

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church  
February 14, 2021

Hi Friends,

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ.

The season of Lent is quickly approaching. This year a number of churches in the West Berks Mission District have joined together to put an Ash Wednesday service together. There are 20 different people from various churches who are participating (including yours truly).

You can join in this service if you have Comcast TV cable services on Wednesday, Feb 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm on Channel 190 or if you have access to a computer you can sign on to our Zoom link (the same one listed below for Sunday worship) at 7:30 pm and we will watch and participate in the worship service together on Zoom.

To participate in the imposition of ashes, we suggest that you use what you have available in your home like: ashes from a fireplace, or the soot of a burnt candle or even dirt from a house plant.

Holy Communion – the Worship and Music committee has recommended and the Council has approved moving to weekly Holy Communion beginning with the Sunday morning worship service on February 7.

If you have prayer request, please send them to me so that I can include them in my weekly newsletters.

Yours in Christ,            Pastor Denise

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## Luke 9:28-45

A reading from the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of Luke beginning at the 28<sup>th</sup> verse.

<sup>28-31</sup> About eight days after saying this, he climbed the mountain to pray, taking Peter, John, and James along. While he was in prayer, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became blinding white.

At once two men were there talking with him. They turned out to be Moses and Elijah—and what a glorious appearance they made! They talked over his exodus, the one Jesus was about to complete in Jerusalem.

<sup>32-33</sup> Meanwhile, Peter and those with him were slumped over in sleep. When they came to, rubbing their eyes, they saw Jesus in his glory and the two men standing with him.

When Moses and Elijah had left, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, this is a great moment! Let’s build three memorials: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” He blurted this out without thinking.

<sup>34-35</sup> While he was babbling on like this, a light-radiant cloud enveloped them. As they found themselves buried in the cloud, they became deeply aware of God. Then there was a voice out of the cloud: “This is my Son, the Chosen! Listen to him.”

<sup>36</sup> When the sound of the voice died away, they saw Jesus there alone. They were speechless. And they continued speechless, said not one thing to anyone during those days of what they had seen.

<sup>37-40</sup> When they came down off the mountain the next day, a big crowd was there to meet them. A man called from out of the crowd, “Please, please, Teacher, take a look at my son.

He’s my only child. Often a spirit seizes him. Suddenly he’s screaming, thrown into convulsions, his mouth foaming. And then it beats him black-and-blue before it

leaves. I asked your disciples to deliver him but they couldn't."

<sup>41</sup> Jesus said, "What a generation! No sense of God! No focus to your lives! How many times do I have to go over these things? How much longer do I have to put up with this? Bring your son here."

<sup>42-43</sup> While he was coming, the demon slammed him to the ground and threw him into convulsions. Jesus stepped in, ordered the foul spirit gone, healed the boy, and handed him back to his father. They all shook their heads in wonder, astonished at God's greatness, God's majestic greatness.

<sup>43-44</sup> While they continued to stand around exclaiming over all the things he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, "Treasure and ponder each of these next words: The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into human hands."

<sup>45</sup> They didn't get what he was saying. It was like he was speaking a foreign language and they couldn't make heads or tails of it. But they were embarrassed to ask him what he meant.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

## Sermon

Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. AMEN

Dazzling Lord,  
In blinding light you showed your disciples a hint of your power and purpose. Reveal yourself to us today. Show us what you desire of us and how to broadcast your love to the world, for the sake of the one who keeps company with the prophets Moses and Elijah, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

This morning we take a huge leap forward from last week's text about the healing stories of the Centurion's daughter and the widow's son and this week's text about the transfiguration of Jesus.

Between these two stories, Jesus has been preaching and healing and feeding the crowds with both his messages and real food. And now as we prepare for Lent, we move forward from his ministry

in the region of Galilee to the story of the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain top.

The season of Lent is bookended with two mountain top experiences. In this story, we see Jesus lit up and shining in all of his glory. The disciples are in awe of what they see and are willing to do whatever it takes to preserve this experience of divine revelation. This is the Messiah, the miraculous one that their people have been waiting for for centuries. The one who is connected to their past as evidenced with the appearance of Moses and Elijah.

