

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay
<http://standrewspres-tbay.ca> - Minister: Rev. Joyce Yanishewski

Transfiguration Sunday. February 15, 2026

Call to Worship

It is good to be here in this sacred space,
in the shelter of God's love and hope.

It is good to be here with folks we know well, as well as with new friends,
joining with all of God's beloved, siblings of Jesus.

It is good to be here, where we can hear God's voice,
calling us to be eyewitnesses to the Spirit's presence.

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Hymn

Immortal, invisible, God only wise

290

1. Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.
2. Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
thy justice like mountains high soaring above
thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.
3. To all life thou givest, to both great and small;
in all life thou livest, the true life of all;
we blossom and flourish like leaves on the tree,
and wither, and perish, but naught changeth thee.
4. Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
all laud we would render: oh help us to see
'tis only the splendour of light hideth thee.

"Immortal, invisible, God only wise." Words by Walter Chalmers Smith. Public domain.

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

God of power and wonder,
we are awestruck by the glory of your presence.
We rejoice at what we can see; we marvel at what we cannot see.
You dazzle us with your brightness; you overshadow us as with a great cloud.
Loving, protecting, challenging, nurturing, you strengthen and transform us.
May we love and serve you in all that we are and do.

**Most amazing God,
the mystery of your radiance surrounds us.
Like the disciples of Jesus,
we confess our unease with transcendent mystery.
Faced with your splendor,
we do not take time for attentive silence as Jesus did,
but we evade the holy with stammering and busyness—
anything to avoid your power.
We also confess those times when we are at ease with holiness,
absorbed in prayer and thought
but so in love with your love that we neglect those in need.
As Jesus descended into the valley to work among the poor of the earth,
so direct us to our responsibilities.
Such is the mystery of your love, O God,
which both overwhelms and attracts us.
Have mercy upon us and forgive us.
Free us to love and serve in equal measure. Amen**

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Assurance of Forgiveness

Now the Lord is the Spirit,
and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.
And all of us, with unveiled faces,
seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror,
are being transformed into the same image
from one degree of glory to another,
for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.
In Jesus Christ we are forgiven and transformed!
Praise be to God!

based on 2 Corinthians 3:17-18, NRSV Reprinted by permission from The Worship Sourcebook, © 2004, CRC Publications.

Prayer for Understanding

God of Word and Wisdom, your Spirit inspired the authors of scripture with faithfulness in their day. Send us your Holy Spirit as we listen to the scriptures in our time. Give us fresh understanding and a vision of how to live out your wisdom in the example of Christ, your living Word. Amen

Scripture Reading

❖ Matthew 17:1-9 The Transfiguration

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. ² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became bright as light. ³ Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴ Then Peter said to Jesus, “Lord,

it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will set up three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”⁵ While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!”⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear.⁷ But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Get up and do not be afraid.”⁸ And when they raised their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, “Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

❖ 2 Peter 1:16-21 Eyewitnesses of Christ’s Glory

¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” ¹⁸ We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain.

¹⁹ So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰ First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, ²¹ because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

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Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church. **Thanks be to God.**

Message The Light of Love

The Word Became Flesh

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.¹ John 1:1-5.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it. This has been a dark week. Heck it just feels like the world is dark right now. Spiritually dark. Emotionally dark. Socially dark. If it were not for the lengthening of each day’s sunlight we might be overcome by the darkness physically as well. And granted those who are suffering in their bodies right now probably feel that physical darkness too.

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There has been so much strife for so long now. Other countries, other people have known strife, through we know that Canada has its own history of colonization that has caused immeasurable harm. But for the most part, those of us in this moment have had it pretty good. We get to have vehicles, pay the bills, even if the money doesn't feel like it goes very far. We have warm beds and food in the pantry. However, socially, societally, things are so very different. In this time, with our generations, we have seen divisions among friends and family that we would never have imagined prior to the last few years that have included Covid and the widening of political divisions.

And then the unspeakable happens. Something so dark that for Canadians it has stopped our country in its tracks. The Prime Minister halting his travels and announcements because of a tragedy and trauma that has reverberated across not only our country but over the world because these things don't happen in Canada.

Nine lives forever gone, ripped from their families, and two more still in hospital, one little girl still fighting for her life. A community in shock and mourning. A country grieving with them.

The stories are still being told, the harm settling in as darkness, darkness particularly for the families that have empty beds or a place at the table which once streamed with hope and possibility. The mass shooting at a Tumbler Ridge school and a home wounded by the aftermath of death and destruction because of one individual. One so consumed by darkness that harm, the taking of lives, seemed the way to stop the pain and anger they had within themselves. We don't get it. We can't understand a pain so deep and anger so vile that it lashes out in the bringing of more darkness, more pain, more harm.

This all in a week where people celebrate love because of Valentine's Day and in the church where we celebrate the light of Christ this Transfiguration Sunday. Love and light.

Darkness and destruction - light and love. How far apart those two things seem to be. Opposite points on the spectrum of our human experience.

This past Friday a vigil was held in Tumbler Ridge. Leaders of our country's political parties, joined with many others from within the community and outside the community to mourn and remember, to tell stories of children and women who had died in such a tragic circumstance, stories of heroism, stories of fear, bravery, courage, and now light. They stood together, holding each other, holding their candles of light.

