

**ST CUTHBERT'S
SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH
COLINTON**

**Sunday Before Lent
Sunday 14 February 2021**



**COVID-19
Services Online on our YouTube Channel**

HYMN 378 – Jesus calls us here to meet him

Jesus calls us here to meet him
as, through word and song and prayer,
we affirm God's promised presence
where his people live and care.
Praise the God who keeps his promise;
praise the Son who calls us friends;
praise the Spirit who, among us,
to our hopes and fears attends.

Jesus calls us to confess him
Word of Life and Lord of all,
sharer of our flesh and frailness
saving all who fail or fall.
Tell his holy human story;
tell his tales that all may hear;
tell the world that Christ in glory
came to earth to meet us here.

Jesus calls us to his table
rooted firm in time and space,
where the church in earth and heaven
finds a common meeting place.
Share the bread and wine, his body;
share the love of which we sing;
share the feast for saints and sinners
hosted by our Lord and King.

*John L. Bell (b.1949) and Graham Maule (b.1958) ©1989, 1998 WGRG,
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Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

COLLECT FOR PURITY

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

God is love and we are God's children.

There is no room for fear in love.

We love because God loved us first.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith.

God our Father, we confess to you and to our fellow members in the body of Christ that we have sinned in thought, word and deed, and in what we have failed to do. We are truly sorry. Forgive us our sins, and deliver us from the power of evil. For the sake of your Son who died for us, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

God, who is both power and love, forgive us and free us from our sins, heal and strengthen us by the Spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.

Amen.

GLORIA (*Said*)

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of
God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Almighty God, whose Son was revealed in majesty before he suffered death upon the cross, give us faith to perceive his glory, that being strengthened by his grace we may be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING: 2 Kings 2.1-12

Now when the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, 'Stay here; for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel.' But Elisha said, 'As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So they went down to Bethel. The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, 'Do you know that today the LORD will take your master away from you?' And he said, 'Yes, I know; keep silent.' Elijah said to him, 'Elisha, stay here; for the LORD has sent me to Jericho.' But he said, 'As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So they came to Jericho. The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, 'Do you know that today the LORD will take your master away from you?' And he answered, 'Yes, I know; be silent.' Then Elijah said to him, 'Stay here; for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan.' But he said, 'As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So the two of them went on. Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground. When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, 'Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.' Elisha said, 'Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.' He responded, 'You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you;

if not, it will not.’ As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha kept watching and crying out, ‘Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!’ But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 4.3-6

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus’ sake. For it is the God who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness’, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GRADUAL HYMN 251 – God of mercy, God of grace

God of mercy, God of grace,
show the brightness of thy face;
shine upon us, Saviour, shine,
fill thy Church with light divine;
and thy saving health extend
unto earth's remotest end.

Let the people praise thee, Lord;
be by all that live adored;
let the nations shout and sing
glory to their Saviour King;
at thy feet their tribute pay,
and thy holy will obey.

Let the people praise thee, Lord;
earth shall then her fruits afford;
God to us his blessing give,
we to God devoted live;
all below, and all above,
one in joy and light and love.

*Henry Francis Lyte (1793-1847) based on Psalm 67, alt.
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GOSPEL: Mark 9.2-9

Hear the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark. **Glory to Christ our Saviour.**

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart,

by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!' Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious Gospel.

Praise to Christ our Lord.

SERMON

Today we commemorate how Jesus was transfigured before his closest disciples, Peter, John, and James— how his glory was revealed in dazzling white light, and how God's voice proclaimed, "This is my Son, my Chosen: listen to him!" "Transfigure" is not a word often used in conversation nowadays. We might use "transform" or "alter" instead, or even "change" - and here is an interesting question with the Feast of the Transfiguration: who is it that's really being changed in this story? Jesus appears to be changed, as Luke writes "the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes

became dazzling white.” But the truth is, Jesus only looks different to his disciples. It is Peter, John, and James who are really changed or transfigured; their eyes now open to see Jesus as he really is, clothed in light and revealed as the Son of God.

And after this experience of God’s presence, the disciples’ lives are changed too. Before, they thought they were following a remarkable teacher. After, they know their lives are being woven into God’s plan for the transfiguration of the world.

