

WORSHIP SERVICE PLAN**(Traditional & Online Service)** (White/Gold)

February 15, 2026 • Transfiguration of the Lord

Exodus 24:12-18; Matthew 17:1-9*"Face to Face with God"*

Being face to face with God means brightness that is identifiable, public and conspicuous.

(online only) Preparation for Worship

Gather these items for worship. If an items unavailable, fret not:

- a piece of **white** cloth
- an end table or stand
- a plate
- a cup
- a glass or bowl with water
- a lighter/match
- a lamp or lightbulb
- a computer or internet-accessible device
- a thank you card to God for something this week



For each item you have, thank God for the provision. For each piece you do not have, thank God you don't need it. Place the table/stand in the area you plan to worship. If more than one person will be present, place the table in the middle of where you will be seated. Drape the cloth over it. Arrange the cup, plate, glass of water, and other items on the table. Keep the Bible in front of you.

Questions for the announcement loop

In preparing for Worship, consider the following:

- How does *anyone* recognize that YOU belong to God?
- When someone is face to face with you are they encountering God in your life?
- If Jesus were standing in front of you, what one question would you ask?
- What does it mean to *you* to be created in the image of God?

Opening Sentence**Exodus 24:17 (CEB)**

To the Israelites, the LORD's glorious presence looked like a blazing fire on top of the mountain.

Welcome! We are glad you are with us! We have a few Community Notes for you to consider as we worship throughout the week, living that Christian life...

Welcome Visitors!

We are glad you are here! Our nursery is in the Education Building and our restrooms are in the buildings other than this Sanctuary.

Great Expectations

We readily accept the brightness of Jesus and his life. The miracles. The challenges to authority. The spectacle of conquering storms, hearts and death. Jesus himself raising to glorious resurrection. The brightness of Jesus is undeniable. It even comes across from the page. Scripture, especially in the Gospels, shines like a floodlight into the reaches of us. So when we carry Jesus within us, shouldn't we be bright as well? As you move through the week, what are the ways you try to dampen, tamp down, or otherwise shade the light of Christ in your life? What does God have to do in order to shine through you without impediment?

Meeting Notes

Last Sunday was our Annual Meeting. We, of course, reviewed the 2025 Annual Report, duplicates of which are available digitally or as hardcopies. Ira Trollinger gave a presentation on giving strategies that ended with an appeal for prayer. The congregation elected to replace Brody Cameron (given his resignation) and employed the Nominating Committee to resume their duty. While his resignation letter was published, copies of it are available from the church office and Brody himself invites anyone who wishes to discuss his decision with him directly.

The longest portion of the meeting centered around the pastor's Terms of Call and (1) their extraordinary increase in expense and (2) confidence in David's ministry. For the first part, it was observed that the increase in expense was due solely to requirements imposed by the denomination's Board of Pensions. The rest of the proposed compensation was unchanged from the previous year. As for the second part, several expressed no confidence in David's leadership and no longer being able to support him as pastor. Specifically expressed was their assessment that our comparatively low membership (compared to nearby, recently started congregations) and financial struggles are due to his sermons not inspiring people to join/remain a part of the congregation. Still others expressed alternative views, including a desire to not become like the mega-churches in our area, appreciation for the welcome and care felt from the congregation, and appreciation for David's ministry. In the end, the Terms of Call were approved but with dissent. It was acknowledged that the conversation on whether David should remain as pastor would continue and that opportunities to participate in those discussions would be forthcoming.

The meeting ended with prayer and members were dismissed in peace.

Lent Has Arrived

Do you have enough light to see your path? Are you traveling light enough to conserve your strength? Are you moved and moving? Well, with our theme for Lent we want to answer all of that and more. In preparation for the season of Lent and our theme, "Light for the Journey", we're in need of a few items if you have them to share. First, we will need mirrors of all shapes and sizes. Please mark the back of your mirror with your name and phone number if you share one with us. The second thing we need are your thoughts! As you are willing to share, take 5 minutes to gaze at yourself in the mirror (set a timer!) and then write a paragraph of what you think you see in the reflection. Your reflections can, of course, be anonymous and we won't share them without your express permission. Your submissions can come by emailing the church office, texting the pastor, or putting it in an envelope and placing that in an

offering plate or giving box. We'll receive these throughout Lent.

