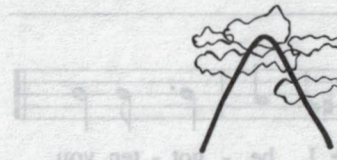


Celebrate

Transfiguration of Our Lord

February 19, 2023



Today's festival is a bridge between the Advent-Christmas-Epiphany cycle that comes to a close today and the Lent-Easter cycle that begins in several days. On a high mountain Jesus is revealed as God's beloved Son, echoing the words at his baptism. This vision of glory sustains us as Jesus faces his impending death in Jerusalem. We turn this week to Ash Wednesday and our yearly baptismal journey from Lent to Easter. Some churches put aside the alleluia at the conclusion of today's liturgy. This word of joy will be omitted during the penitential season of Lent and will be sung again at Easter.

Prayer of the Day

O God, in the transfiguration of your Son you confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the witness of Moses and Elijah, and in the voice from the bright cloud declaring Jesus your beloved Son, you foreshadowed our adoption as your children. Make us heirs with Christ of your glory, and bring us to enjoy its fullness, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading

Exodus 24:12-18

At Mount Sinai, Moses experienced the presence of God for forty days and forty nights. The "glory of the LORD" settled on the mountain, and on the seventh day God called out to Moses. On the mountain God gave Moses the stone tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments.

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

¹⁵ Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain.¹⁶ The 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.¹⁷ Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel.¹⁸ Moses entered the cloud, and went up on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

to all nations. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Give shelter to those lacking safe homes. Spur communities to work for fair housing for all. Protect our neighbors whose dwellings do not keep out dangerous cold or heat; accompany with your touch those who are homebound, sick, or isolated (especially). Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Make us eager to receive your Word in scripture. Help us recognize Jesus' voice in the needs of our neighbors; make us confident to follow the way of the cross. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Receive our thanksgiving for the holy ones who have guided us in faithfulness and gathered even the unlikely as your people. With our forebears in faith and all who have hoped in you, teach us to wait with courage until the promised day dawns. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We bring to you our needs and hopes, O God, trusting your wisdom and power revealed in Christ crucified. **Amen.**

These readings are from the Revised Common Lectionary, Year A, for the Transfiguration of Our Lord, February 19, 2023.

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Called together to follow Jesus, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Embolden your church as it witnesses to the majesty and mercy of your Son. Equip lay preachers, deacons, and pastors. Move us to share our stories of your faithfulness and forgiveness; may our lives proclaim your greatness. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Dwell with your whole creation, from the tallest mountain peak to the deepest valley. Bless the work of conservation organizations and protect vital habitats (*locally threatened waters or lands may be named*). Support the work of disaster relief agencies around the world. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

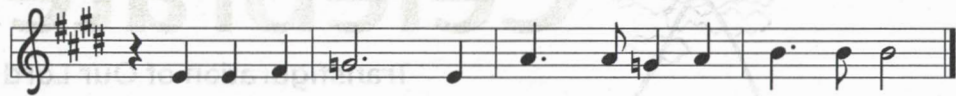
Guide and give wisdom to all in authority: our mayor (*name*) and local leaders, our governor (*name*) and state legislators, our president (*name*) and national legislators. Bring freedom and justice to

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 78:17-20, 52-55. **Tuesday** Romans 11:1-6. **Wednesday** (Ash Wednesday) Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or Isaiah 58:1-12; Psalm 51:1-17; 2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21. **Thursday** (commemoration of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, martyr, died 156) Psalm 51. **Friday** Jonah 4:1-11. **Saturday** (commemoration of Elizabeth Fedde, deaconess, died 1921) Isaiah 58:1-12. **First Sunday in Lent** Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7; Psalm 32; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11.

CELEBRATE February 19, 2023

Volume 54, Number 1



You are my son; this day have I be - got - ten you.

Why are the nations ¹ in an uproar?

Why do the peoples mutter ¹ empty threats?

²Why do the kings of the earth rise up in revolt,
and the princes ¹ plot together,
against the LORD and against the ¹ LORD's anointed?

³Let us break their ¹ yoke," they say;
"let us cast off their ¹ bonds from us."

⁴God whose throne is in heav- ¹ en is laughing;
the LORD holds them ¹ in derision. **R**

⁵Then in wrath God ¹ speaks to them,
and in rage fills ¹ them with terror.

⁶"As for me, I have anoint- ¹ ed my king
upon Zion, my ¹ holy mountain."

⁷Let me announce the decree ¹ of the LORD,
who said to me, "You are my son; this day have I be- ¹ gotten you.

⁸Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for ¹ your inheritance
and the ends of the earth for ¹ your possession. **R**

⁹You shall crush them with an ¹ iron rod
and shatter them like a ¹ piece of pottery."

¹⁰And now, you ¹ kings, be wise;
be warned, you rulers ¹ of the earth.

¹¹Submit to the ¹ LORD with fear,
and with trembling ¹ bow in worship;

¹²lest the LORD be angry, and you perish in a sudden ¹ blaze of wrath.
Happy are all who take ref- ¹ uge in God! **R**

or Psalm 99; refrain, Ps. 99:9 [not printed]

At the transfiguration, God's voice was heard declaring Jesus to be the beloved Son. By the activity of the Holy Spirit, God's voice continues to be heard through the word of scripture.

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 eye-witnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, my Beloved, 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 own interpretation, ²¹because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Gospel

Matthew 17:1-9

Shortly before he enters Jerusalem, where he will be crucified, Jesus is revealed to Peter, James, and John in a mountaintop experience of divine glory called the transfiguration.

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 dazzling white. 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 will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁵While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed

them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; 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 looked up, 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."