

15th February 2026 – Morning Service

The Transfiguration

Melanie Walters

Prayers from *Barefeet and Buttercups*, gifted by Beatrice Cloke – remembered with love.

Opening Responses by Ruth Burgess

Creativity and Light

Belong to God

Let all the earth rejoice

Justice and Glory

Belong to God

Let all the earth rejoice

Wisdom and wonder

Belong to God

Let all the earth rejoice

When we get it amazingly wrong

God loves us

When we get it superbly right

God loves us

When we have no idea at all what is happening

God loves us

When we walk with God

We do not need to be afraid

Jesus said: I am the light of the world

Listen to him and walk in his way

Jesus said: Stand up and do not be afraid

Listen to him and walk in his way

Jesus said: You are my friends.

Listen to him and walk in his way

Jesus said: I am always with you.

Listen to him and walk in his way. **Amen.**

StF 175 – Light of the world

1) Light of the world, You stepped down
into darkness,
Opened my eyes, let me see.
Beauty that made this heart adore You
Hope of a life spent with You.

Ch) *So here I am to worship,
Here I am to bow down,
Here I am to say that You're my God:
You're altogether lovely,
Altogether worthy,
Altogether wonderful to me.*

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2) King of all days, oh so highly exalted,
Glorious in heaven above,
Humbly You came to the earth You created,
All for love's sake became poor.

Br) *And I'll never know how much it cost
To see my sin upon that cross.
And I'll never know how much it cost
To see my sin upon that cross.*

Prayer of Adoration

God of the ordinary, we praise you.

You take the drabness of thoughts, and brighten them into vivid imagination. You take our everyday lives, and transform them into holy, precious moments. You take our meagre offerings and multiply them into an

abundance of delight. Extraordinary God, you light up our thoughts, our lives, our selves with the wonder of your call. We praise you. **Amen.**

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Confession by Pat Bennett

Father you are the source of all time. Yet it neither contains nor constrains you. We who are time-bound confess that often we do not take the time, or make the time to enter into your great stillness and gaze on you.

Silence

Forgive us for all those times when the restless pursuit of the next thing has distracted and deflected us from spending time with you.

Silence

Help us to escape the bondage of busyness and find those moments of intersection with eternity when your time and our time come together and we can grow in our awareness of you and of your purposes.

We ask this with hearts filled with the gratitude that knows all this is and so much more is made possible because we ask in the name of Christ – the one who came into the world to make visible the Time of God. **Amen.**

StF 113 – O worship the King

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) O Worship the King, all-glorious above;
O gratefully sing his power and his love:
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days,
Pavilioned in splendour, and girded with praise. | 4) Your bountiful care what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light;
It streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,
And sweetly distils in the dew and the rain. |
| 2) O tell of his might, O sing of his grace,
Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space;
His chariots of wrath the deep
thunder-clouds form,
And dark is his path on the wings of the storm. | 5) Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,
In you do we trust, nor find you to fail;
Your mercies how tender, how firm to the end,
Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend. |
| 3) The earth with its store of wonders untold,
Almighty, your power has founded of old;
Established it fast by a changeless decree,
And round it has cast, like a mantle, the sea. | 6) O measureless Might, ineffable Love,
While angels delight to hymn you above,
Your humbler creation, though feeble our praise,
With true adoration our voices we raise. |

Robert Grant

Reading: Daniel 7: 9-10 & 13-14 (NIV)

“As I looked,

“thrones were set in place,
and the Ancient of Days took his seat.
His clothing was as white as snow;
the hair of his head was white like wool.
His throne was flaming with fire,
and its wheels were all ablaze.
A river of fire was flowing,
coming out from before him.
Thousands upon thousands attended him;
ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.
The court was seated,
and the books were opened.

“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

StF 362 – Meekness and majesty

- 1) Meekness and majesty, manhood and deity,
In perfect harmony, the Man who is God.
Lord of eternity, dwells in humanity,
Kneels in humility and washes our feet.
- 2) Father's pure radiance, perfect in innocence,
Yet learns obedience to death on a cross.
Suffering to give us life,
Conquering through sacrifice,
And as they crucify prays: 'Father forgive'.
- Ch) *O what a mystery,
Meekness and majesty.
Bow down and worship
For this is your God, this is your God.*
- 3) Wisdom unsearchable, God the invisible,
Love indestructible in frailty appears.
Lord of infinity, stooping so tenderly,
Lifts our humanity to the heights of His throne.

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Reading: Matthew 17: 1-9 (NIV)

After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.”

While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”

When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. “Get up,” he said. “Don’t be afraid.” When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, “Don’t tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

James and the Giant Cloud by Alison Adam

Peter wanted to build three booths.

He gets a very bad press for that,

but people don't have a clue what it was like.

I haven't had the words to explain it to them, not really.

Prayer has never been so real, so mind-blowing, so terrifying!

We were pretty exhausted by the time it happened but wow - the brightness - the dazzling, radiant brightness of Jesus - shocked us into alertness.

And there was Moses and Elijah!

