

Shining

Luke 9:28-36

How close do we get to God? How close do we let God get to us? The Christian faith is based on the idea of 'presence': God is in our midst. God comes to be with us in the person of Jesus. God continues to be with us through God's Spirit.

There are times in life when God seems very far off. We go through a struggle, an illness, a time of doubt and life feels very lonely and isolated. There are times when God seems very near. Help comes, encouragement is given, a realization of how many blessings we have becomes clear. Transfiguration Sunday reminds us of God's real and shining presence, and Communion Sunday reminds us how close to us Jesus comes, when we are reminded in the bread and wine.

The Bible reading this morning is one of those mystical moments where we hear it and we wonder what really happened. Confusion, dazzling light, visions of prophets from another time, and Jesus talking about His coming death. There is sleepiness, a desire to build something to protect, or is it to contain, the holy people, a cloud, and a voice from heaven.

But all around this story there is shining. The shining presence of Jesus, of what He is really like, and of Who He really is, transfigured from Jesus of Nazareth to Jesus the Son of God in all His glory.

I think sometimes we are like those sleepy disciples, half-seeing, half-understanding Who it is that Jesus really is. And it is at times like this that Jesus comes close, so that our community, this church, not fully awake to the promise of God, suddenly, uncomfortably, wonderfully, find God has come really close. Through the gifts of music and prayer and preaching; through the service and work for justice and peace; through the gift of water and baptism, and through the gifts of bread and wine, Jesus comes really close.

Look, the cloud of Jesus' glory envelops us this morning; look, *here* shines the One in Whom there is power to overcome fear and sadness and death itself.

Good news!

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

Amen