



## KNOX CHURCH, DUNEDIN

*Captivated by the vision of the realm of God,  
made known in Jesus, given in grace*

10am – Sunday 23 February 2020  
Transfiguration Sunday

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### Pre service music

*Christe Qui Lux es et Dies (Christ Who is the Light and Day)*  
*Erhalt uns Herr bei deinen Wort (Sustain us, Lord, with Your Word) BuxWV 185*

John Redford (~1500-47)  
Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707)

### We are prepared for worship, led by our choir

*"Lord, I trust Thee"*

G F Handel (1685-1759)

### We are invited to worship

(adapted from Roddy Hamilton)

Kia noho a Ihowa ki a koutou. May God be with you.

**Ma Ihowa koe e manaaki. May God bless you.**

Amid everyday life,

**there is a glory reflecting God's involvement,**

a light that discloses God's love,

**that transfigures the world,**

that casts a spell of hope

**seeing life even in death.**

It is a glory that meets us on this mountain where Jesus Christ,

covered in the dust of the world,

**is caught up in the glory of heaven.**

Welcome to the mountain.

### We sing

(Regent Square) CH4 355 - Sylvia G Dunstan

1 You, Lord, are both Lamb and Shepherd.

You, Lord, are both prince and slave.

You, peacemaker and sword-bringer  
in the way you took and gave.

You, the everlasting instant;

you, whom we both scorn and crave.

2 Clothed in light upon the mountain,

stripped of might upon the cross,

shining in eternal glory,

harrowing hell to save the lost,

you, the everlasting instant;

you, who are our gift and cost.

3 You, who walk each day beside us,  
sit in power at God's side.

You, who preach a way that's narrow,  
have a love that reaches wide.

You, the everlasting instant;

you, who are our pilgrim guide.

4 Worthy is our earthly Jesus!

Worthy is our cosmic Christ!

Worthy your defeat and vict'ry.

Worthy still your peace and strife.

You, the everlasting instant;

you, who are our death and life.

## We pray and are assured of God's great love

E te whanau, in Christ we are forgiven. **Thanks be to God.**

## We share the peace of Christ

Kia tau tonu te rangimarie o te Ariki ki a koutou; The peace of Christ be with you all.

**And also with you.**

## Our choir leads us in praying

*"O Nata Lux de Lumine - O Light of light, by love inclined"*

Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943)

## We converse

### We sing

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.

*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!*

(Shine, Jesus, shine) CH4 448 - Graham Kendrick

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.

[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]

## We listen for God's Word

### Exodus 24:12-18

*Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church* **Thanks be to God**

24:12 The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain, and wait there; and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction."

24:13 So Moses set out with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God.

24:14 To the elders he had said, "Wait here for us, until we come to you again; for Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a dispute may go to them."

24:15 Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain.

24:16 The glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud.

24:17 Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel.

24:18 Moses entered the cloud, and went up on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

## Matthew 17:1-9

*This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ **Praise to Christ the Word***

17:1 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves.

17:2 And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white.

17:3 Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.

17:4 Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

17:5 While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!"

17:6 When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear.

17:7 But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid."

17:8 And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

17:9 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."

## 'An encounter that readies us'

Today is bright Sunday, transfiguration Sunday, the last Sunday of Epiphany. At the beginning of Epiphany the star shone over the baby Jesus, guiding the magi. A little later in Epiphany we remembered his baptism and we heard the words "This is my Son, the beloved, and with whom I am well pleased." Over the last weeks we have heard Matthew's account of some of the teaching of Jesus, especially over the last three weeks when Jesus was up a hill, and we heard the beatitudes, then last Sunday Jesus teaching about the law. And today, 14 chapters later, nearer the end of Matthew, we are up a higher mountain, and we hear the same words – "This is my Son, the beloved, with him I am well pleased." But with three words added on ... Listen to him.

But this week the tone shifts sharply. Tuesday is fat Tuesday, Shrove Tuesday, the end of Epiphany, when we eat pancakes to use up all the eggs of abundance. Wednesday is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, when we bury the alleluias, we begin to name darkness and we are reminded that we are dust,

creaturely beings. Then we are in the season of Lent, the journey to Good Friday and Easter Sunday, the journey to crucifixion and resurrection.

Today though is bright Sunday, transfiguration Sunday. And I have an image - a diving board. We have climbed to a high place, over the weeks of the teaching of Jesus, steadily climbing, but then Jesus takes us higher still, high up, on the mountain, on the board, and why? Well because over the next weeks we plunge into what is underneath us, underneath what is going on, we are plunged deep into the human experience, deep into darkness, so deep indeed that we get to the very heart of evil, to a cross. It is a long way down and Christ goes there, so deep that he even punctures the power of evil. Christ brings us to this mountain, high up, because of how deep he is going to plunge us.

Peter struggles to comprehend the height and depth. Now Peter has been with Jesus, seeing the healing, noticing the restoring, hearing the teaching, watching the including, sensing embodied justice. Perhaps he seemed that this was it, that this would continue. That Jesus would carry on with his ministry and this was all he needed to do. But Jesus has a sense that the trajectory of his ministry brings him into conflict with the powers, that he has to confront and wrestle with the very power of evil, the power that keeps people down, that drowns us, to rescue more than those with whom he related, to disempower evil.