Lent Has Arrived

We begin with the Fat Tuesday (2/17) Pancake Supper from 5:30-7:30pm. The meal is supported by your donating.

Next is the Ash Wednesday (2/18) Worship Service starting at 7pm. We will literally wash our sins away (you have to see it to believe it...).

From there we will follow our theme during the Sundays in Lent, using a different thematic element each week.

Palm/Passion Sunday will come March 29th to begin Holy Week.

A reading list that takes you all the way through Lent (and into Holy Week, really) is available from the church office or from the website.

(10am only) Greet one another in Christ!

(10am only) Gathering Song

"He Came Down" GTG #137

He came down that we may have love;
He came down that we may have love;
He came down that we may have love;
Hallelujah forevermore. (2X)

(10am only) Prelude:

"Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise" arr. Victor Labenske

Being face to face with God means brightness that is identifiable, public and conspicuous.

In this moment, let us stand, take a deep breath, silence our devices, and continue in worship together. Let us make use of the *Call to Worship* that is before you...

(10am only) Call to Worship

God changed the days

God changed the rules

God changed conventions

God changed legacies

God changed the world

God changed the nations*God changed the Christ***God seeks to change us****Sing:***"Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise" GTG #12***Prayer of Confession/Preparation**

For all the things we count on about God, we forget that Jesus was transformed as a part of his ministry. It's not good that we do that. It's important to talk about our shortcomings so that we're ready to hear what God has to say. Let us begin with silent prayer...

(Please pray silently...)

Pray: Eternal God, we read, we hear, that we are created in your image. We observe that we, along with all of Creation, grows. Everything grows, transforms, changes. But when it comes to our hearts and minds, we resist your image in us. We resist your efforts to transform us. We resist your desire to see us move past, grow into, push beyond, all the limitations our sins place on us. Help us, please, set aside everything holding us back from becoming exactly what you have in mind, God. May we come to reflect your generosity as enthusiastically as we receive it. Thank you for listening, God. Amen.

(10am only) Assurance of Pardon

God's love can change everything, even the power of our sins over us. God's will that we have this power:

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.*The Peace of Christ be with you***And also with you.****(10am only) Gloria Patri (Glory to God)****Glory be to the Father and to the Son****And to the Holy Ghost****As it was in the beginning****It is now and ever shall be****World without end: Amen, amen.****Reading of Scripture**

Say: God's Word is a gift. And good gifts are meant to be opened. Our hearts and minds are gifts. And good gifts are meant to be opened. God offers to help us open our presents by God's own Spirit. Let

us take God up on that offer and ask for help to understand. Let us pray...(everyone sings)

Pray/Sing: *"Break Thou the Bread of Life" (verse 2)*
GTG #460

**Bless thou the truth, dear Lord, now unto me,
As thou didst bless the bread by Galilee.
Then shall all bondage cease, all fetters fall.
And I shall find my peace, my all in all.**

The Transfiguration is one of those stories that strains our ability to understand. What are we supposed to DO with it? But ultimately the Gospel story with Jesus' brightness is meant to echo the illumination of Moses on Mount Sinai. Listen closely to the Word of God to us all and our ongoing place in God's story...

Read: Exodus 24:12-18 (CEB)*The giving of the Commandments.*

¹² The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and wait there. I'll give you the stone tablets with the instructions and the commandments that I've written in order to teach them."

¹³ So Moses and his assistant Joshua got up, and Moses went up God's mountain. ¹⁴ Moses had said to the elders, "Wait for us here until we come back to you. Aaron and Hur will be here with you. Whoever has a legal dispute may go to them."

