



**Worship Service Theme: Change
(Transfiguration Sunday, or the Feast of Transfiguration)**

Helpful Elements:
White table cover

Welcome: Welcome! Thank you for coming to our service today. My name is _____ and I'll be leading our worship time.

According to many traditional church calendars¹, this week we celebrate the Transfiguration, remembering the day Jesus's appearance was transformed into brilliant light and God proclaimed Jesus as His beloved Son. That's why our table covering today is white.

It's an interesting and beautiful story that illustrates something important: how we, too, are transformed by our faith and God's loving presence, especially during life's inevitable changes.

Please pray with me as we open our time together.

Opening Prayer: Great and loving God, we ask your Holy Spirit to bless our time together and to refresh us with your presence. In the midst of a world full of trouble and strife, we thank you for watching over us, guiding us, and as we confess our sins, for forgiving us. Enable us to enter your presence joyfully and reverently, and let us depart today with the assurance that our sins are forgiven. Fill us, O God, with the peace which passes all understanding. Amen.

Opening Hymn: Doxology

¹ Typically, Roman Catholic and Episcopal churches observe Transfiguration Sunday on August 6. Other traditions, including Presbyterian and Methodist, place Transfiguration Sunday on the last Sunday before Ash Wednesday.

Statement of Faith: Let us affirm our statement of faith by reciting Psalm 23, “The Lord is my shepherd,” together:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

² He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.

⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Suggested Hymns:

Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us
Amazing Grace

First reading: Exodus 34:29-35

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. ³⁰ Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of Moses’s face shone, and the people were afraid to come near him. [Wow! That *would* look scary, wouldn’t it!] ³¹ But Moses called to the people, and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him. Moses talked with the people [and told them] all that the Lord had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. ³³ And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face. ³⁴ Whenever Moses went in ... to speak with the Lord, Moses would remove the veil from his face, until he came out. And when Moses came out ... ³⁵ the people of Israel would see ... that the skin of Moses’s face was shining.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Suggested Hymns:

Holy, Holy, Holy
Jesus Loves Me

Second reading: Mark 9:2-8. This is the story about Jesus that's called the Transfiguration.

²After six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And Jesus was transfigured before Peter and James and John, ³and Jesus's clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴And then Elijah with Moses appeared to Peter, James, and John, and Elijah and Moses were talking with Jesus. ⁵And Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." ⁶[Peter said this because] he did not know what to say, because he and James and John were terrified. ⁷And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." ⁸And suddenly, looking around, Peter and James and John no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Suggested Hymns:

**Jesus Shall Reign
In the Garden**

Interactive Homily: We've just read a couple of interesting stories from the Bible, where people were profoundly transformed by God's presence.

- In both cases of "transfiguration," first with Moses and then with Jesus, the presence of God made their faces *shine*. I wonder why that would be? Why might you think that God's presence would make something shine like a bright light?
 - God's character is full of light and love and purity. In these stories, God's presence and glory "rubbed off" on the physical bodies of Moses and Jesus.
- In the transfiguration story recorded in the gospel of Mark, three of Jesus' followers (Peter, James, and John) are up on the mountain with Jesus, and Jesus is shining like the sun. As if that weren't scary enough, God's voice then booms out and says, "This is my beloved Son."
- Let's think about this message from God, said out loud so that others could hear it. What did God want Peter, James, and John to hear? Two parts:
 - Love: "This [Jesus] is my beloved Son."

- Direction: “Listen to him.”
- Before this amazing event, Jesus has been preparing his disciples for a huge change: Jesus has told his followers that he’s going to die, and then he’s going to rise again. How do you think the disciples felt about this news? How would you feel if a best friend told you about an upcoming scary change?
 - Disbelief; unprepared; confused; scared of the future.
- Why would Jesus shining like the sun, combined with God’s message—“This is my beloved Son, listen to him”—possibly help the disciples (and us, too!) as things around them started to change in ways they didn’t like?
 - These miracles give the disciples (and us) a focus: Let go of preconceived ideas of how things “should” go and focus on God only.
 - There is more going on than meets the eye! They get a glimpse of the immensity of Jesus and his power, a preview of Jesus’s heavenly, eternal glory.
 - This event becomes a seed planted in the hearts and minds of Jesus’ followers, something they can remember later when hard things happen, something to give them (and us) hope and faith in God to sustain them.
- Instead of letting life’s changes and upheaval affect us with fear, confusion, and worry, we can let God’s powerful presence transform us and our view. As St. Paul writes (Rom. 12:1), “Don’t let the world mold you into its image, but *be transformed* by the renewal of your mind through God.”
- What helps you as things around you inevitably change?
 - Remember what God has done for you in the past.
 - Remember how God can change you to let go of fear and instead have faith.
 - Trust that God will carry you through change and hard times, as God always has.

Let us pray together that we would be able to hear God’s voice, and to know God’s love that transforms us and sustains us through change.

(Silent Prayer) ... Lord, hear our prayers. Now let us pray the Lord’s prayer together:

Lord’s Prayer: 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

Suggested Hymns:

This is My Father's World

The Old Rugged Cross

Third Reading: Quotes on Transformation

One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world. — Malala Yousafzai, Pakistani activist for female education and the youngest Nobel Peace Prize laureate

The power of faith is transformative. It can be utilized in your own personal life to change your individual condition, and it can be used as a lifeline of spiritual strength to change a nation. — John Lewis, civil rights activist and congressman

When we genuinely believe that inner transformation is God's work and not ours, we can put to rest our passion to set others straight. —Quaker theologian and author Richard J. Foster

Listen to the MUSN'TS, child,
Listen to the DON'TS
Listen to the SHOULDN'TS
The IMPOSSIBLES, the WON'TS
Listen to the NEVER HAVES
Then listen close to me—
Anything can happen child,
Anything can be. —author Shel Silverstein, *Where the Sidewalk Ends*

Suggested Hymns:

This Little Light of Mine

Shall We Gather at the River

Fourth Reading: *The Velveteen Rabbit*, by Margery Williams

In this story, the Velveteen Rabbit, a beloved stuffed bunny, is deeply loved by a boy, who insists his Rabbit was real. When the boy finally outgrows playing with the Rabbit, the Rabbit is heartbroken. But the Rabbit has this conversation with another toy, the Skin Horse, about what it means to be Real.

“Real isn’t how you are made,” said the Skin Horse. “It’s a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real.”

“Does it hurt?” asked the Rabbit.

“Sometimes,” said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. “When you are Real you don’t mind being hurt.”

“Does it happen all at once, like being wound up,” the Rabbit asked, “or bit by bit?”

“It doesn’t happen all at once,” said the Skin Horse. “You become. It takes a long time. That’s why it doesn’t happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don’t matter at all, because once you are Real you can’t be ugly, except to people who don’t understand.”

Suggested Hymns:

Swing Low Sweet Chariot

Trust and Obey

Closing Blessing: (Strike bell as you say the word “Lord”)

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and grant you peace. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Doxology (Reprise)

Extra Material:

Yes, your transformation will be hard. Yes, you will feel frightened, messed up and knocked down. Yes, you’ll want to stop. Yes, it’s the best work you’ll ever do.

—leadership speaker Robin Sharma

Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Don't resist them; that only creates sorrow. Let reality be reality. —ancient Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu