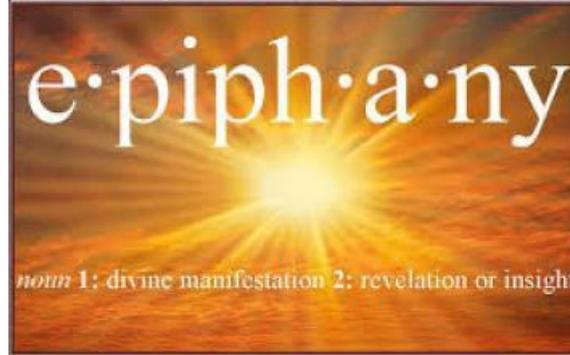


**Second Congregational Church in Newcastle, United Church of Christ
Newcastle, Maine**

**Last Sunday After Epiphany: Transfiguration
Sermon Series: 6 of 6:
The Light Has Come: The Source of Our Transformation
Online Worship – February 14, 2021, 10:00 AM**



INVITATION

Welcome to Virtual Worship with the community of Second Congregational Church in Newcastle, United Church of Christ in Newcastle, Maine. From our various spaces, on our various devices, we enter sacred time together. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here. God meets us everywhere and in all our humanness. Be here in this sacred moment. God is with you. God is with us. May this worship of saints be blessed, be nourishing, be comforting, be church.

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP DURING EPIPHANY:

Wednesday, January 6th was Epiphany (Three Kings Day in other Christian/cultural traditions), when we remember the manifestation (revelation) of Jesus Christ as God among all people. It begins the season of Epiphany, when we recall Jesus' baptism, temptation in the wilderness, the beginning of Jesus' ministry and finally, the time of Transfiguration. The Epiphany season ends on Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday, which begins the season of Lent.

As we gather for worship together, please be sure that your device (computer, phone or tablet) is in the mute mode to avoid feedback and background noise. You are encouraged to use the "chat" or "comment" features to offer prayer requests at any time during the service.

Before the time of the service you may want to prepare a simple worship space. Perhaps you can light a candle, have a Bible with you, set your 2021 star gift on the table before you or place some other symbol of faith that brings you comfort. Perhaps an outdoor element – a flower, potted plant or branch - helps you to spiritually focus. Maybe include the photograph of someone you wish to bring into the circle of faith. Whatever it is, follow your heart.

Thank you for your preparation.

Let us now be present to the Spirit, which brings us together and loves us wherever we are!

+ + + +

GATHERING MUSIC

"This Little Light of Mine"
arr. by Joel Raney for piano duet. ©Hope Publishing Company.
Peter Asche and Jane Wilmot

Traditional Spiritual

WELCOME & CENTERING MOMENT

CALL TO WORSHIP (*adapted from 1 Corinthians 13:12-13*): (*Words in bold are said aloud together but muted*):

For now we see in a mirror, dimly,

But then we will see face to face.

Now I know only in part;

Then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.

And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three;

And the greatest of these is love.

Come, let us worship God,

Who is Love, and will reveal all to those who are faithful.

OPENING HYMN

“Here in This Place”

Gather Us In (NEXT PAGE)

We will remain muted to avoid audio feedback and lags. Please sing aloud at home or follow along as best as you are able. Remember, it's our spiritual intention that matters!

Led by the Second Singers

Link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1n6l0dJjBxgNr0np_xMFJR8CTIJ90oJQg/view?usp=sharing

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION:

Speak to us, Mighty One, for we are eager to listen. Bless us, as we seek your strength and vision. You have acted before to save your people. Show us the way now. You have sent prophets to change the world. Let us hear their words now. You have granted light in Jesus Christ. Shine on us now. Let us see your glory. Lift us to the mountaintop in this time of worship and prayer. Stay close, melt away our doubts, claim us too as your Beloved. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (*said out loud together but muted*):

(Second Church follows the version of the Lord's Prayer that is offered below. However, you are invited to say this prayer aloud in the tradition that brings you the most comfort: debt/debtors; sins/sin; trespasses/trespass).

