



One Page Devotional

By Pastor Robb McCoy

February 19, 2023

Worship Every Sunday at 9:30 AM

The Transfiguration

On Sunday, Viminda Shafer was our guest preacher.
This devotion was written by Pastor Robb McCoy
Scripture: Matthew 16:24-17:9

We rest here on a transition Sunday. It is the last Sunday after Epiphany. It is the Sunday before Lent. We stand nearly halfway between Christmas and Easter. We stand on the mountain of Transfiguration with the ministry of Galilee over and the journey to Jerusalem about to begin.

We are reminded by the words of God that Jesus is “my Son whom I dearly love.” These words repeated from the moment Jesus was baptized by John. As Jesus touches his disciples and says, “Rise Up. Do not be afraid.” We hear the Good News of Easter Morning as the angel told the women, “Do not be afraid.”

We see on the mountain two men, Elijah and Moses, who represent all that has come before. Moses, the giver of the Law; and Elijah, the messianic prophet. They are the Law and the Prophets embodied here with the Word of God made flesh. Also on the mountain are James, John, and Peter, the future of the Church.

This is the fulcrum moment of Jesus’ life. Everything before is about revealing who he was. Authoritative teacher, commander of the sea, bringer of bread, healer of sick, Son of God. Finally, it is Peter who declares “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Mt. 16:16). Peter sees Jesus fully and understands his identity, but now the truth must be revealed on a level that none of them could anticipate. Everything before has revealed that Jesus is the Christ. Everything from this point reveals what kind of Christ Jesus will be.

Jesus’ identity is revealed, and the light pours from him. He glows in the full knowledge of who he is. Connected deeply to the past and looking honestly at the future, Christ is transfigured. God tells them, “Listen to him.”

I believe we stand here at a fulcrum moment as a Church. We are on the edge of a global crisis in which churches were forced to adapt in ways many thought impossible. We stand in the midst of a conference shedding churches even while others are making bold declarations of inclusivity and reconciliation. New things are being born and it seems as if something old is slowly dying.

We stand as a congregation in the middle of a process we have been calling “Reconciling Conversations.” We are deciding if we will make an explicit statement about welcoming LGBTQ people. This is an important step because to say nothing is to be un-welcoming. The United Methodist Church has been sending mixed messages for decades, and most headlines that are being made now are “LGBTQ people are not welcome.” If we are who we say we are - a welcoming congrega-

tion that loves everyone - than we must not hide behind a veil of secrecy or coded language. We are deciding to remain United Methodist, but remain in a way that is distinct and explicit in our welcome. Like Jesus on the mountain, this is a moment about identity and purpose.

Everything before has been about identity. Everything from this point reveals what kind of Church we will be. Some are disaffiliating and declaring what kind of Church they are. To whom will be granted full access? Who will be fully welcomed? What interpretation of the Law will we stand on. Which lens will we use to read the Scriptures? We are facing questions of identity. Who do people say that we are? Who do you say that we are? We are the Church – what kind of Church will we be?

It is a fearful time. James, Peter, and John were terrified on that mountain where Christ revealed the truth. Stripped away from anything that hid Jesus’ true nature, Christ glowed. Christ glowed with a light that transformed. Christ glowed with the Law and the Prophets. God told James, Peter, and John to “listen to him.” Then Jesus told them “Rise up. Fear not.”

It is a fearful time. Like James, Peter, and John, it is fearful to stand in this moment of transition and wonder what may come. It is frightening to wonder where we may have to go. It would be easier to simply dig in and built booths and not face what must come. It is fearful to stand a the fulcrum of the Church. Like James, Peter, and John, maybe we can listen to the voice of God and trust the ones who are telling us who they are.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people have been telling us who they are. Stripped away from what hides their true nature, they glow. They have been telling us for generations that they are beloved. They have been telling us that they know Christ. They have been showing us that they have been transformed by the Spirit. They have been rising up in Christ’s strength and love. Will we listen to them? It is time. This is a Transfiguration moment. This is the time to rise up, fear not, and walk boldly into a future when we decide what kind of Church we will be.