What experiences in your own life frame the way you see and understand the world? Much of the way we experience the world is fixed by circumstances beyond our control: who our parents are, where we are from, the language we speak. But sometimes we have moments of clarity which allow us to see the world in a new light. These are moments when it seems we can see beyond ourselves and our limitations, into the heart of reality. God given moments.

One God given moment for me was at a time when I was doing any job I could to fit in with childcare and Iain’s role in the army. At the time I was selling Tupperware (the older ones amongst us will remember it). I worked hard and even managed to achieve a car. The day I was due to pick it up, a very close friend of mine died of cancer. I didn’t collect the car, I realised that what mattered more was being close to those I loved, spending time with them and not striving for more and more material things. I gave up

Tupperware that day too and spent time with Iain and the girls instead of chasing targets and Iain and I being ships in the night. It wasn't easy financially, but I knew it was the right thing to do. My friend's death had changed my perspective on life.

Jesus took his disciples up the mountain hoping to find God there. They were on a quest, actively seeking God's presence. And like Peter, John and James, God is calling all of us to climb the mountain with Jesus. To go to a place where our vision is clear, and all the noise of everyday life subsides.

One year, pre-ordination, I visited Nepal with a group of friends during the Easter holidays. Easter morning, we left the tea house at 4am in the morning to walk up Poon Hill and watch the sun rise over the Annapurna Himalayas. We were looking at Machupuchare, a holy mountain, rising to about 7000 metres. We were only climbing to just over 3000 metres to experience this amazing sight – and amazing it was.

To experience the first light of Easter surrounded by the Himalayas is something I cannot explain but I know that I experienced God in that place, in God's creation. I get goose bumps talking about it now.

Later that day we even passed an Anglican church on the hillside. It was called the Victory church and it must have

been some victory carrying up the resources to actually build the church at such a height with no roads.

But even though it is easier to find God on the mountaintop, that is not the only place God can be found. All of us have joined this service today in different places, at different times, hoping to find something of God here, in the liturgy, the Scriptures, the music or the Eucharistic Prayer. In knowing others are watching, even.

Of course, there's always a temptation to stay put on top of the mountain — to use that sacred space as a place to hide from the problems of the world. Particularly at the moment as we continue to journey through Covid restrictions and miss our friends and family so much.

Truthfully though, it isn't only in those beautiful and set-apart places that we can find God. The whole world is filled with the glory of God, if we only have eyes to see.

There is no place on earth that God's love does not go. The cry of a baby; the last breath of a friend, the beggar on the street, the milkman, postie, checkout assistant, doctor or nurse. If we open our hearts to God's Spirit and go looking for God, we will begin to see God's presence all around us. Our transfiguration comes as our eyes are opened and our hearts changed. And the people who seemed so different from us before — we will see them as they really are: made in God's image, just as we are; we will see how Jesus' life was spent for them, just as it was for us.

Open your eyes and see the world as it is— be loved by God. Let your heart be transfigured by God’s love. Take that love down from this mountain and use it to bring more love into the world, particularly, this Sunday, as we remember St. Valentine.

Revd. Nicki McNelly

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named. We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love. We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high. We believe in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

INTERCESSIONS

God of glory, in our prayers today we come to you with thanks and with needs.

God of glory, we give thanks for the glory of your creation-- seen in Colinton in the grandeur of the hills and the joy of snowdrops. How we need your guidance in how best to challenge and overcome our spoiling of your creation.

God of glory **hear our prayer.**

God of glory, today we especially give thanks for the work of the scientists who have produced the vaccines and who are

still working for future protection. We thank you for the increased vaccine programme for people in the UK. How we need to pray and work for people of all countries--rich and poor--to receive vaccines.

God of glory **hear our prayer.**

God of glory, we call to mind places where there is violence and tension. We give thanks for the courage of the protesters in Myanmar and Russia. How we need - and to pray for- leaders in all countries to have a vision of peace and justice for all and the wisdom and strength to work for this.

God of glory **hear our prayer.**

God of glory, we pray for your church worldwide. We give thanks for the faith shown by our persecuted brothers and sisters and pray for them. We hold before God our local leaders. We give thanks and pray for Bishop John, Nicki, Margaret, Caroline...and Philip and Marie.

God of glory **hear our prayer.**

God of glory, we give thanks for the technology that is helping to keep people connected during the pandemic. But there are many with needs - those who are ill, those who are lonely, those mourning a loved one, young people missing education and friends. We pray for them.

