

# twelvebaskets



## TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY A

A complete Sunday service ready to use  
for worship and inspire ideas in your church



## Order of Service

Call to worship

**Hymn:**

**20 STF – Be still, for the presence of the Lord OR**

**59 STF – Lord, the light of your love is shining**

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

**Hymn:**

**11 STF – Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! OR**

**83 STF – Praise, my soul, the King of heaven**

Readings: Exodus 24:12-18; Psalm 99; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9

**Hymn:**

**134 STF – Christ, whose glory fills the skies OR**

**53 STF – How shall I sing that majesty, which angels do admire?**

Reflections on the readings

**Hymn:**

**175 STF – Light of the world, you stepped into darkness OR**

**362 STF – Meekness and majesty, manhood and deity**

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

**Hymn:**

**394 STF – Spirit of God, unseen as the wind OR**

**261 STF – Transfigured Christ, none comprehends**

Blessing

## Call to worship

Let us be still, for a moment,  
Let us breathe deeply, and hear the Lord's grace reaching us.  
Let us be still, and open to the possibility of love breaking through.  
Let us be still, and prepare to worship you, O God.

Amen.<sup>1</sup>

## Hymn:

20 STF – Be still, for the presence of the Lord OR  
59 STF – Lord, the light of your love is shining

## Opening Prayers

*[Split the congregation into two groups for a call and response]*

### [Group 1]

Who is our God?

### [Group 2]

Our God is the almighty one!

### [Group 1]

Who is our God?

### [Group 2]

Our God made the heavens and the earth!

### [Group 1]

Who is our God?

### [Group 2]

Our God loves justice and righteousness!

### [Group 1]

Who is our God?

### [Group 2]

Our God brings fire upon mountains and divides seas!

### [Group 1]

Who is our God?

### [Group 2]

Our God sent Jesus to the cross and rose him from the dead, alleluia!

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<sup>1</sup> Call to worship written by Tim Baker

## [Together]

Praise be to our God! Praise be to the One who reigns, who forgives, who creates, who inspires, who loves. Let us praise God today and every day!  
Amen.<sup>2</sup>

## We say together the Lord's Prayer

## All Age Talk

One of my favourite mountain top moments in a movie is at the very beginning of the Sound of Music, there is a shot over mountains and forests and eventually we see Julia Andrews, playing Maria, running up the mountain and as she spins around, the camera cuts to an up-close shot of Julia beginning to sing ... (*with some encouragement the congregation may actually join*) 'The Hills are alive with the sounds of music', it is an iconic and amazing scene showing off the Bavarian mountains.

What's quite fascinating is the amount of time it took to get the right establishing shot from the camera in the helicopter capturing the landscape, and then timing it right to also get Julia coming up the hillside, and on top of that, to avoid Julia being blown down on camera by the jet engine from the helicopter – if you look carefully it cuts to a close up, grounded shot, very quickly.

Whether you've been up a real mountain or just seen The Sound of Music, or fill in a space for another mountain here; these mountain top moments can be amazing to look at, we can feel a real sense 'awe', and in the Bible it's no different, that often when people go up a mountain it is an easy way to show that they are going to be closer to God.

Whether Noah on Mount Ararat, Abraham on Mount Sinai or even Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, the transfiguration, or even the Mount of Olives – just like The Sound of Music it's a moment of awe and wonder – and a shortcut telling us God is going to be doing something special.

Amen.<sup>3</sup>

## Hymn:

11 STF – Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! OR  
83 STF – Praise, my soul, the King of heaven

**Readings:** Exodus 24:12-18; Psalm 99; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9

## Hymn:

134 STF – Christ, whose glory fills the skies OR  
53 STF – How shall I sing that majesty, which angels do admire?

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<sup>2</sup> Opening prayers written by Phoebe Parkin

<sup>3</sup> All Age Talk written by Mark Stennett

## Reflections on the readings

There are moments when the world gets thin – when light breaks in and we glimpse how things truly are. The transfiguration is one such moment. What do we do with that light when we come down the mountain?

Peter calls us eyewitnesses; Scripture calls us prophets. Justice flows from what we have seen; what we have experienced; what we say; and what we do. Today's texts show us that when God reveals their glory, we are called to respond by listening and then turning what we have heard and experienced into action for justice.

Peter, looking back to lived experience of the transfiguration, claims that the early disciples 'were eye-witnesses of God's majesty' (2 Peter 1.16). Truth-telling matters in a world of spin. Peter was living in a time where there was spin from all directions: the spin of the Roman empire, pointing to the dominant forces as the key to life; the spin of religious leaders, pointing to the way things have always been as a source of protection and hope; the spin of new disciples, pointing to stories of Jesus's miraculous actions – not to mention his resurrection – as the path to redemption.

Truth-telling matters in a world of spin. Peter doesn't try to spin his message. He simply says look, this is what we witnessed. This is what is going on. Pay attention. God's justice doesn't need exaggeration; it needs faithful observation and public naming. We don't need to buy into the false binaries of culture wars or the saviour complex that makes us the only solution to systemic injustice and trauma woven back through generation after generation.

If we claim we know all of the answers, have we really witnessed the light? If we claim we have all of the solutions, are we really working together as the body of Christ? Our advocacy must be credible, ethical, and rooted in hope. Our advocacy must be built on foundations of listening.

And building up those foundations takes time. In today's reading from Exodus, Moses is in the midst of a long and arduous journey, leading his people out of oppression. They have left Egypt and made the risky crossing over the Red Sea, seeking refuge from their captors, their enslavers. They are in the wilderness of Sinai – camping at the foot of a mountain. The future liberation is still far ahead – they have forty years of travel to come.

