

2021 02 14 Opening Prayer

Rev. Dr. Peter Storey: Feast Of The Transfiguration

Infinitely loving and patient God, we gather on this Transfiguration Sunday as always, grateful to meet with you and each other, hungry for the nourishment that comes only when hearts are lifted in worship and souls are opened to your Word of life.

We come seeking to be made different.

Today you remind us again who you are and who you want us to be, by drawing lines and connections we could not imagine without you ...

You marry mountain-top visions to crowds jostling and sweating in valleys far below;

You reveal the lines between your beloved son, transfigured by your presence and among the great ones of old – and a lost and tortured soul, tossed about by seizures and convulsions;

You link our glimpses of glory in times of intense worship, with those other moments when we fail to cast out the destructive, demonic spirits that strike us dumb when we should speak, and scream within us when we should be still;

Between your Son's promise that we will see the kin-dom come in power, and his frustrated cry that we are 'an unbelieving and perverse generation;'

Between his frightening question, 'how long shall I be with you?' and his promise to be with us always.

It is because you continue to draw these lines across the chasms of contrast between you and us, Lord, that we have hope - not in ourselves, but because in the Christ you have come among us, you are among us and in spite of - or maybe *because of* - our frailties and failures, you have chosen to dwell, not in the rarified air of some mountain fastness, but *with us* ... here in this valley we call the world.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for being 'God with us' – for marrying yourself to us for better and for worse, for richer and for poorer, in sickness and in health ...

In this time of deep vulnerability, when all our vaunted skills, our best laid plans, our sometimes cocky autonomy, our most precious relationships, our ambitions, our hopes - when all these things are laid low by an invisible intruder that we can neither touch nor see - humble us we pray, so we may revisit other invisible things that are much stronger, the things that matter most:

Caring and compassion, truthfulness and love, faithfulness and kindness, and yes, the shocking discovery that life is a much more fragile, delicate and fleeting thing than we thought, therefore to be lived with infinite care each day we are given.

That is why we are here today, why we come to you.

Lord, we believe. Please, please, help our unbelief.

Lord we have faith. Please, please help us where our faith falls short.

In your strong name we pray.

AMEN