

Westminster United Church  
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Sunday, February 11, 2024 – Transfiguration Sunday

Pianist/Accompanist: Michael Oddy  
Song Leaders & Soloist: Joanna Novosedlik  
Singing Bowl: Wilma Stewart/Sandi McDonald  
Reader: Wilma Stewart  
Audio-Visual: Norm Barnoff, Jeanne Stocks  
YouTube Editor: Harold Barnoff  
Property: Garry Derbowka  
Bulletin: Rose Barkhouse  
Minister: Rev. Del Stewart

Worship and Celebration: In-person, Zoom-church and YouTube

\*indicates please stand, if able

## **Gathering Music**

## **Westminster's Mission Statement**

Westminster United Church is an inclusive church for Progressive Christians...  
creating something beautiful for God.

## **Welcome and Announcements**

## Acknowledgement of Territory

Westminster United Church sits on the traditional territory of the Three Fires Confederacy of First Nations, which includes the Ojibwa, the Odawa, and the Potawatomie. We respect the longstanding relationships with First Nations people in this place in the 100-mile Windsor-Essex Peninsula and the straits – *les detroits* – of Detroit.

**ENTRY INTO WORSHIP AND CELEBRATION** (Transfiguration Sunday, Rev. Rob Smith, in <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org>, adapted) – **Responsive**

Min: Beyond our busyness,  
above the cold winter floor,  
there is a glory arising born of heaven  
and reaching out to each one of us,

All: a light that shines through the clouds,  
an invitation seeking all of who we are  
that transfigures the world

Min: that transforms darkness into hope,  
that brings life from a cross,  
where old life ends and new life is born.

All: In glory Jesus meets us here  
raising us from the depths of the valley  
to the height of the mountain,  
carrying the weight of our humanity  
to the heights of heaven's glory.

Min: Let us worship from the mountain and hear again,  
"This is my child, my chosen, my beloved,  
listen to him!"

**Choral Response:** MV 115, Behold, Behold, I make All Things New

**Words of Awareness** (Transfiguration Sunday B, <http://www.bruceprewer.com>, adapted) – **Responsive**

Min: Today we celebrate the holy light that illuminated Jesus.  
We celebrate his transfiguration on the mountain.  
Light of light; transfusing light.  
Divine light flooding out the shadows.  
Light of light; light of delight.  
Light that turns doubters into followers.

All: It is the same God who at the beginning said, “Let there be light,”  
who has shone in our hearts with an understanding  
of the glory of God in the face of Jesus.

Min: The mightiest One of all, God eternal,  
speaks and summons the whole earth  
from the rising of the sun to its setting.

All: From God’s holy mountain. God’s light,  
the perfection of beauty, shines out...

*The singing bowl is sounded three times*

**Opening Prayer** (Madison Shockley, Transfiguration Sunday B, in <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org> , adapted) - **Min**

O Holy One,  
on the mountaintops and valley floors  
you reveal to us the light of your love.  
Our heart’s desire is to bask in the amazing glory

of the divine presence.

With each encounter we are changed and transformed.

Draw us nearer

so that we might receive a double portion of your Holy Spirit.

Help us, O Holy One, to live our lives as a reflection of divine glory.

May we walk among our brothers and sisters as a blessing,  
bearing light into dark places,

hope to displace despair,

and love that casts out hate.

Our world is hurting

and we need followers of Jesus to follow more closely.

Maybe then we will hear your voice speaking to us and saying,

“Listen to my Child, my Chosen, my Beloved!” Amen.

**\*Opening Hymn:** MV 10, Come and Seek the Ways of Wisdom

## **A Modern Parable for Transfiguration Sunday**

**“Light and Shadow: A Parable”** – (Rev. Bruce Prewer,

Transfiguration Sunday B, <http://www.bruceprewer.com>, adapted

– **Min**

In the township of Frosty Creek

on the south of Mt Forlorn,

are some who’ve never seen the

sun rise up at dawn.

There was a bloke named Tom Carew

who lived at the chill base

of that peak which in winter shadowed

‘til noon in that place.

From his childhood Tom had planned

to one morning early rise

and climb up to that lofty peak  
to watch the rosette skies.

But civic matters pressed him hard  
and he had ambitious hopes,  
so alderman Tom never did  
make it up those lofty slopes.

His heart gave out at forty six  
when night fell all too soon.  
Now the winter frost lies there hard  
on Tom's grave until noon...

