

Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKEY
11 February The Transfiguration

HYMNS: 747 37 358 152

INTROIT: Psalm 50:1-6

The God of gods, the LORD, has spoken; He has summoned the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

Out of Zion, which is perfect in beauty, God has shone forth.

Our God will come and will not remain silent; a fire will devour before Him; it will be very stormy around Him.

He will summon the heavens above and the earth, that he may judge His people: "Gather around Me My devout people, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice."

The heavens have been proclaiming His righteousness, for God Himself is Judge.

COLLECT: O God, in the glorious transfiguration of Your beloved Son You confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the testimony of Moses and Elijah. In the voice that came from the bright cloud, You wonderfully foreshowed our adoption by grace. Mercifully make us co-heirs with the King in His glory and bring us to the fullness of our inheritance in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

READINGS: Exodus 34:29-35 Moses face shone from talking to God.

2 Corinthians 4:3-6 God's glory is unveiled in Christ.

Mark 9:2-9 The transfiguration of Jesus.

Welcome to all worshipping with us!

Pastor Ziebell can be contacted via phone/text at 0407 583922.

Please notify pastor of anyone who is unwell or in need of a visit.

Email him at paziebell@gmail.com or to the church office at ddaelc@gmail.com.

Pastor is usually in his office Tuesday-Wednesday for anyone who would like to call in. Other days of the week are set aside for visits.

Exodus 34:29-35

²⁹ Moses came down from Mount Sinai. The two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses' hands when he came down the mountain. Moses did not know that

the skin of his face was radiant because God had been speaking with him. ³⁰ When Aaron and all the other Israelites looked at Moses, they saw that the skin of **Moses' face** was **radiant**, and they were afraid to come near him. ³¹ However, when Moses called to them, Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him and Moses spoke to them. ³² After that, all the other Israelites came near him and he commanded them to do everything that the LORD had told him on Mount Sinai. ³³ When Moses had finished speaking to them, he **put a veil over his face**. ³⁴ However, **whenever Moses entered the presence of the LORD** to speak with Him, **he used to remove the veil** until he came out. Whenever he came out he used to tell the Israelites what he had been commanded. ³⁵ When the Israelites saw Moses' face, they observed that the skin on **Moses' face was shining**. Then Moses used to **put the veil back over his face until he went in** to speak with **Him**.

2 Corinthians 3:12-13 (14-18); 4:1-6

¹² Therefore, since we have such hope, we speak very frankly. ¹³ We are not like **Moses**, who used to **"put a veil over his face"** to keep the Israelites from gazing at the end of the **glory** while it was fading away. ¹⁴ However, their minds were made dull. For to this day the same **veil** remains when the Old Testament is being read and is not removed, because only in Christ is it done away with. ¹⁵ Rather, to this day, whenever Moses is read, a **veil** lies over their hearts. ¹⁶ However, **"whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away."** ¹⁷ This **"Lord"** is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ As we all reflect **"the glory of the Lord"** in our unveiled faces, we are being transformed into the same likeness, from glory to glory, just as it comes from the "Lord," who is the Spirit.

^{4:1} Therefore, since we have this ministry as we have received mercy, we do not become discouraged; ² but we have renounced hidden and shameful ways. We do not live by trickery, nor do we falsify the Word of God. Rather, by making the truth plain, we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. ³ If our Good News has been veiled, it has been veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ The god of this age has blinded the minds of these unbelievers, with the result that the light of the Good News of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, does not shine on them. ⁵ We do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as the Lord and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For it is God, who said, **"Let light shine out of the darkness!"** who has shone in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

Mark 9:2-9

² After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with Him and led them up onto a high mountain, by themselves and alone. He was transfigured before them, ³ and His clothes became dazzling and very white, whiter than any launderer on earth could bleach them. ⁴ Then Elijah appeared to them together with Moses and they began to talk with Jesus.

⁵ Then Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us make three Tabernacles, one for You, one for Moses and one for Elijah!”

⁶ For he did not know what to say, because they had become very afraid. ⁷ Then a cloud came and overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud: “This is **My Son**, whom I love. **Listen to Him!**”

⁸ Suddenly, as they looked around, they did not see anyone with them any longer except Jesus only. ⁹ While they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS MARKS THE STARTING POINT OF HIS JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM Sermon for the Transfiguration 2024

Mark 9:2-9

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is our Gospel from before, Mark 9:2-9: **After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with Him and led them up onto a high mountain, by themselves and alone. He was transfigured before them, ³ and His clothes became dazzling and very white, whiter than any launderer on earth could bleach them. ⁴ Then Elijah appeared to them together with Moses, and they began to talk with Jesus.**

⁵ Then Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us make three Tabernacles, one for You, one for Moses and one for Elijah!”