¹⁵ Then Moses went up the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. ¹⁶ The LORD's glorious presence settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days. On the seventh day the LORD called to Moses from the cloud. ¹⁷ To the Israelites, the LORD's glorious presence looked like a blazing fire on top of the mountain. ¹⁸ Moses entered the cloud and went up the mountain. Moses stayed on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

Read: Matthew 17:1-9 (CEB)*The Transfiguration.*

¹ Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and brought them to the top of a very high mountain. ² He was transformed in front of them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light.

³ Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Jesus. ⁴ Peter reacted to all of this by saying to Jesus, "Lord, it's good that we're here. If you want, I'll make three shrines: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

⁵ While he was still speaking, look, a bright cloud overshadowed them. A voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son whom I dearly love. I am very pleased with him. Listen to him!" ⁶ Hearing this, the disciples fell on their faces, filled with awe.

⁷ But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." ⁸ When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Don't tell anybody about the vision until the Human One is raised from the dead."

*One: For the Word of God in Scripture,
for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us...*

All: Thanks be to God!

Children's Sermon

Adults, you'll need:

- a flashlight
 - Make space for questions if you get them
- "Make It Shine"*
- So, do you know what this is? It's a flashlight! And it makes a really great hammer...Oh, wait. Ok. Maybe it's good for eating cereal or soup...Huh. Well maybe you can use it to fly...Will it make me taller? I know, if I touch it to my head I'll get smarter. If I shake it (shake it) maybe I'll get rich, I'll get a lot of money...
 - Well this flashlight doesn't seem to work very well. It doesn't seem to do what I want. It doesn't seem to do anything...(if they protest, ask them what to do instead; if they don't, suddenly come up with the idea of turning it on)
 - Wait, if I turn it on...I get light?! The job of a flashlight is to shine light? That's amazing! And it's just how our faith should work.
 - We are flashlights for God. And we are meant to shine the light of God around us.
 - So when you're around the people who care about you, ask them how they shine God's light.
 - Don't forget to pray!

(10am only) Anthem:

"Glory to God in the Highest" by Jay Althouse

"Face to Face with God"

Being face to face with God means brightness that is identifiable, public and conspicuous.

One of the most famous Bible chapters about love says something curious towards the end. 1 Corinthians 13:12 says:

"Now we see a reflection in a mirror; then we will see face-to-face..."

But face to face with what? What could *love* possibly reveal that nothing else can? As it turns out, Paul, in that letter is talking about maturity, spiritual maturity. Growing up. Moving beyond where we started to the future God has waiting for us. To a realization of God's purpose for us all. I mean, who wouldn't want to know what their life was meant to accomplish? Who wouldn't want to have the meaning of their life laid so plainly that you couldn't mistake it?

We have a tendency to call understanding like that illumination. Brightness. Shining a light on a situation, a problem, a puzzle, a mystery, a life.

I mean, you can imagine it, can't you? God has just rescued you from slavery and utter oppression. God has declared that the whims of Pharaoh will not have the last word on generations of your family or nation. And in drama that only God can fashion you follow pillars of cloud and fire to the edge of the Red Sea (after 10 plagues that rival any sci fi movie you can think of). The Egyptian army is bearing down on all of you: aunts, uncles, the twins, widows, singles, storytellers, that guy who knows how to make his arm bend funny, that lady who always knows the best way to handle pain, everybody...everybody you know is facing extinction. Then that weird guy at the center of it all steps up to the sea and raises that staff of his. The winds blow and the Red Sea parts. You walk. It's breath-taking. You can't believe you're actually doing this. You can't believe any of this has happened. Is this what it means to be the people of God?

Not yet.

So you make it to the other side. You watch the waters fall and wipe out the pursuing army. It is complete victory at God's own hands. Everyone is dancing, singing, yelling, laughing, crying and just plain trying to take it all in. Surely this is what it means to be the people of God.

No, not yet.

So they travel. As a nation. As people who left with only what they could carry, into a desert waiting to swallow them whole. They travel with this crazy Moses person who's leading them to a mountain. Sinai someone said he called it. It's been hard travel and it hasn't been clear how they're going to eat. It's not clear where they're going to get water. It's not clear what the next move is supposed to be. And there's all this infernal waiting. All of it pointing to a much different question than the miraculous rescue inspired: what do we do now?