In a moment of quiet we name those known personally who need our prayers.

God of glory **hear our prayer.**

Finally, a prayer for ourselves.

We give thanks that you are indeed a God of glory. Keep us alert to see ways in which you are revealing your glory - maybe not in great signs and wonder - but in actions of love and concern.

God of glory, accept this and all our prayers for the sake of your son Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

OFFERTORY HYMN 463 – Lord Jesus Christ

Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us,
you are one with us, Mary's Son.
Cleansing our souls from all their sin,
pouring your love and goodness in,
Jesus, our love for you we sing,
living Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ, now and every day
teach us how to pray, Son of God.
You have commanded us to do
this in remembrance, Lord, of you.
Into our lives your power breaks through,
living Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ, I would come to you,
live my life for you, Son of God.
All your commands I know are true,
your many gifts will make me new,
into my life your power breaks through,
living Lord.

*Patrick Appleford (b.1925) ©Josef Weinberger Ltd
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Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation;
through your goodness we have this bread to offer,
which earth has given and human hands have made;
it will become for us the bread of life.

Blessed be God for ever.

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation;
through your goodness we have this wine to offer,
fruit of the vine and work of human hands;
it will become the cup of our salvation.

Blessed be God for ever.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Worship and praise belong to you, Father, in every place and
at all times. All power is yours. You created the heavens
and established the earth; you sustain in being all that is.

In Christ your Son our life and yours are brought together in a wonderful exchange. He made his home among us that we might for ever dwell in you. Through your Holy Spirit you call us to new birth in a creation restored by love.

As children of your redeeming purpose we offer you our praise, with angels and archangels and the whole company of heaven, singing the hymn of your unending glory:-

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Glory and thanksgiving be to you, most loving Father, for the gift of your Son born in human flesh. He is the Word existing beyond time, both source and final purpose, bringing to wholeness all that is made. Obedient to your will he died upon the Cross. By your power you raised him from the dead. He broke the bonds of evil and set your people free to be his Body in the world.

On the night when he was given up to death, knowing that his hour had come, having loved his own, he loved them to the end. At supper with his disciples he took bread and offered you thanks. He broke the bread, and gave it to them, saying:

"Take, eat. This is my Body: it is broken for you."

After supper, he took the cup, he offered you thanks, and gave it to them saying:

"Drink this, all of you. This is my Blood of the new covenant; it is poured out for you, and for all, that sins may be forgiven. Do this in remembrance of me."

We now obey your Son's command. We recall his blessed passion and death, his glorious resurrection and ascension; and we look for the coming of his Kingdom. Made one with him, we offer you these gifts and with them ourselves, a single, holy, living sacrifice.

Hear us, most merciful Father, and send your Holy Spirit upon us and upon this bread and this wine, that, overshadowed by his life-giving power, they may be the Body and Blood of your Son, and we may be kindled with the fire of your love and renewed for the service of your Kingdom.

Help us, who are baptised into the fellowship of Christ's Body to live and work to your praise and glory; may we grow together in unity and love until at last, in your new creation, we enter into our heritage in the company of the Virgin Mary, the apostles and prophets, St Cuthbert, and of all our brothers and sisters living and departed.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory be to you, Lord of all ages, world without end. **Amen.**

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The living bread is broken for the life of the world.

Lord, unite us in this sign.

LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour Christ has commanded and taught us, we are bold to say:

**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.**

COMMUNION

**Lamb of God; you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God; you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God; you take away the sins of the world:
grant us peace.**

A PRAYER FOR US TO PRAY AT HOME:

God of infinite mercy, we thank you for Jesus our Saviour, who feeds his people and gives them eternal life.

Though we cannot consume the gifts of bread and wine, we thank you that we do receive Christ's saving presence, the forgiveness of sins, and all other benefits of his passion. Grant that we may continue for ever in the Risen Life of our Saviour.

Amen.

THANKSGIVING AND SENDING OUT

Give thanks to our gracious God
Whose mercy endures for ever.

POST COMMUNION

Father, your steadfast purpose is the completion of all things in your Son. May we who have received the pledges of the kingdom, live by faith, walk in hope and be renewed in love, until the world reflects your glory and you are all in all; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

BLESSING

Christ our King make you faithful and strong to do his will, that you may reign with him in glory; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**