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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from Evil: for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

A READING FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT: Mark 9:2-9

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one^[a] on earth could bleach them. ⁴And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. ⁵Then Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings,^[b] one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” ⁶He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, “This is my Son, the Beloved;^[c] listen to him!” ⁸Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

⁹As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Here In This Place



1. Here in this place the new light is stream-ing, now the dark night has
 2. We are the young - our lives are a mys - tery; we are the old, who
 3. Here we re - ceive new life in your wa - ters; here we re - ceive the
 4. Not just in build - ings, small and con - fin - ing; not in some heav - en,



van - ished a - way. See in this space our fears and our dream-ings,
 yearn for your face. We have been sung through - out all of his - tory,
 bread of new birth; here you shall call your sons and your daugh - ters,
 light years a - way, here in this place the new light is shin - ing;



brought here to you in the light of this day. Gath-er us in, the
 called to be light to the whole hu-man race. Gath-er us in, the
 call us a - new to be salt for the earth. Give us to drink the
 now is God pre - sent, and now is the day. Gath-er us in and



lost and for - sak - en; gath-er us in; our spir - its in - flame.
 rich and the haugh - ty; gath-er us in, the proud and the strong;
 wine of com - pas - sion, give us to eat the bread that is you;
 hold us for - ev - er; gath-er us in and make us your own;



Call to us now, and we shall a-wak-en; we shall a-rise at the sound of our name. ___
 give us a heart so meek and so low-ly; give us the courage to en - ter the song. ___
 nourish us well, and teach us to fash-ion livesthat are ho - ly and hearts that are true. ___
 gath-er us in, all peo-ples togeth-er, fire ___ of love in our flesh and our bone. ___

Words and Music: Marty Haugen, 1981, alt

GATHER US IN
10.9.10.10D

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SERMON: The Light Has Come: The Source of Our Transformation Rev. Char Corbett

On this last Sunday of the Epiphany season, we hear the story of the Transfiguration today because things are changing!

Jesus' transfiguration sits at the center of Mark's gospel. Mark and God's word are indicating to all who will listen that change is in the air.

The disciples know a little something about change. They have made drastic changes in their lives to follow Jesus. Nothing is the same, really. They've left their home, their boats, their livelihoods, their families to travel the road with Jesus. They have been direct witnesses to Jesus changing other lives, too. He's been preaching and teaching with authority and the crowds are building up. Jesus has been healing the sick and removing evil spirits from the possessed. And, just like you and I when we find ourselves in new and unfamiliar situations, there is only so much change they can tolerate!

Change is what this gospel text is all about and it starts with the very first words: "Six days later." Wait. What? Isn't that curious? Doesn't that make you wonder: what happened six days ago in this story? Mark is prompting us to remember an earlier event. What could it be? Well, if you return to Mark 8, you see what happened six days earlier.

Jesus had asked the disciples who he was and Peter responded, "You are the Messiah."

And after Peter made that confession, Jesus said the "Messiah must suffer and die." Peter was aghast and publicly rebuked Jesus for even saying such a thing.

Jesus calls Peter out for that move (even goes so far as to call Peter Satan!) and tells Peter he has got to change his understanding of the Messiah. The Messiah will not ride in as a king on a white horse, but will be a suffering servant.

Think about it: at that moment Jesus was calling Peter to a new future, to change his understanding of God and to embrace a new way of life. Jesus was pointing Peter toward the cross and that is a difficult change to comprehend. Why? Because it involves loss!

We have all heard the adage: "People resist change," but Harvard Professor Ron Heifetz says, "It is not really true. People are not stupid. People love change when they believe it is a good thing. No one gives back a winning lottery ticket. What people resist is not change per se, but loss. When change involves real or potential loss, people hold on to what they have and resist the change."

John F. Kennedy once said, "Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."