God says, according to this Moses guy, "wait for my instruction..."

NOW they're the people of God.

Read: Exodus 24:12-18 (CEB)
The giving of the Commandments.

So let's start with the end: for how many things are you willing to wait forty days and forty nights? Look, we know that, thanks to naysayers, the Israelites traveled the desert for forty years before entering the Promised Land. But what are they really waiting for? What takes so long for God to get on with it and bless us? After leaving Egypt and crossing the Red Sea, after every hardship and having to fight for every minute, why is God's answer MORE WAITING?

But the thing is, we're not really waiting on God. God is waiting on us.

God is waiting on us to catch up with who we are supposed to be. God is waiting for us to be ready to accept the instructions prepared for us. God is waiting for us to set aside our other gods and make sure God's the only one we're serving. God's

waiting on the people to be ready to be illuminated with the utter brightness of God's own Spirit and activity. God is waiting on you. God is waiting on me. God. Is. Waiting.

It says that God's presence on the top of the mountain looked for all the world like a blazing fire. Having lived in Black Mountain for many years, I got the opportunity to experience the Appalachian Mountains, covered head to toe in green trees until the glorious Fall season. Stepping out onto the porch of the building where I worked, watching the sun drench the mountain faces and valleys in mid-October, it looked for all the world like everything was on fire. Glory of God indeed.

Yet it wasn't fire. It wasn't even light, in the conventional sense. It was how the experience of it was making me feel. What is it that fires you? What is it that illuminates you and makes you realize how very precious to God you really are? What is it that draws you into a mountaintop experience of realizing that you are a part of the People of God?

But impatience can be ruinous to our experience of it. There's a movie called "Crimson Tide" about a submarine with a nuclear arsenal that has its communications cut off and is weighing whether or not it's actually world war III. In the very beginning, before submerging for their mission, the captain and first officer are gazing at the setting sun, just taking it in, saying nothing. The captain says, "Bravo, Hunter."

"Sir?"

"You knew to shut and enjoy the view. Most eggheads would want to talk it away..."

Rather than trying to control the experience or reframe it, allowing it to wash over him was the important thing. And that's the important thing for us as we think about our own Christian identity. We are not going to find the answers we're looking for trying to control what God gets to say to us, what God gets to show us, or even how God gets to save us. Can you imagine drowning and then telling the one who swims out to you, "I'd prefer it if you only swam the backstroke..." Really?

And yet, we know, part of the drama of Exodus is the people, after being rescued in such dramatic fashion, taking time to push back on God's way of doing things. They weren't ready. They weren't willing. So, God had to wait. First seven days with Moses and then forty days and nights with the people.

But surely, thousands of years later, the people caught on. Surely they learned those lessons and were ready to not repeat those mistakes. Surely the disciples were ready to embrace the illumination of God right in front of them in the person of Jesus Christ.

Read: Matthew 17:1-9 (CEB)
The Transfiguration.

Once again with the mountains!

But this time it's a little more intimate, at least in the sense that it's fewer people. Maybe in a small group we'd have an easier time facing that God-mirror. Maybe the light is easier to share among a close knit, well-traveled group. After all, Peter, James, John and Jesus have been through a LOT together. They've already seen healings, parables, sermons, walking on water, casting out demons, arguments with leaders, gone on mission trips, calming of a storm, a couple of mass feedings, rejections, and even a declaration by Jesus of his own suffering and death. But even after all of that, they were not yet illuminated.

So with this mountaintop experience, these guys were engulfed. To an observer, they might have even looked like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the furnace for all of the brightness. But they are joined by the two rivers of the people's entire history: Moses and Elijah, the Law and the Prophets, with Jesus at the center. It must have been quite the moment.

And in his impatience, Peter tries to manage it. Rather than just taking it in, Peter comes up with a plan of action. Even though God is literally acting—at work right in front of him—Peter is getting in his own way. Then Jesus gives the instruction that we're just plain tired of hearing, if we're honest.

Wait.

