

Bethlehem Star

"Connecting People to Jesus"

February 2020

Dear Members and Friends

Transfiguration Sunday (February 23) is the one Sunday in the church year when the story of Jesus going up a mountain with the inner circle of his disciples is told. Before the eyes of Peter, James and John, Jesus was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes were as white as light. In addition there appeared before the disciples, two other figures from the ancient past, Elijah and Moses.

It must have been an amazing experience. They were not sure how to react. First they reacted in fear. But Jesus comes and touches them. They look up and he is the same as he was before, no one was with him, and he bids them come down the mountain. Before we can truly understand the glory of God we need to understand his power over sin and death, which is what the resurrection is all about.

You see it is not an accident that the Church has chosen to make Transfiguration Sunday the transitional Sunday between Epiphany and Lent. We begin the Church Year with Advent, a season of repentance and anticipation of the coming Messiah. Christmas proclaims that a Savior has come, born in Bethlehem, born of a woman, born under the law that he might redeem those under the law.

The Epiphany Season follows Christmas and tells how Jesus the light of the World has come into the world to illuminate us. In this Season of Epiphany we learn about Jesus and his message of salvation. We learn that he is the fulfillment of the law of God. The Law given by Moses on Mt. Sinai had to be kept. The people of Israel demonstrated that they were unable to keep the commands of God. For salvation to come to the world the Law had to be fulfilled, and Jesus is the one who is able to do it.

On Ash Wednesday (February 26) we will enter into the season of Lent. Lent is a dark season. It is a season of suffering, of denial, of betrayal, and of death. In this season we examine the passion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, his innocent suffering and death on our behalf.

Transfiguration Sunday forms the bridge. It is the transitional Sunday between a season of light and illumination and a season of darkness and death. It is a reality check Sunday. Things were going so well, it seemed for the ministry of Jesus. He had been healing the sick, he had been casting out demons, he had changed

water into wine, he had fed five thousand people with 5 small barley loaves and two small fish. People had noticed, there was a great deal of interest in this Jesus of Nazareth.

Maybe that is why Jesus only took his trusted inner circle of disciples up on the mountain to see his glory. They would be the ones who would follow him all the way. They would see him suffer, they would see him mistreated by the authorities, they would see him die a criminal's death on a cross. They would have to understand that the way to glory with God is not a way paved with luxury and ease. They got a glimpse of his glory, but they would get a full dose of his agony. Being a Christian does not make you immune to suffering. Christians suffer just as much as anyone else. They get sick and die just like everyone else. Cut a Christian and he bleeds red blood, just like everyone else.

The message is that it is through the way of the cross that salvation came. Jesus agony and death was God's way of saving the world from the consequences of sin. Those who are called to follow Jesus are call to follow him on the way of the cross. The comfort that comes to Christians is that even in the midst of suffering, they can know that Jesus is with them. They can see the glory at the end of the way of suffering.

As Christians, even though we have suffering, disappointment, and loss we also have hope. The hope of Christianity is that through the suffering of Jesus we have been rescued from the fate of eternal death and hell.

The glory that the disciples saw, we see. Oh, we don't see it all the time, but there are glimpses. Perhaps, you have had a glimpse or two of the glory of Christ. An experience that confirmed your faith, a high point when you felt really close to Jesus, a time when you knew you were in his loving hands. These are not everyday occurrences. Most of the time we live rather normal and mundane lives. But every once in a while God shows us his love. It might be through another Christian, or through your parents, or through your spouse, when God shows you a glimpse of his unconditional love, grace, and mercy. Certainly we can see the cross. There God shows his love for mankind by punishing a sinless Jesus for the rest of the human race, and thereby setting us free from sins penalty.

Pastor Griesse

Singing for the Lord

Bethlehem's choir is now practicing after coffee hour on Sundays.

Choir practice will be geared to the choir members' abilities. Our new choir director, John Krueger, says, "All are welcome. This is a choir designed to encourage all to sing. You do not need to read music!" Come & sing with us!

Choir Schedule for February

February 2	How Firm A Foundation
February 16	Promised Land
February 23	A Faithful Shepherd is my Lord



LENTEN WORSHIP SCHEDULE

February 26 is Ash Wednesday!

Our midweek services will begin on Ash Wednesday and continue every Wednesday to April 1st.

Bethlehem service at 12:10pm

Peace's Soup & Devotions
6pm with soup and 6:45pm with Devotions.



*Come one come all!!
to the Valentine
Dinner on Feb. 14th*

*at the Hilton Garden Inn
6pm*

*Sign-up sheets are at both
entrances or call the church
office to let us know you are
coming.*



The LHM Mission: Bringing Christ to the Nations—and
the Nations to the Church

SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION WORKSHOPS

WHEN: FEBRUARY 22, 2020

10AM TO 2PM

**WHERE: MT. OLIVE
FELLOWSHIP HALL**

**WORKSHOPS & LUNCH ARE
FREE**

**RSVP BY FEB 20TH
509-833-9725**



Is one of the local missions we support monthly. In 2019, 427 young people visited Rod's House 7,230 times! Because of you, young people found solutions to their lack of housing, whether it was to reunite with family or to find their own place. Because of you, young people were engaged in school or graduated. Because of you, young people learned the skills to find and keep employment. Most importantly, you ensured they felt **respected, empowered, and connected** to this community.