Listen again to what Peter says in today's gospel: Let me build three booths – one for you, Moses, and Elijah." He said this with fear. He's anticipating change and the unknown consequences of that change.

We resist change because it involves loss!

If someone you love has died, or if you have recently retired or changed jobs, or if you have sent a child off to college or the military, or if you just had a baby, you know that change (even good change) involves loss.

But our fear of loss is not a good enough reason to resist change, especially if that change is for the good of others and creation.

Jesus is telling the disciples that change is at the heart of what it means to live fully. Mark is re-telling this transfiguration story to his community and now to all of us to help us all understand that change is at the heart of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Change is at the heart of the spiritual life.

We are easily distracted and amused. We can easily lose our way, forget our priorities, nurture habits good or bad for comfort. We must change our minds, our hearts, our direction. To do so, we must listen. We must remember that it's Jesus' call to us that is the center of our faith and our story.

The first Sunday of Epiphany began with Jesus' baptism, with Jesus coming up out of the water and God saying, "You are my Son, the beloved; with you I am well pleased." Epiphany ends with the Transfiguration and God speaking again, "This is my Son, the beloved; listen to him!"

In Mark's gospel, Jesus is named the Son of God a third time and who identifies Jesus is a powerful change to note, as it is spoken by someone other than God. Jesus is named by the Roman soldier standing at the foot of the cross.

We don't know what this Roman Centurion had to do with the act of Jesus' death. Mark and the other Gospel writers never give us that detail. Maybe he was the one who hammered the nails, perhaps he was the one who hoisted Jesus up to die, or he could have just been a soldier assigned to stand guard. Whatever the case, something in him changes and he says, "Truly this man was the Son of God."

In life, death and resurrection, Jesus has a way of changing people. As Christians, Jesus is the source of our transformation.

We are people of change. As we enter the season of Lent on Wednesday, change will be in the air. We've tolerated a lot of change this past year and no doubt, there is more change to come. We are weary and stressed by the change that keeps on coming. Do not fear. God is with us. Lent is an opportunity for us to think about how things change and how Jesus encourages us to be transformed ourselves in the change that's all around us.

This Lenten season, I encourage you to find or return to a spiritual practice that helps you to open yourselves to God's transforming ways. Pray. Meditate. Read scripture. Journal. Follow the daily devotional that has been made available to you through our church. Take walks with God. Care for others. Rest in God's care. Fast if you can do so safely and with support.

This kind of intentional change can help us focus on what truly matters. It is a change we can have faith in, for indeed, the Light has come and it is the source of our transformation. God is with us!

* * * * *

SILENT PRAYERS AND PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:

[NOTE: You are invited to type your prayer requests in the "Chat" or "Comment" features of your online device or to name those you pray for aloud in your own sacred space. PLEASE BE PRUDENT and do not share last names or specific, sensitive information on on-line platforms, as we can unknowingly increase an individual's vulnerability in our stated care].

Dear God, thank you for making your presence known to us in every moment. Throughout the week you have revealed your nearness through the voices of friend and stranger, in the touch of snow that has brushed our cheeks, in the beauty of snow-frosted trees glittering with winter sunshine and in the dawn of every morning. We hear you in our song, our laughter, our sobs and our sighs. May we trust in this place and for this time that you hear even our smallest, most silent prayers.

We give thanks for all of our church members who teach, greet, read scripture, deliver flowers, commence meetings, visit the sick and lead us in song today. As we gather by Zoom after worship for an informational meeting in preparation for our Annual meeting on February 28, we pray God that your presence will help us to discern our future mission and work, that all of our words and actions reflect the deep care we share for your world and one another and that we are guided not by angst or bottom lines, but by your Spirit which lives in and through us.