Peter does not yet know that. So a few verses before today's story, when Jesus predicts his suffering and killing and resurrection, Peter takes Jesus aside and rebukes him. You can hear Peter thinking - Why would a venture so seemingly effective come to an end? Why would you, Jesus, throw cold water when so many people are being helped? And Jesus angrily responds. "Get behind him Satan!; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." There is more here Peter than you realise. Jesus then speaks about discipleship. "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."

How can Peter gain a sense of the depth of what is happening, what is really going on in the ministry of Jesus? So six days after this experience, Jesus led Peter and James and John up a high mountain, by themselves. And there was the law embodied in Moses, and prophecy embodied in Elijah, this is what is driving Jesus. This is the faith giving him purpose. But more than that, there is the glow of divinity. Jesus is taking them beyond what they had already experienced, because they are about to start plunging. I've noticed that there are people who seem to grow gradually in discipleship, over time, with prompts here and there, with ups and downs, steadily evolving as followers. But some of us don't. We have to be jolted to the depth of what Jesus is wanting to do with us in our world, surprised by glory. Jesus was being realistic up the mountain as he sensed the powers that swirl around, the forces that gather on the horizon, the entrenched ones who whisper behind the scenes, the gathering darkness. There was about to be a wrestling, a struggling, a wrenching, a suffering and torture and betrayal and death and resurrection, and Peter was going to be in the midst of it, right in the middle when everything seemed to come crashing down. So Jesus took him up a mountain.

Peter wanted to build three dwellings for Jesus and Elijah and Moses. Maybe he was honouring heroes or stretching the moment or preserving their influence. To face the depth of humanity, we need history and heroes, yes. We also need also a present power, a living voice, the constant whisper in our ear. "Get up and do not be afraid."

We know Syria and South Sudan, domestic violence and tragic deaths, unending inequality and the intractability of destructive forces. Jesus wants us to be part of the divine movement that punctured evil, to receive the spirit who takes us into life's deepest challenges, with hope.

Malcolm Guite wrote a poem looking back from the mountain of crucifixion, the blackened sky, to the mount of transfiguration, to the love glimpsed there that can never be eclipsed,

For that one moment, 'in and out of time',  
On that one mountain where all moments meet,  
The daily veil that covers the sublime  
In darkling glass fell dazzled 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 the tender skin.  
Nor can this this blackened sky, this darkened scar  
Eclipse that glimpse of how things really are.

## We sing

1 Jesus, take us to the mountain,  
where, with Peter, James and John,  
we are dazzled by your glory,  
light as blinding as the sun.  
There prepare us for the night  
by the vision of that sight.

2 What do you want us to see there,  
that your close companions saw?  
Your divinity revealed there  
fills us with the self-same awe.  
Clothed in flesh like ours you go,  
matched to meet our deadliest foe.

## We pray for others

**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.**

(Irby) GtG 193 - Jaroslav Vajda

3 What do you want us to hear there,  
that your dear disciples heard?  
Once again the voice from heaven  
says of the Incarnate Word:  
"Listen, listen everyone:  
this is my beloved Son."

4 Take us to that other mountain  
where we see you glorified,  
where you shouted "It is finished!"  
where for all the world you died.  
Hear the stunned centurion:  
"Truly this was God's own Son!"

*Anglican prayer book*

**E tō mātou Matua i te rangi  
Kia tapu tōu Ingoa.  
Kia tae mai tōu rangatiratanga.  
Kia meatia tāu e pai ai  
ki runga ki te whenua,  
kia rite anō ki tō te rangi.  
Hōmai ki a mātou āiane  
he taro mā mātou mō tēnei rā.  
Murua ō mātou hara,  
Me mātou hoki e muru nei  
i ō te hunga e hara ana ki a mātou.  
Āua hoki mātou e kawea kia whakawaia;  
Engari whakaorangia mātou i te kino:  
Nōu hoki te rangatiratanga, te kaha,  
me te korōria, Āke āke āke. Āmine.**

# We share news and share the offering of Christ

*"O Nata Lux"* Thomas Tallis (1505-85)

Gradual for the Feast of Transfiguration

*We recognise and bless the gifts brought to the table,  
and those which wing their way electronically from our banks to the Church's account.*

## We sing

AA 85 - Colin Gibson

*Let justice roll down like a river,  
let justice roll down like a sea,  
let justice roll down like a river,  
let justice begin through me.*

1 Justice for all who go hungry,  
crying to God to be fed,  
left in a world of abundance  
to beg for a morsel of bread.  
[Refrain]

2 Justice for those who are homeless,  
victims of warfare or need,  
trapped on the borders of nowhere,  
lost in the canyons of greed.  
[Refrain]

3 Justice for all who are powerless,  
yearning for freedom in vain,  
plundered, and robbed of their birthright  
silently bearing their pain.  
[Refrain]

## We are sent

## Postlude

*"Tuba Tune"*

Craig Sellar Lang (b. NZ, 1891-1971)