⁶ For he did not know what to say, because they had become very afraid. ⁷ Then a cloud came and overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud: “This is My Son, whom I love. Listen to Him!”

⁸ Suddenly, as they looked around, they did not see anyone with them any longer except Jesus only. ⁹ While they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth.
Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

The Transfiguration of Jesus was a key event in His life. It marked a turning point, a pivot point, in Jesus' ministry. The Transfiguration would reveal Jesus' divine nature in a visible way and also support the truthfulness of all He had told the disciples in predicting His passion. So, let's start with the event itself and what happened.

Jesus has been in His ministry for some time now, and He takes three of His disciples, Peter, James, and John, up a high mountain. What happens next on the mountain is startling. **“He was transfigured before them.”** Jesus starts gleaming, glowing, gloriously bright. **“His clothes became dazzling and very white, whiter than any launderer on earth could bleach them,”** our text says. Indeed, this is no mere earthly glory that Jesus is manifesting. When Moses had returned from the presence of God on Mount Sinai, *“his face was radiant”* (Exodus 34:35), but in his case, that was simply *a reflection* of the glory of God. Here, in Jesus' case, the radiance came from within, a revelation of His divine nature. This is heavenly glory, the light of divine majesty and purity shining forth.

“Then Elijah appeared to them together with Moses.” Why these two? These are two figures from Israel's past, and God brings them back for this special occasion. Moses was the representative of the Law. The Law meant not only the commandments but the entire good and gracious will of God, including the Gospel.¹ Elijah was the great prophet who, by the power of God, had succeeded in bringing many in Israel back to God at a time when God Himself had said, *“I reserve seven thousand in Israel - all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal”* (1 Kings 19:18). Elijah had been taken to heaven without suffering death. The presence and the words of these two prophets assured the disciples that God's purpose was being fulfilled in Jesus in *exactly the way Jesus had told them*.

Moses and Elijah had had a mountaintop experience in which they caught a glimpse of God's glory. Now, Peter, James, and John are having that same type of mountaintop experience as Jesus is transfigured before them. It is an epiphany, a brilliant manifestation of Christ's glory as the holy Son of God.

¹ See Genesis 3:15 and Deuteronomy 18:15-19

And that's what happens next, further evidence of Jesus as God's Son. **“A cloud came and overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud: “This is My Son, whom I love. Listen to Him!””**

God the Father is bearing witness to His Son. Peter, James, and John are to know, beyond a doubt, that their teacher is none other than the very Son of God: **“This is My Son, whom I love.”** They are to know that His words, Jesus' words, are words to listen to and take to heart: **“Listen to Him!”** They are to know that Jesus is greater than Moses and Elijah, that He is the fulfilment of all of Israel's history - that Jesus is the one Moses and Elijah were pointing ahead to. When Peter, James, and John opened their eyes, **“they did not see anyone with them any longer except Jesus only.”** As the writer of Hebrews says, *“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith”* (12:2).

So, that is the Transfiguration event itself. Now, how does this fit into the context of the gospel narrative and, thus, into the context of the church year? And how does that benefit us?

The Transfiguration fits into the gospel narrative like this.

In the first part of the Gospels, Jesus is manifesting His glory as the Son of God. After His baptism, Jesus began His public ministry by preaching, teaching, and healing. He called people to repentance, saying that the kingdom of heaven was now at hand. The kingdom had arrived because He, Jesus Christ, had arrived on the scene. He taught and unfolded the true meaning of God's Law, its intent and its extent, that we cannot hide from the Law's accusing finger, and that all of us need a righteousness better than anything we could ever muster on our own. His words were words of wisdom, and they were words of divine authority. His words had authority to heal the sick, to cast out demons, and to calm storms. Jesus called men to be His disciples, saying, *“Come, follow Me.”* All of this remarkable, singular ministry pointed to Jesus being the very Son of God who had come in the flesh to do the will of the One who had sent Him.