And we could hear them!

When Peter suggested we enshrine the moment I was totally up for it-this was more awesome than anything I had experienced - and life with Jesus had been very miraculous!

Afterwards Peter told me he didn't really know what he was saying, but he was right -

we had to do something for these giants of the faith, we had to make a gesture - offer something, and Pete's always the man for action - diving in feet first!

But the cloud shrouded us
and the voice stopped us in our tracks.
I was terrified.
Afterwards we were still for a long time and Jesus said we needed to stay put for a while.
None of us argued, we were literally awestruck.
So we waited there, all night,
and we began to grasp something of what we'd seen and what we'd heard,
as we quietly pondered it all with Jesus.
John summed it up for the three of us
when he said that he was glad we'd stayed up there.
He said something about
needing to stick with the moment-to make sense of it-
Jesus knew what he was doing when he kept us up there till morning.
I know the three of us learned a lot about ourselves, and I know we were better prepared for what was
ahead of us.

Message

In a recent episode of the Sky Arts competition, Landscape Artist of the Year, the contestants' infamous "Pods" were placed at the foot of Skiddaw, one of the top five climbs in the Lake District. As the artists tried to rise to the challenge of capturing their impression of the awe-filled scene before them, my mind shot back to the power of a God moment I experienced in that very spot. When the 'Covid Lockdowns' were finally lifted, my family and I travelled to that beautiful part of the country. As Skiddaw came into view, it was as if a light came on, and I was struck with a fresh understanding of the absolute power, glory, and perfect freedom found in God's plan for all God made.

Just as on earth in the Bible, mountains are holy sites of encounter with God – someone with time to count says this occurs 500 times, you can check and let me know if they are correct! Mountains are liminal spaces, places where the gap between heaven and earth closes. Places to better comprehend God and God's plans for us.

As we gaze at Christ's transfiguration on Mount Hermon, with its distant views of Galilee, the theologian Tom Wright suggests that if we want to better understand we must let our minds catapult forward to *a green hill far away, outside a city wall* (StF 284) and the moment of Christ's crucifixion.

In the previous chapter of Matthew's Gospel, we read that: *from that time on, Jesus began to explain to his disciples...that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life... then Jesus said, 'whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me'* (Matthew 16: 21,24).

I wonder if, having made or been asked to commit to a plan, you have ever experienced your mind filling with questions, or realised that you need space and time to consider what is involved?

Throughout the gospels, Jesus models the divine response to such moments, repeatedly taking himself and his disciples away to the foothills of mountains or the slopes of olive groves to make time and space to seek God's view of the situation.

Earlier still, in Chapter 5 of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus tried to help his followers realise that he had not *come to abolish the Law or the Prophets... but to fulfil them* (Matthew 5:17). If we follow Tom Wright's advice, then the Transfiguration can be seen as giving all concerned the Godly view of the situation, through an image that should help make sense of what has gone before and what is to come.

Standing centrally between the two giants of faith, Elijah, who represents the Prophets and Moses, who stands for the Law, Jesus prays. The light that surrounds them reminds me of one of those powerful reading lamps that illuminate everything, making it easier to see and understand. In Luke's account, Elijah and Moses also shine, creating a picture that illustrates how Jesus is the light that completes or makes sense of

the prophecies that called God's people to change from sinful behaviour with the laws and leadership that brought freedom from slavery.

Place that picture next to one where Jesus is central on the cross at Calvary, between two flawed humans, and visually the two images represent how God makes the impossible, possible, as Jesus simultaneously reveals the depths to which humanity can sink and the glory of God who loves the world so completely that the debt of sin is cancelled. Jesus completes God's plan to save humanity by bridging the gap between heaven and earth that sin creates.

The journey to that second image and the suffering of the cross will begin in earnest as Jesus and the disciples descend from the mountain. For the theologian William Barclay, the conversation between Jesus, Moses and Elijah is *the signal for Jesus to go on* (William Barclay).

For the disciple, Peter, it is the signal for a typically impulsive reaction that reveals his heart's reply to all he has witnessed. Peter wants this moment to last. In knowing Jesus better, he wants to glorify all that God can do. His earthly desire to freeze the divine transformative moment with shelters recalls the traditional Jewish response, still marked annually at the Feast of Tabernacles, to God's protection during the wilderness journey. Then the disciples' ancestors were steered to the safety of the Promised Land by keeping their attention fixed on the pillar of cloud that God provided. Now, the disciples are stopped in their tracks as God demands the disciples' attention and passes on the authority Jesus needs to help them make sense of all that is to come, so they, too, can shine.

The lesson Peter learned that day about stopping and listening to Jesus is so significant to enabling followers to shine through the challenges they face that he later passed it on to the next generation, saying: For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. He received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, *"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain."*

We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts (2 Peter 1: 16-19).

Have you ever had a new experience that brought glory to God because you took time to pay attention and listened to Jesus?

That day, as the disciples listened, they were reassured – reminded that they need not be afraid, given the support that helped them to know Jesus better so they could stand in the presence of God.