God, as we recall how our lives are transfigured through our faith and as we prepare ourselves to live out the coming season of Lent, we are reminded that we all journey on the edge and that we carry heavy burdens upon our hearts. We pray for the final relief of hunger, homelessness, poverty, sickness and hatred which bind so many of your beloved children. We pray for the victims of war and natural disasters, for all those who are met with powerful forces that are far greater than anyone should ever have to bear alone. We pray God for anyone here and in the world who walks through life in sickness, pain, addiction, anger, sadness or fear. Help them to reach out for help and to share with you. We pray too for: *(Pastor Char will read all prayers sent in during the week or collected in the Chat/Comment features of Zoom and Facebook).*

O God, may we remember all that you have blessed us with. We praise you and rejoice in the sound of your reassuring words. Throughout this week and always, let the words of our mouths, the prayers and thoughts of our hearts and the actions of our lives be as one; that we may live each day in harmony with you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

A MOMENT OF REMEMBERING AND GIVING THANKS

We have received so much this week through the love of God and the abundance of God's care. May the light of God and the love of Christ transfigure all the gifts we offer to the church and others, that they may bring healing, comfort, peace, joy and love to all. Amen.

DOXOLOGY: ***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God, for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ and Spirit, One. Amen.***

(Music is pre-recorded by Peter Asche with the Second Singers Choir and Jane Wilmot on Organ. We will remain muted to avoid audio feedback and lags. Please sing aloud at home or follow along as best as you are able. Remember, it's our spiritual intention that matters!).

Link: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zf9vXKaxxAb6dJhE3Z67dlc0oJK5rC3W/view?usp=sharing>

CLOSING HYMN

“This Little Light of Mine”

This Joy

We will remain muted to avoid audio feedback and lags. Please sing aloud at home or follow along as best as you are able. Remember, it's our spiritual intention that matters!).

Link: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UzKQnXbBZAzhF72rsA1ppR6dmYc6i1LC/view?usp=sharing>

This Little Light of Mine



2. This great joy I have, I'm gonna let it shine....
3. Ev- 'rywhere I go I'm gonna let it shine.....
4. All through the night I'm gonna let it shine.....
5. This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.....

BENEDICTION:

It is good to be together in Spirit and Love.

Now we scatter again, to share the good news: God is here with us!

Light from the Gospel has been revealed to us. We too are lights in the world!

It is an awesome responsibility to reflect God's glory and love.

We depart with confidence and joy, carrying true knowledge in our hearts to share.

VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR CHECK IN (ZOOM ONLY)

* * * * *

Today's Worship has been prepared, sent out, offered and led by:

- ▶ **Peter Asche**, Recording Support; Piano
- ▶ **Mary Berger**, Scripture Reader
- ▶ **Bill Bausch**, Communications & Technology Support; Snippets Meister
- ▶ **Rev. Char Corbett**, Pastor
- ▶ **Jim Corbett**, Videographer and Technical Support
- ▶ **Jane Wilmot**, Minister of Music, Organ and Piano
- ▶ **Second Singers**, members and friends of the Chancel Choir

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Have a question about Second Church or today's service? A concern or a joy to share? A prayer request? We're here to listen and respond! Contact our Pastor, Deacons or Pastoral Relations Committee:

- ▶ **Lonnie Anderson**, Deacon: lonnieba@gmail.com
- ▶ **Bill Bausch**, Pastoral Relations Committee: wbausch@gmail.com
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- ▶ **Judy Jones**, Deacon: judy.t.r.jones@gmail.com
- ▶ **David Lawrence**, Pastoral Relations Committee: lawrence@tidewater.net
- ▶ **Carl Nord**, Moderator: chnord@twc.com
- ▶ **Rev. Ann Roundy**, Pastoral Relations Committee: revaroundy@gmail.com

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### Passing the Peace – and A Little Humor – For the Week

Dear friend and church member, James O'Brien, sent this comic to Pastor Char this week. Let's hope that things haven't changed THIS MUCH when the time comes for us to re-open the sanctuary! That is, unless Pastor Char can sip coffee and wear her bathrobe instead of her clerical robe in the pulpit too. Then she's all in! ☐



Mrs. Jones got a little too used to watching online worship from home.

*\* Peace and Love be with you all! \**