And so, this early Galilean ministry of Jesus is what we have been tracking through this Epiphany season of the church year. Beginning with the baptism of Jesus on the First Sunday after the Epiphany, we have been following Jesus through this season, hearing His preaching and His teaching, witnessing His signs and wonders, the healings and the exorcisms, these manifestations of His divine wisdom and authority. We know who Jesus is. He is the very Son of God. The Epiphany season of the church year has made this quite clear.

Notice how at the beginning of the Epiphany season, at the baptism of Jesus, the liturgical colour was white, and in the Gospel reading, we heard the voice of

the heavenly Father say, of Jesus, “*You are My Son, whom I love. With You I am well pleased*” (Mark 1:11). Now at the conclusion of the Epiphany season, at the Transfiguration of Jesus, the liturgical colour once again is white, and once again, we hear the Father’s voice, “**This is My Son, whom I love. Listen to Him!**” There is no question who this Jesus is. He is God’s Son, whom He loves.

And that is what is so significant, then, for what follows in the church year and in the gospel narrative. From this point on, Jesus is going to Jerusalem. He is going to Jerusalem not to take up a throne there in the city of the kings but rather to ***take up a cross in the city that kills the prophets.*** And that is the shift that now takes place in the church year and in the gospels. Jesus is on a journey to Jerusalem, there to suffer and to die.

Why is He going there? He’s going there to suffer and die *for you*. For your sins, the holy Son of God will take up that cross. He will die on that cross for you and for me. This is God’s mercy in action, Jesus dying on Calvary’s cross for the sins of the world. Jesus will shed His holy blood to obtain forgiveness for you, to wash away your sins, the stain of guilt that would accuse you and condemn you as the sinner you are. Jesus will pay the price for all of that.

The Transfiguration works so well as the bridge between Epiphany and Lent and as the pivot point in the narrative of the gospels. In the first part, in the early chapters of the gospels and in the weeks of the Epiphany season, we see Jesus showing forth His glory as the Son of God. The Transfiguration, then, serves as the culmination, the climax, of Jesus manifesting His glory and His identity as the Son of God. Yet, at the same time, the Transfiguration works as our bridge into the Lenten season. Now we know who it is who will be going to the cross for us. “**Listen to Him!**” the Father says, “*Listen when Jesus tells you about how He needs to go up to Jerusalem, to be rejected and to be handed over, to suffer and to be killed at the hands of sinful men.*” Yes, listen to Him! This is necessary, this is essential to God’s plan to redeem sinful mankind.

This glory that Jesus displays at His Transfiguration - this is the glory that God’s own Son had in the beginning with the Father, and it is the same glory He will return to once He has completed the saving mission for which He had come. The Father will raise up His beloved Son on the day of resurrection. The Son will return then to His Father on the day of His ascension.

And the most marvellous of all this is that we, too, shall share in Christ’s resurrection. We too shall be with Christ in heaven, to share in eternal life with Him, for we have been baptised. We believe in Christ and trust in Him alone for

our salvation. God's own beloved Son. Jesus only, the only Saviour for sinners, dying on the cross and rising from the dead.

Dear friends, today is Transfiguration, and we get all that on this day. Today is Transfiguration, the perfect bridge between Epiphany and Lent. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

PRAYER FOR TRANSFIGURATION

Almighty God, Your ears are always open to the prayers of Your people. Hear now the cries of Your children, as we bring before You our needs of body and soul.

Above all else, we praise You for the precious gift of Your Son. Today in particular we bless You for the message of His transfiguration. Through this mighty sign give to us and all people a clearer vision and a higher knowledge of Christ's person and mission. Give us eyes of faith that see the glory of His deity, and the glory that came through His cross, and lead us to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Grant that, as we continue to see the glory of His person in Your Word and Sacrament, we may know and believe in Him as the Light of the world, the Sun of righteousness, and the visible likeness of Your very being. May we continually hear the voice of Jesus Your prophet still today, that our faith may constantly be renewed. Grant that, as Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus in glory, each of us may die in faith, share in the power of Christ's resurrection, and be eventually transformed into ever greater glory.

Let Your Spirit, who inspired the prophets and apostles, live in our poor bodies. Transform our weak, sinful lives so that they shine with goodness, purity, and righteousness. Transform our minds, eyes, judgment, and our whole persons, so that they may reflect the mind of Christ. Take away our sickness, pains, wounds, and hurts. Take away our disappointments, defeats, and despair. Take away our sorrows and grieving. Take away our pride, anger, hatred and fear. Take away our selfishness and envy, our laziness and un-concern for others. Take away all our weaknesses, and turn them by the touch of Jesus into impulses, motives, thoughts, words, and deeds that shine with godliness and new life.