Martin Luther King Junior famously said that "We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice". Liberation isn't a quick win. Transformation takes time – systemic change is slow, and progress is rarely smooth. Before Moses carries the tablets with God's law of love down, he must give up some time. Justice demands some time. I wonder what was debated, witnessed to, advocated for, agreed, changed in those forty days and forty nights.

What might your justice calendar look like? What is the rhythm of your long wait for justice? Do you have time to pray for justice each week? Perhaps you have time to write to your MP, or to read about lived experiences of injustice. We can be arc-benders, if we work the long journey towards justice together, each doing the little that we can.

Back to Peter and that second mountain. There are six key moments in the transfiguration. The mountain climbing, the transfiguration, the tents, the voice, the reassurance, the journey back down.

Firstly, Peter, James and John climb a mountain with Jesus. Remember that long arc? It takes time and effort to discern the next steps God is asking us to take towards justice. Who might you climb a (metaphorical!) mountain with so that you can hear and understand their story and work with them for justice? I wonder if the mountains of today are the gaps between our stories, torn ever wider apart by the disagreements that rupture and divide us.

Secondly, Jesus is transfigured. Peter, James and John see a bright dazzling light, and the prophets Moses and Elijah are seen with him. This bringing together of the prophets who have journeyed before Jesus sets him in the context of a long line of justice seekers. Moses is the archetypal prophet, the one who God knew ‘face to face’ (Deut. 34.10). Elijah is also a major prophet – one who confronts injustice to call people back to faithfulness (1 Kings – 2 Kings). We cannot seek justice alone, or at one moment in history, it is something done together by a vast cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 12.1) each doing what we can in our generation.

Thirdly, Peter proposes setting up camp. He wants to stay. Perhaps we’ve all been there. Sometimes it’s a moment of worship that just feels so rich in the Holy Spirit that we don’t want the song to end. Sometimes it’s a conversation with – or talk by – someone who just seems to ‘get it’, someone we think might hold the solution to all of the problems society faces. Sometimes it’s a protest or movement that seems so close to God’s kin(g)dom that it becomes all consuming.

Fourthly, the voice. God’s voice interrupts Peter right in the middle of his plan. No camp. No staying. No passive waiting. Instead, the voice commands that we ‘listen’. Peter’s moment of wonder gives way to the justice which begins in deep listening. Listening to Jesus means listening to those on the margins. That listening unsettles us in our waiting for justice – it makes us move.

Fifthly, the reassurance. It can be scary when we really take time to listen. It can be confronting when God interrupts us just as we were settling down. We might not like what we hear. It might not feel like quite the right moment. Jesus says, “Get up and do not be afraid”, and then the disciples look up, they and see Jesus alone. Perhaps listening to the lived experiences of people who are different from us must be rooted in seeing them just as they are.

Finally, the journey back down. The disciples don’t get to stay in that mountain top experience. They are called on to witness to justice out in the world.

I wonder where you might be called to witness to justice.

- Write down three glimpses you’ve seen of God’s justice this week.
- Read or listen to a story from someone affected by injustice.
- Do one local justice action (welcome, cost-of-living support, repair café).
- Send one advocacy letter to an MP or councillor.
- Pray with a candle: “*Your word is a lamp to our feet.*”

Let’s not bottle the light – let’s become lantern-bearers.

### Reflection Questions

- Where have you seen God’s justice breaking through in your community this month?
- What makes waiting hardest for you in the work of justice?
- How can you build rhythms that help to make the wait for justice purposeful?

Amen.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Reflection written by Alex Clare-Young from the Joint Public Issues Team

To hear more about campaigns for justice and peace, sign up to the JPIT newsletter [here](#). To read about the topics explored on the [Public Issues Calendar, click here](#). To be part of a network of churches building good relationships with politicians, join the [Constituency Action Network](#).

**Hymn:**

175 STF – Light of the world, you stepped into darkness OR

362 STF – Meekness and majesty, manhood and deity

**Prayers of intercession**

**Prayer: Holding the Light Steady**

God of glory and cloud,  
You call us to the mountain and into the street.  
You show us light that cannot be dimmed.  
Teach us to live as eye-witnesses and prophets for justice.

**Shape us in the rhythms of justice—**

**May we act, pray, speak, and rest in You.**

When truth feels fragile and voices compete,  
Give us courage to name what is real.  
When waiting feels heavy and change feels slow,  
Give us patience to keep the lamp steady.

**Shape us in the rhythms of justice—**

**May we act, pray, speak, and rest in You.**

When the lantern shatters on the hard ground of our fear,  
Help us to pick it up and start again.  
When voices on the margins cry out,

**Shape us in the rhythms of justice—**

**May we act, pray, speak, and rest in You.**

Send us down the mountain with light in our hands,  
Until your justice shines in our hearts and in our streets.  
May it be so,

Amen.<sup>5</sup>

**We will now take up the offering.**

Gracious God, giver of gifts,  
We are thankful for all you have done for us  
Grateful for the gifts that we are surrounded with,  
Help us to use those gifts, including those given here today,  
To build your kingdom here on earth – and we'll have a little heaven down here,  
In Jesus' name

Amen.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Prayers of intercession written by Alex Clare-Young from the Joint Public Issues Team

<sup>6</sup> Additional prayers by Tim Baker

**Hymn:**

394 STF – Spirit of God, unseen as the wind OR  
261 STF – Transfigured Christ, none comprehends

**Blessing**

Go out, transformed,  
Go out, because you have seen the light,  
Go out and let the light shine from you, from your words, your actions, your thoughts,  
That all might be blessed by the Christ-light in you.

Amen.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Additional prayers by Tim Baker