*Quiet reflection*

**A Hymn from Our Childhood & Youth:** VU 585. Jesus Bids Us  
Shine

**A Confession of Faith** (Monika Helliwig, from The Christian  
Creeds-A Faith to Live By. 1973, Pflaum, quoted in  
<http://progressivechr.wpengine.com/resources/a-confession-of-faith>, adapted) – **Responsive**

Min: We believe that happiness awaits humanity and that our  
existence is not absurd.

People: We believe that all our longings can be fulfilled beyond  
imagining and that hope is not in vain.

Min: We believe that we come into existence by love and that our  
lives can become wholly meaningful by love.

People: We believe that all are joined in one destiny and that we  
are all responsible for one another.

Min: We believe that peace, justice and freedom-from-want are God's gifts to all but they must be received by us.

People: We believe that no human being is forgotten by God and that no one can be unimportant to us.

Min: We believe it because of Jesus who has reflected to us the fidelity of God – the Spirit of Life.

People: We believe it because of the sublime simplicity of his preaching and of his life.

Min: We believe it because of the luminous conviction and singleness of purpose with which he faced death.

People: We believe it because God raised him up as a sign of hope and as a challenge to all that shall one day be gloriously fulfilled.

Min: We believe it because the Living Spirit of Jesus is among followers-of-Jesus to this day.

People: We believe it because we share in the celebration of the mysteries in which we are transformed.

Min: We believe it because we expect to share in the fulfillment of all the promises in a world-yet-to-come.

People: Let it be so:  
this is our commitment...

*Quiet reflection*

## **The Peace** (D. Galston, adapted)

Min: May a heart of peace rest with you,

People: and also with you.

**Solo:** (Joanna Novosedlik)

## **READINGS** (Wilma Stewart)

### **From the Hebrew Scriptures**

**Psalm 50:1-6**, Vu p. 775 – Responsive

### **2 Kings 2:1-12 (Inclusive Bible)**

Now when Yahweh was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here. Yahweh is sending me to Bethel."

"As Yahweh lives, and as you live," said Elisha, "I will not leave you."

So they departed together for Bethel. The disciples of the prophets in Bethel approached Elisha, asking, "Do you know that Yahweh is going to take Elijah away from you today?"

"Yes, I know," Elisha replied, "now be silent."

Then Elijah spoke, "Stay here, Elisha. Yahweh is sending me to Jericho."

And Elisha replied, "As Yahweh lives, and as you live, I will not leave you."

So they went to Jericho. The disciples of the prophets in Jericho approached Elisha, asking, “Do you know that Yahweh is going to take Elijah from you today?”

“Yes, I know,” he said, “now be silent.”

Then Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here. Yahweh is sending me to the Jordan.”

And Elisha replied, “As Yahweh lives, and as you live, I will not leave you.”

So the two of them walked on. Fifty disciples of prophets stood off at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha stopped at the Jordan. Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry land.

Once across, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?”

Elisha replied, “Let me inherit two-thirds of your spirit,” he said.

“You ask a difficult thing,” Elijah said. “If you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours – otherwise not.”

As they were walking along and chatting with each other, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two, and Elijah went up into heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha saw this and cried out, “My father! My father! The chariots and cavalry of Israel!” And Elisha saw nothing more. Then he took hold of his clothes and tore them apart.



## **From the New Testament**

### **Mark 9: 2-9 (SV)**

Six days later, Jesus takes Peter and James and John along and leads them off by themselves to a lofty mountain. He was transformed in front of them, and his clothes became a brilliant white, whiter than any laundry on earth could make them. Elijah appeared to them, with Moses, and they were conversing with Jesus. Peter responds by saying to Jesus, “Rabbi, it’s a good thing we’re here. In fact, why not set up three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah!” (You see, he didn’t know how else to respond, since they were terrified.)

And a cloud moved in and cast a shadow over them, and a voice came out of the cloud: “This is my favoured Son, listen to him!” Suddenly, as they looked around, they saw no one, but were alone with Jesus.

And as they were walking down the mountain he instructed them not to describe what they had seen to anyone, until the son of Adam rise from the dead.

And they kept it to themselves, puzzling over what this could mean, this ‘rising from the dead’. And they started questioning him: “The scholars claim, don’t they, that Elijah must come first.”

He would respond to them, “Of course, Elijah comes first to restore everything. So, how does Scripture claim that the son of Adam will suffer greatly and be the object of scorn? On the other hand, I tell you that Elijah in fact has come, and they had their way with him, just as the Scriptures indicate.”