Grant Your blessing to Your church. Especially bless all who belong to the fellowship of this congregation. Be present with all our members and graciously supply what they need. Grant that we, and all who bear the name of Christ, may

daily offer to You acceptable spiritual sacrifices of repentance, thanksgiving, and obedience.

Look mercifully on our state and our nation. Deliver us from those who love evil and whose aim is unrighteousness. Grant that the whole world may know Your will, and all nations may know Your salvation.

Have mercy on those among us who are sick, lonely, or depressed. Teach them to look to You for healing, comfort, and stronger hope for the glory to come.

Loving Father, as we trust that You are near to us when we call to You, hear our prayer, and grant all our petitions for Christ's sake. Amen.

Article: Article: Moses' Veiled Face

Today's First Reading recounts how Moses was given the privilege to come into the special presence of God and how it caused his face to radiate with a special bright light as a result of that encounter. Moses has been up on Mount Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments - for a second time, by the way, since earlier he had shattered the two tablets of stone when he saw Israel shattering the commandments themselves by worshipping the golden calf. Moses has been face to face with God, and now, for the children of Israel, even this reflection of God's glory on Moses' face was more than they could look at with steadfastness. It may be likened to driving with the intense light of the rising or setting sun in one's eyes.

So Moses put a veil over his face to shield the people from the brightness . . . and also so that their appreciation of the God-given authority with which he spoke would not falter when the glow on his face would lose some of its lustre over time until it was "recharged" by another intimate meeting with God. In this and the other encounters mentioned beforehand, God is hidden and revealed at one and the same time. The light shines, but God must veil His glory so that the people will not be blinded.

No human can look at God in the fullness of His glory. Thus, God uses what Luther called "masks" to shield sin-ridden humans from His unapproachable light. They give us glimpses of what we can understand about God but hide that which is too profound for us to take in. Luther speaks perceptively about God's revealed will and his mysterious ways:

Thus Christ says to Peter: "What I am doing you do not know now (Jn 13:7). You want to anticipate me and to teach me what I must do. You are making a big mistake. For it is your duty to bear and endure my hand. Let me do as I please. Afterwards you will know and understand what I have intended."

. . .

This, then, is the way the saints are governed and the wisdom of the church of God, namely, that they are not scandalized by the counsels of God or offended by the face with which he meets us. . . . He is indeed the God of life, glory, salvation, joy and peace; and this is the true face of God. But sometimes he covers it and puts on another mask by which he offers himself to us as the God of wrath, death, and hell. . . . [T]his is done in order that you may be humbled, that you may endure and wait for the hand of the Lord and the revelation of his face. (AE 8:30–31)

It may take a while for people to see the Ten Commandments as a path to joy and freedom rather than bondage. It may have taken God's people time to see the outlines of the Gospel in the required sacrificial offerings and days to be observed. It most certainly was a challenge to see the hand of the all-powerful and loving God in the time of the bondage in Egypt. Moses and his message were given a hearing by the people because he was attested by signs and wonders. Through him, God had brought plagues upon the Egyptians, inducing them to let God's people go. And by God's power, Moses led Israel in the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea that finalised their deliverance from what was one of the most powerful military powers of that day - after the Israelites had surely imagined the Egyptians would slaughter them. God's people have always been called upon to walk by faith and trust rather than by mere human reasoning based on sight and current philosophies.

The Old Testament constantly points forward to the fulfilment of God's great plan of salvation in the promised Messiah. While the picture of God's plan of salvation is most clearly seen in its fulfilment in the person and work of Jesus, God's gracious and redemptive work is already there to behold in the Old Testament sacrifices and prophecies of God's spokesmen. Salvation has always been the work of our gracious God and fulfilled only through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Moses wrote that God would not abandon His created people to be taken over by Satan and his evil angels, but that he would raise up a "*seed of woman*" (cf Gen 3:15) to overcome Satan (identified in Rev 12:9). That "*seed of woman*" was none other than our Lord Jesus, born of the virgin Mary.