The other bookend to our Lenten season is the mountain that Jesus will climb on Good Friday, not with his beloved disciples, but with two criminals and the Roman soldiers who will nail

him to the old wooden cross that he carries.

The mountain on which Jesus, who was abandoned and betrayed by his disciples will die. And we will see him not shining with dazzling clothes; but, we will see his naked body that has been bloodied and battered, hung on a cross between two criminals.

The Messiah, who appears to be defeated coming into his glory, not out of power and strength, but out of weakness and devastation. Not the mountain experience that we wanted, but the mountain experience that we will forever cherish.

We are reminded in this morning's text that before Jesus began this journey to the cross, he went to the mountain top to spend time in prayer, time with his Father. He took with him three of his beloved disciples, Peter, James and John, who are being prepared to continue God's

mission of restoration that God has begun through Jesus.

When they reach the top of the mountain, Jesus needing some privacy for his conversation with the Father, leaves the three disciples for awhile. Resting from the hike up the mountain, the three disciples fall asleep. While Jesus is talking with the Father, the appearance of his face changes and his clothes became dazzling white and he is then joined by two men. The three are talking about the next phase of his mission that will lead him to Jerusalem to accomplish the work that he has been sent by the Father to do.

The disciples wake to see Jesus shining in all of his glory with other two men, who they come to know as Moses and Elijah.

Peter overcome with awe approaches Jesus and wanting to capture this mountain-top experience offers to build three places for them to stay: one for

Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

But, while Peter is babbling on about housing the divine, a cloud surrounds them and Peter hears the voice of God saying: “This is my Son, the Chosen! Listen to him.”

When the fog from the cloud clears, there they are alone with Jesus and they are speechless. And the four of them Peter, James, John and Jesus head on down the mountain to where the needy crowd awaits them.

We, like Peter would rather stay on that mountain time, soaking in that glow and trying to relive those awe-inspiring moments.

But that is not the life of a disciple to climb to the top of the mountain and stay there, disciples have real work to do down among the people.

For Peter, James and John their journey to the top of the mountain was part of their preparation for the real kingdom work that God had planned for them.

For they would be the ones that God has chosen to continue God’s mission after Jesus has departed. They have experienced these two mountain top encounters that bookend the Lenten season, the first up close and personal and the second from a distance. And through these two encounters they have come to see, they have come to hear, and they have come to experience God’s unconditional love, God’s unrelenting mercy and God’s amazing grace.

As modern-day disciples, we come together on a Sunday morning as the body of Christ to hear God’s Word, to partake in God’s meal with our brothers and sisters, and to support and celebrate one another.

For us in it’s like our weekly mini mountain top experience. For we come together in community not out of duty or obligation, but so that through the hearing of God’s Word, through the sharing of God’s meal and through supporting and celebrating one another; we

may experience God's love,  
God's mercy and God's grace.

But that mini mountain top  
experience on a Sunday morning  
is not where the real kingdom  
work gets done.

As Christ's disciples, we can't  
live in the church any more than  
Peter, James and John and  
Jesus could live on the mountain  
top. But like Peter, James and  
John and Jesus walked down the  
mountain into the needy crowd,  
we are called to walk out of the  
church, into the needy world to  
do the work of bringing about  
God's kingdom on earth for all  
people.

So that through our words and  
deeds, all who are broken or  
hurting or lost or hopeless can  
have their own mini mountain  
top encounter.

We as God's church have been  
called, empowered and  
emboldened by God's Holy Spirit  
to embody Christ presence in  
this needy world so that all of  
God's beloved children will one  
day get to experience God's  
unconditional love, God's  
unrelenting mercy and God's  
amazing grace.

AMEN

### *Blessing*

May  
The love of God,  
The light of Christ,  
And the joy of the Holy Spirit  
Abide with you on this day  
and forever more.

**AMEN**