

WESLEY UNITING CHURCH, FORREST, ACT
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11TH, 2024
9:00am FOYER SERVICE

SUNDAY OF THE TRANSFIGURATION
THEME: 'LIVING ON THE THRESHOLD'



In the English language, the word “threshold” originally referred to the plank or piece of timber that lay under a door, marking one room off from another. So, in broader use, the word has come to mean that which marks the entry point to a new situation or new circumstances. Accordingly, we sometimes speak of being on the threshold of something new in our personal lives: for example, moving from school to university, from university to work, or from work to retirement. We also speak of thresholds in Western history: the movement from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance and then to the Enlightenment. In our reading today, the Transfiguration of Jesus is a threshold, as Jesus “turns his face to Jerusalem” to a more difficult situation of conflict with the political and religious powerbrokers.

It is also a threshold for the disciples as they occupy a place between heaven and earth, a location of “thin places” which Peter finds is much to his liking. But Jesus’ insight is that the disciples are not to stay there on the mountaintop. Rather, they are to descend the mountain to live out the kingdom in practical ways. Christians are people who live between the mountaintop and the valley: on the threshold.

GATHERING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY AND SAFE CHURCH STATEMENT

CALL TO WORSHIP

WELCOME

In the name of God our Father and Mother

In the name of the Son

In the name of the Holy Spirit

Let’s go up the mountain.

Let’s go up to the place where the land meets the sky
where the earth touches the heavens,
to the place of mists,

to the place of voices and conversations,
to the place of listening.
LIGHTING THE COMMUNITY CANDLE

SONG: Table of Plenty

Dan Schutte © 1992

Chorus:

*Come to the feast of heaven and earth
Come to the table of plenty
God will provide for all that we need
Here at the table of plenty.*

1. O come and sit at my table
where saints and sinners are friends
I wait to welcome the lost and lonely
to share the cup of my love. *Chorus*

2. O come and eat without money
come to drink without price
My feast of gladness will feed your spirit
with faith and fullness of life. *Chorus*

3. My bread will ever sustain you
through days of sorrow and woe.
My wine will flow like a sea of gladness
to flood the depths of your soul. *Chorus*

4. Your fields will flower in fullness;
your homes will flourish in peace.
For I, the giver of home and harvest,
will send my rain on the soil. *Chorus*

OPENING PRAYERS

Transfiguration is a sort of advanced preview of resurrection. In the Gospel for today about Jesus' transfiguration there are a lot of themes rubbing up against each other, but what stands out is the way in which the Biblical writers saw that we live between what we refer to as heaven and earth. We move, whether we are conscious of it or not, between mountaintop experiences and dense complex human realities. We gravitate on thresholds from thin spaces to dense thick spaces. In these dynamics we learn, what Christian living is about. A good way of speaking about living on the threshold is Desmond Tutu's expression, "Each of us carries a piece of God's heart within us".

We like to live safe, secure, soundly, in one place, in one space.
But we are "thrown into existence", controlling so little.

What does it mean to live with substance, with depth?

Jesus, you lived with substance, with depth. You gave expression to heaven and to earth, to 'thin spaces' and 'thick ones'.

What does it mean to live with substance, with depth?

You lived permanently on the threshold:
straddling the heavenly and the earthly;
asking questions of heaven from the human struggle,
asking questions of the human struggle from heaven.

*What does it mean to live with substance, with depth?
Surely it means to live our lives, "carrying a piece of God's heart within us".*

THINKING TOGETHER

A STORY ABOUT LIVING ON THE THRESHOLD: "GOD'S DREAM"
(DESMOND TUTU AND DOUGLAS CARLTON ABRAMS)

Mark 9:2-10 (Good News Translation)

The story of the Transfiguration is not entirely easy to decipher; mainly because of its miraculous character, shrouded with mountain-tops, clouds and mist. Something of meaning nevertheless, is being stated here: Jesus' identity, both vertically and horizontally. In the vertical dimension (heaven and earth), Jesus is being presented as divine, summed up in his "shining clothes". In the horizontal dimension (history), Jesus is being presented as the vision of future hope. That said, Jesus does not opt to make the spiritual experience permanent, important as it is. Jesus with the three disciples returns down the mountain to concrete reality to live out the kingdom. [Translate](#)

² Six days later Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John, and led them up a high mountain, where they were alone. As they looked on, a change came over Jesus, ³ and his clothes became shining white—whiter than anyone in the world could wash them. ⁴ Then the three disciples saw Elijah and Moses talking with Jesus. ⁵ Peter spoke up and said to Jesus, "Teacher, how good it is that we are here! We will make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁶ He and the others were so frightened that he did not know what to say. ⁷ Then a cloud appeared and covered them with its shadow, and a voice came from the cloud, "This is my own dear Son—listen to him!" ⁸ They took a quick look around but did not see anyone else; only Jesus was with them. ⁹ As they came down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has risen from death." ¹⁰ They obeyed his order, but among themselves they started discussing the matter, "What does this 'rising from death' mean?"

LET'S WORK TOGETHER AT OUR TABLES!

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

OFFERING

EUCHARIST

**INVITATION
THE STORY**

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

SANCTUS AND CONSECRATION

PEACE

WE SHARE THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST IN THE ROUND

LEAVING

SONG: The Pilgrim's Song Paul Chalson © 2001

1. We believe in God, in whom the universe
in all its beauty was born.
We believe in Christ, the Saviour of the world
and the Spirit who travels with us.

Chorus

*For we are the people who travel in Christ's way
Yes, we are the people, seeking God's new day.
We are the people the Spirit binds as one.
Together in faith we journey on.*

2. We believe in Christ, God come as one with us
who died to set the world free.
We believe Christ lives, his spirit is with us
that in our lives God's new world will come.

Chorus

3. There will come a day creation will be free
and love will rule all the world.
Until then, we'll seek to care for all the earth
and to live for the glory of God.

Chorus

BLESSING

The blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
Be upon you and remain with you always.

Our service has ended.
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ

Liturgist: Rev'd Geoff Dornan
Music Coordinator: Jade McFaul
Guitarist: Sam Launt
Reader: Nancy Opdyke