So, while it often seems that the Old Testament covenant was primarily a promise that God would grant His people blessings as a nation in *this life* if they lived under His Lordship, that covenant was actually already shining brightly the light of God's *eternal* grace and love in Christ. Old Testament believers already had faith that God would raise them from the dead (Heb 11:17-19). Job, who belonged to the time of the patriarchs, beautifully

expressed that faith that God would raise him from the dead when he declared familiar words, *“I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another”* (Job 19:25-27).

Children’s Message:

Who can tell me what today is? Right! Today is Transfiguration Sunday. “Transfiguration” means to change the way something looks, and there’s a lot of that in our readings today.



Way back in the Old Testament, Moses went up Mount Sinai to receive the Ten

Commandments from God. When he came back down, his appearance, the way he looked, was changed. He looked bright and shining because he’d just been face to face with God, who’s glorious and bright. But after he was down for a while, the brightness faded away and he looked just like before. So Moses put a veil over his face so people wouldn’t see.

Many years later, Jesus took Peter, James, and John up another mountain and suddenly He was transfigured; His appearance changed. He was bright and shining! That’s the way Jesus looks in His glory in heaven. And Moses, who’d long ago died and gone to heaven, was back to see Jesus. Then after a bit, the way Jesus looked changed back to what it was before.

After His transfiguration, Jesus went down the mountain and, not too much later, died on the cross, where He shed his blood for us. But you know what Jesus dying on the cross did! It took away our sins so that one day we’ll get to be with Jesus in heaven. And you know how we’ll look when we’re in heaven? Our bodies will be changed too, transfigured, so that they’ll be bright and shining and glorious too, just like Jesus’ body when He was transfigured and when He was raised from the dead! *Thank You Jesus for beginning today Your journey to the cross, where You would die to pay the price for my sins. Amen.*

Trip to America

Pastor is still planning a trip to the USA later this year, working between the dates of August 7 and 18. It is still early days yet in the organising, but the following is a rough time frame, to give you some idea. We can begin to work out a schedule as soon as we have numbers.

We hope to leave Australia on Wednesday, the 7th of August, arriving in the USA on the same date. We shall visit the Ark Encounter and the Creation Museum over two days and then travel to Decatur, where we can worship with our brothers and sisters of the ULMA on Sunday, 11 August. The following week is still unplanned, but we can set aside a few days for sightseeing, etc. Pastor will talk with the ULMA people about ideas.

Return flights are hovering around \$1900.00, and plan around \$150.00 a night for accommodation. Tickets into the Ark and Creation Museum are around \$135.00 for dual entry into both attractions and can be purchased here before we go. I suggest you work on a budget of around \$5000.00 as the minimum for the trip. However, this does not include food, souvenirs, transport, etc. There is the possibility that some ULMA members may put us up while in Decatur, or drive us around, saving a little more money.

So, anyone interested in coming along, **please let pastor know by the end of February.**

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ash Wednesday	18 February 1 Lent	25 February 2 Lent
Wednesday, 14 Feb. Oakey Vespers, 7.30pm.	8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC 9.00am GRN LR 10.45am AUB HC 9.00am MARBURG LR
Thursday, 15 Feb. Marburg HC. 7.00pm.	<p>Wednesday, 21 Feb 2nd mid-week Lenten Service</p> 7.30pm Greenwood Hymns: 71, 69, 852, 48v3	<p>Wednesday, 28 Feb 3rd mid-week Lenten Service</p> 7.30pm Toowoomba Hymns: 61, 58 part 1, 320, 48v3
ASH WEDNESDAY		
READINGS: Joel 2:12-19; 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10; Mark 6:1-6, 16-21		
HYMNS: Marburg: 54 310 59 (294 282) 48 v.1 Oakey: 54 310 59 48 v.3		
Sunday, 18 February		
READINGS: Genesis 22:1-18; James 1:12-18; Mark 1:9-15		
HYMNS: 57 part 1 756 195 (313 290) 57 part 2		

Please take with you today a copy of the Lenten devotional booklet.

Saturday, 17 February, 7.00pm. Youth at St John's Aubigny. All youth and young adults are invited to attend. Please bring something for a shared supper.

Sunday, 18 February, 1.00pm. Seminary Committee meeting at Bethlehem Toowoomba.

Thursday, 22 February, 10.00am. Bible Study at Lowood.

Congregation AGM dates:

Trinity Marburg: Today, after service.

Bethlehem Toowoomba: Sunday, February 18, 2.00pm.

Our Saviour Lowood: Sunday, March 3, after service.