## **A Contemporary Reading**

**“Transfiguration”** – a sonnet by Malcolm Guite written from the perspective of one of Jesus’ disciples looking back at The Transfiguration from the crucifixion of Jesus on Good Friday (<https://malcolmguite.wordpress.com>)

For that one moment, ‘in and out of time’,  
On that one moment where all moments meet,  
The daily veil that covers the sublime  
In darkling glass fell bedazzled at his feet.  
There were no angels full of eyes and wings  
Just living glory full of truth and grace.  
The love that dances at the heart of things  
Shone out upon us from a human face  
And to that light the light in us leaped up.  
We felt it quicken somewhere deep within,  
A sudden blaze of long-extinguished hope  
Trembled and tingled through tender skin.  
Nor can that blackened sky, this darkened scar  
Eclipse that glimpse of how things really are.

## **Reflections on Today’s Readings**

May these words bless us,  
and may our words be a blessing to others.

## **Centering**

Let us now prayerfully center our hearts, our minds and our lives  
as we listen to this musical meditation played by Westminster’s  
pianist, Michael Oddy...

## **Musical Meditation (Michael Oddy)**

## **Sermon: “Light and Life” (Rev. Del Stewart)**

**\*Hymn:** Transform Us [a.k.a. The Transfiguration Song] – by (now deceased) United Church Minister, Sylvia Dunstan – sung to the tune of VU 700, God of Freedom, God of Justice

Transform us as you, transfigured, stood apart on Tabor’s height.  
Lead us up our sacred mountains, search us with revealing light.  
Lift us from where we have fallen, full of questions, filled with  
fright.

Transform us as you, transfigured, once spoke with those holy  
ones.  
We, surrounded by the witness of those saints whose work is  
done,  
Live in this world as Your Body, chosen daughters, chosen sons.

Transform us as you, transfigured, would not stay with a shrine.  
Keep us from our great temptation – time and truth we quickly  
bind.  
Lead us down those daily pathways where our love is not  
confined.

**A Prayer for Transfiguration Sunday** (Lisa Ann Moss –  
Degrenia, <https://revlisad.com/2012/02/13/prayer-for-transfiguration-sunday/>, adapted) – **Responsive**

Min: Radiant Creativity-God,  
Strong, Wise One,  
Shine in our minds.  
Enlighten our understanding of you and your ways  
So that we may do what is true, and live in your light.

People: Restore us, O God;  
Let your face shine,

so that we may faithfully follow Jesus.

Min: God – Breath of Life ,  
Spirit of Life,  
Refiner's Fire,  
Shine in our hearts.  
Illumine every motivation and agenda,  
Spark in us your compassion and reign.

People: Restore us, O God;  
Let your face shine,  
so that we may faithfully follow Jesus.

Min: Jesus, Anointed One,  
Light of the World,  
Shine in our ways,  
Make them like Yours -  
Lighthouses to reflect your love;  
Faithful beacons of hope to guide others to you.

People: Restore us, O God;  
Let your face shine,  
so that we may faithfully follow Jesus.

*Silent prayer*

### **The Lord's Prayer - Unison**

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 and ever. Amen.

## **THE OFFERING**

**Invitation** (based on Heather Christensen, <https://www.uua.org>,  
*adapted*)

Since its formation in 1925, the United Church of Canada has had  
a grand vision of a world filled with peace and justice, love and  
joy.

That vision is embodied in this denomination's congregations  
large, small and in-between.

No matter its size, every local church depends on the generosity  
of its members.

Each one of you, by your commitment of time, energy and money  
helps to make that vision a reality.

Individually and together we are followers of Jesus working  
together to build a world filled with peace and justice, love and joy

**\*Offertory Hymn:** MV 191, What Can I Do (please feel free to clap  
along)

### **\*Presentation of the Offering**

**\*Offertory Prayer:** (Carol Penner,  
<https://carolpenner.typepad.com>, adapted)

O God, we worship you with our words and our songs, and we  
praise you with our money. Everything we have is yours, and

these gifts and offerings are signs of your kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

**\*Closing Hymn:** VU 102, Jesus on the Mountain Peak

**\*Parting Words** (David Bahr, Transfiguration Sunday B, Transfiguration Sunday B, in <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org> , adapted) – Min

The time has come for us to leave this sacred place.  
As we go, may God send us back down the mountain of our  
worship and celebration.  
We have been changed.  
We can't be silent anymore.  
We have seen the Light of the World.  
Go now, and share the radiance of loving compassion...

*The singing bowl is sounded three times*

**\*Blessing** (<https://pilgrimwr.unitingchurch.org.au>, adapted) – Min

May the love of God embrace you,  
the Way of Jesus challenge you,  
and the wisdom of the Spirit renew you...

**\*Choral Response:** VU 967, Amen