We always look for light in the darkness. We light the Christ candle each Sunday as a reminder of the light of Christ. It is a reminder of the light that is for us. We are born with this light in us, most of us can keep that light going even if it is just a flicker at times. Yet, there are those few for whom darkness has so overcome the light that it seems it has been snuffed out. The light was so completely hidden for the one who perpetrated this senseless and horrific act. The light so completely covered over in their soul that it did not appear to have hope of ever shining again. And because of that, the light of the

children and two adults who lived among friends, family, and community, were snuffed out.

From the Gospel of John you heard, “In the beginning was the Word... [Jesus]... and the [Jesus] was with God, and [Jesus] was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.”

This week it feels like darkness did overtake the light; however, the light still shines. It is why people held candles at the time of the vigil; it is the remembrance that light still shines in the darkness. What many don't realize is that Christ is the light of the world, the light that can transform and illumine darkness. It does not mean that one does not get help through other humans. Health care professional, medications, therapies, community, this is all part of how Christ's light shines. It is however why Christian community, the love that we have because we know the love and light of Christ, is needed now as much as ever. We are that light of Christ, the light of Christ living and moving and shining through us that can transform the world with the Holy Spirit living and working in, with, and through us.

We are here to love. We are here to bring light to the darkness that threatens to overcome the lives of those we love and lives around the world. God will work in many ways to bring light through whatever means and people that will step up and be light. I pray that the Christian church is one of the places where people can find light and love. The church is called to be light in the darkness of human experience.

When Jesus was transfigured before Peter, James and his brother John, they saw Jesus differently. There were not expecting this. They had signed up to follow Jesus but they were not expecting this radiance were Jesus “was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white.”² They didn't expect to see the figures of Moses and Elijah in the light and they certainly didn't expect to have “a bright cloud overshadow them and from the cloud hear a voice say, “This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am will please; listen to him!”³ (Matthew 17:1-9)

But once they experienced it they could not unsee it or unhear it. Though we have not seen the transfiguration for ourselves we trust in its truth. Years later Peter would write in his letter,

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory,

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

saying, "This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." ¹⁸ We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain.⁴ (2 Peter 1:16-18)

We do not follow some imagined person or someone who was just a good man. We are Christ followers and Christ is the light of the world. He is still shining in each person, sometimes the light is dim or seems to be snuffed out, but it is there. It may appear that darkness has overcome, but the light of the world still shines in and through each one of us who are called to be images bearers of light, images bearer of God.

As you go from here today pledge to look for the light of Christ in yourselves and in each person you encounter. Bring light into the world because of your love, because of Christ's love, because God so loves the world. May the transfiguration of Christ, the light that shone so brightly, shine through us in ways that transform us, our families, our community, and imagine.... all the world.

In Christ, with Christ, and through Christ. Amen.

Prayers of the People

God of life, God of love,
You created us and set us in relationship with each other
In families and neighbourhoods,
in communities and countries,
in cultures and nations.

Thank you for the inheritance offered by previous generations
that helped establish our families and our common life.

Help us stand open to the wisdom in other cultures and insight from a new
generation so we can all contribute something to the well-being of wherever we call
home.

God of our faith and our future,
there are many pressures on families today.
Draw near to those struggling in economic difficulty,
and those burdened by challenges to their health and happiness.
Work with families where members are in conflict with each other
to create solutions that express mutual respect.
Make us a congregation that supports people whatever their state or condition.
Help us find joy and support together as part of the family of your people.

God of mercy and forgiveness,
you call us to live together in peace and unity.
Where people are divided and bitterness turns into resentment,

⁴ Ibid.

show us how to work for reconciliation.

Where violence and fear turn neighbour against neighbour, or nation against nation, call out leaders to work for justice that will bring peace.

Help us build a world where children can grow up to enjoy their future in good health and happiness.

We pray this even in the time of great sorrow in our country for the loss of so many young lives in Tumbler Ridge, BC. We lift up the families and community where unspeakable tragedy has rocked their world and our country. Grant all people the grace, love, and compassion that is needed at this time and hold grieving families in your loving embrace.

God who is our hope and our help,
thank you for the inheritance we share as church members,
for the gifts of so many generations handed along to teach us your wisdom
and inspire us with a vision of the new things you make possible.

Teach us how to learn from tradition

but also to recognize the work of the Spirit to keep reforming us in the faith.

Build up the family of this church.

Help each one find a place and a purpose in our mission and ministry,
using their talents and sharing their vision for our future with you.

And now as a part of your family called together over the centuries,
we pray the words Jesus gave us:

Lord's Prayer

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 forever. Amen

Invitation to the Offering

God reached out to the world in Christ Jesus, calling us to share God's transforming love. We offer our gifts as a sign of our readiness to follow God, praying they will become tangible tokens of that transforming love.

You are invited and encouraged to financially support St. Andrew's ministry through our website, [St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay, ON – Part of the PCCWeb network of churches](#)

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.

Refrain

*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!*

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

Refrain

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.

Refrain

"Shine, Jesus, Shine (Lord the Light of Your Love)." Words by Graham Kendrick © 1987 Make Way Music.
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Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.

Alleluia! Amen. —based on Numbers 6:24-26, NIV Reprinted by permission from The Worship Sourcebook, © 2004, CRC Publications.

Postlude