory,

mirrored here may our lives tell the story
Shine on me, shine on me

Refrain

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