In Luke's Gospel, we are told that Jesus and the disciples stayed on the mountain for the remainder of the night. So, as the disciples listened, they were reminded of the need to wait in the presence of God and absorb what they learnt in that moment.

Then, as the disciples descended the mountain, they listened and heard of the cross they must carry. They must contain their awe and wonder for a time, not sharing what they have seen until the moment of Jesus' resurrection. Despite their growing understanding, which is revealed if we read on from today's passage, it is only when Jesus is glorified as the Son of Man, the Messiah of Daniel's vision, that these disciples will shine with the light of God's glory as they share all they know with the world.

It is just a few days until we enter Lent, a time of year to reflect and remember the trials and tests that were the experience of the wilderness for the Israelites and later for Jesus as he prepared to begin his earthly ministry. It also marks the days leading to Calvary and recalls the challenges of that time for Jesus and the disciples, ending as we bask in the light and rejoice in the glory which Easter day recalls. Lent can

be a time to stop and take up something that will help us grow closer to God, a symbolic act that responds to Jesus' call to take up our cross and follow him.

Listening to Jesus today is just as significant a part of discipleship as it was when God first gave the command to the disciples on Mount Hermon. Only by listening can we receive the Godly view, which allows the light of Jesus to shine from us.

So, I wonder whether this Lent is the time to 'take up' listening more attentively to Jesus?

In those days, could we listen to Jesus' words by highlighting them (or using a Red-Letter Bible) in Scripture to seek and receive his reassurance?

In those days, could we make time to step away to a quiet place to absorb and be sustained by what we have read, heard and learned from Jesus?

In those days, could we take up our cross, until the moment is right to celebrate the fullness of God's glory in our rejoicing on Easter day, revealing the light which shines from Jesus through us, so that others can learn to listen to him too?

StF 20 – Be still for the presence of the Lord

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) Be still, for the presence of the Lord,
The Holy One is here.
Come, bow before Him now
With reverence and fear.
In Him no sin is found,
We stand on holy ground.
Be still, for the presence of the Lord,
The Holy One is here. | 3) Be still, for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place,
He comes to cleanse and heal,
To minister His grace.
No work too hard for Him,
In faith receive from Him;
Be still, for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place. |
| 2) Be still, for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around;
He burns with holy fire,
With splendour He is crowned,
How awesome is the sight,
Our radiant King of light!
Be still, for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around. | |

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Prayers of Intercession

God of all creation within our darkest night, **let your light shine.**

Fill our souls with your wonderful love and light. Give us strength and courage to reflect that love and light in the world. Hear us today as we pray for a world too often darkened by hatred, evil, power and greed. Within our darkest night, **let your light shine.**

God of power and might, we share the pain and anguish of your broken world, a world dominated by the darkness of war, terror and injustice. We think of all those for whom this is reality today. May they see your light, feel your strength and power and know the truth of your promise: your light shines in the darkness, and the darkness shall not overcome it. Within our darkest night, **let your light shine.**

God of life. God of compassion and grace, in the silence that follows, we share with you our love and concern for people in a dark place today, those who are grieving, enduring pain or illness or whose journey is loaded with care and woe.

Silence

We pray that they will find your strength in the compassion and love of those around them. Let your light shine through the darkest moments of great sadness, pain and suffering to reveal the power which brings healing, wholeness and peace beyond understanding. Within our darkest night, **let your light shine.**

God of love and hope, renew in us a deeper sense of who we are in you. Help us to be aware of your presence every moment of each day. May our thoughts, words, and actions be living examples of your forgiving, healing, life-giving love. Within our darkest night, **let your light shine.**

For we ask these prayers in the name of Christ who brought your life and light to the world. **Amen.**

The 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 for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

StF 59 – Lord the light of your love

1) Lord, the light of Your love is shining
In the midst of the darkness, shining;
Jesus, Light of the World, shine upon us,
Set us free by the truth You now bring us,
Shine on me, shine on me.

2) Lord, I come to Your awesome presence,
From the shadows into Your radiance;
By the blood I may enter Your brightness,
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness.
Shine on me, shine on me.

Ch) *Shine, Jesus, shine,
Fill this land with the Father's glory;
Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow,
Flood the nations with grace and mercy;
Send forth Your word, Lord,
And let there be light.*

3) As we gaze on Your kingly brightness
So our faces display Your likeness,
Ever changing from glory to glory,
Mirrored here may our lives tell Your story.
Shine on me, shine on me.

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Blessing adapted from a prayer by Ruth Burgess

Lord, what we bring to you is nothing compared with all that you give to us, but we give from all that we have received, with willing hearts, seeking that these gifts might be used to build the Kingdom here within the community we serve, so that the light of your glory might shine in this time and place.

Aware of your glory, take us down the mountain with love in our lives to our homes and our streets. Take us down the mountain and walk with us, in love as we go to take your light to the world.

Go with the blessing of God, Father, Son and Spirit, whose love and light are with us and will remain with us all eternally. **Amen.**