Specifically, Jesus says don't tell anybody yet. He says this knowing they won't be ready until the resurrection happens. But I have to wonder are we ready to hear it? Are we ready to take in the view of the transfiguration and allow it to wash over us?

Part of the problem in the desert was that the people were coming face to face with the God who had saved them AND God's expectations. And as you might expect, that immediately revealed—illuminated—who belonged to God and who didn't.

The transfiguration posed the same challenge. They came face to face with implications of who Jesus is and what he represents. Given the vision Peter, James and John were shown, who would've been ready to hear that Jesus was the culmination of history? Only children of the resurrection.

That brings us to now. Being face to face with God means brightness that is identifiable, public and conspicuous. Light that identifies who we are. Light that puts us on display. Light that makes us stick out in a world that doesn't want to do things God's way. Coming face to face with God brings us face to face with the question the Confirmands are exploring right now. It brings us face to face with the question the restlessness and violence of our world demands. It puts us face to face with the question the needs of our neighbors and real hopes of our nation present to us.

To whom do we belong. Only time will tell. But let's not keep God waiting too long.

My family in Christ, may it be so. Amen.

Song of Reflection

"Shine, Jesus, Shine" CEL #431

Offering

God chooses to love us, abundantly. We should respond by choosing to be loving, abundantly. This is why we should give and share what we have and who we are. Let us reflect together on what has been given...

(10am only) Offertory

"I Have Decided to Follow Jesus " arr. James Koerts

(10am only) Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God all creatures here below.
Praise God above ye heavenly hosts;
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Blessing

(text is for the ONLINE service)

Let there be no doubt, Great God: you love us. And we are grateful. Let there be no doubt, Great God: we should be loving in turn. As we receive the gifts you provide, may the gifts we are meant to be emerge. In the great name of Jesus Christ, we pray this together. Amen.

Prayers of the People

- Say: God doesn't just hear our prayers. God answers. Let us pray...
- "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" GTG#465
**What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer.
O what peace we often forfeit;
O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer.**
- Holy God, to you be all glory and honor and power forever. Amen. To you from whom every good thing arrives, be praise and thanksgiving. Not slogans, Lord. Just statements of fact. Who we are is tied up in who you are God, even when we get wrong. You continue to try and light our path. Give us the strength to walk it. Give us the sense of your voice and yours alone. May what we pursue be your pursuit of us. And when faced with the darkness of our day, the confusion and questions of our culture, the absurdities we accept as normal, help us return and remain in your brightness.
- Every where we go, everything we say, let it all shine with you. You say in your Word, "And whatever you do, do it all in the name of Jesus Christ." God, may that really be true of us. Help us get there, if we aren't. Help us WANT to be there. And may nothing interfere with coming face to face with you.
- Thus, let us be Godly people. Let us make a habit of compassion and consolation. Let us make

second nature your grace and mercy and sense of justice. Let us set aside safety and embrace risk-taking with you. May your healing balm reach through us to those around us, especially those on our prayer lists and those we will come to know. Help us love and give love. Help us value mercy as you do. Despite our collective answer of violence, of disdain, of division, of cynicism, of apathy, to your love, may we truly be washed by you and embrace hope instead...
(take time to name your own prayers)

- Thank you for believing in us, Thank you for transforming us. Thank you for teaching us, even how to pray when words fail us, saying,
- **Pray: 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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

Hymn of Sending

(10am) "We Are Marching in the Light of God"
GTG #853

Sending & Benediction

Let us say together our benediction...

Being face to face with God means brightness that is identifiable, public and conspicuous.

(raise your hands and say) "Get up, take heart, Jesus is still calling you..."; Go, and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding guide your hearts and minds this day and forever more. Amen!

Sing: "God Be With You Till We Meet Again"

**God be with you till we meet again;
Loving counsels guide, uphold you,
May the Shepherd's care unfold you;
God be with you till we meet again.
Till we meet, till we meet,
till we meet at Jesus' feet.
Till we meet, till we meet,
God be with you till we meet again.**

(10am only) Postlude

"Siyahamba/This Little Light of Mine" arr. Sandra Eithun