Written Service Sunday 15th February 2026
A service of worship for use at home
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The Transfiguration

Nottingham North East Methodist Circuit
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Opening Prayers:

I bow before the Father, who made me.
I bow the son, who saved me.
I bow before the Spirit, who guides me.
In love and adoration,
I give my lips, I give my heart, I give my mind and I give my strength. Amen

Hymn: Singing the Faith: 76

Give me joy in my heart, keep me praising
give me joy in my heart I pray.
Give me joy in my heart, keep me praising
keep me praising till the break of day.
Sing hosanna! Sing hosanna!
Sing hosanna to the King of Kings!
Sing hosanna! Sing hosanna!
Sing hosanna to the King!

Give me peace in my heart, keep me loving
give me peace I heart I pray.
Give me peace in my heart, keep me loving
keep me loving till the break of day.
Sing hosanna! …

Give me love in my heart, keep me serving
give me love in my heart I pray.
Give me love in my heart, keep me serving
keep me serving till the break of day.
Sing hosanna! …

Prayers of Adoration and Praise:

Lord of all, creator and source of all life, you rule in strength and steadfast love over all the earth.
Your glory shines through the lives and traditions of all people.
Your love does not change:
The power and the glory are your forever.

The destiny of every nation is in your hands: the achievements of great empires and their leaders come to an end, but you Lord are worshipped in every age by every generation, in every land.
Your love does not change:
The power and the glory are yours forever.

In Christ's death and resurrection, you demonstrated the power of your kingdom to overcome evil. You move ahead of us, using forces and movements in the world, bringing reconciliation and healing. In the powerless and weak find strength and courage.
Your love does not change:
The power and the glory are yours forever.

We praise you for every sign of your power to save, the experience of 'the heart strangely warmed', for the change you have begun in us through your Spirit who leads us to repent and draws us closer together in community of Christ's body.
Your love does not change
The power and the glory are yours forever. Amen

Readings: Mathew 17:1-9
Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and the brothers James and John and led them up to a high Mountain where they were alone. As they looked on a change came over Jesus: His face was shining like the sun, and His clothes were a dazzling white. Then the three disciples saw Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus. So Peter spoke up and said to Jesus, "Lord, how good it is that we are here! If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."
While he was talking, a shining cloud came over them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my own dear Son, with whom I am pleased – listen to Him!"
When the disciples heard the voice, they were so terrified that they threw themselves face downwards on the ground. Jesus came up to them and touched them. "Get up," He said, "Don't be afraid!" So they looked up and saw no one here but Jesus.
As they came down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Don't tell anyone about this vision until you have seen the Son of Man has been raised from death."

2 Peter 1:16-21
We have not depended on made up stories in making known to you the mighty coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. With our own eyes we saw His greatness. We were there when he was given honour and glory by God the Father, when a voice came from the Supreme Glory, saying "This is my own dear Son, with whom I am pleased!" We ourselves heard this voice coming from heaven, when we were with Him on the holy mountain.
So we are even more confident of the message proclaimed by the prophets. You will do well to pay attention to it, because it is like a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the light of the morning star shines in your hearts. Above all else, however, remember that no one can explain by himself a prophecy in Scriptures, for no prophetic message ever came just from the will of man, but men were under the control of the Holy Spirit as they spoke the message that came from God.

Sermon Part One

This is one of the turning points in the ministry of Jesus. Peter had just declared that Jesus was the Messiah and now Peter, James and John were taken up the Mountain for the Transfiguration.

But in this reading from Matthew's Gospel we have God confirming that Jesus was indeed His son and the promised Messiah. However, we have this very telling sentence, "When they were fully awake, they saw His glory." The three disciples nearly missed the whole thing as they had fallen asleep! Well it was probably the heat of the day, and they had just walked up a mountain.

Now, I don't know about you, but I have never had the sort of experience that the three disciples had on that mountain top – nor have I seen God shining out of a burning bush. In fact I often complained to God that I have not had any of the spectacular experiences that I have heard other people speak about – but I have had those times when suddenly the ordinary things of life become special.

For example – A reading – a hymn – a place of great beauty – a rainbow – the word of a friend, through which I hear the voice of God – or even in the words of the preacher!
We **can** experience the presence of God or His word to us – if we are listening and attentive. But it is so easy to miss because we are distracted – our minds are asleep.
What causes our minds to be shut to what God has to say to us or what He has to reveal to us?

One of the most potent blocks to hearing or understanding God is our ***prejudice.*** So often we have a set idea about God and how He operates that our minds are closed to the Messiah and were horrified when Jesus revealed the kind of Messiah he was.

And Jesus was angry with them! This is not the 'Gentle Jesus meek and mild'. We need to be sure that our prejudice does not cause Him to be angry with us!
In Matthew 25 Jesus said that whatever we do for the hungry, the poor and the prisoner, we do for Him. How many of us fail to see the face of Jesus in the face of the poor and marginalised, the prisoner and the unemployed, or the refugee and asylum seeker because of our prejudice – because we have already decided that they don't deserve our help?
Prejudice is a potent barrier to us seeing the Glory of God.

Then there is ***mental lethargy.*** I wonder how many people there are in church who just won't make the effort to think through what they believe and why. How many people won't face their doubts but push these to the back of their mind and fail to examine them. Perhaps this is due to fear. If I face my doubts perhaps I will lose my faith – better not go there? We need to bring our doubts and fears to God – pray about them and **keep looking out for His answers**. You may be surprised how He chooses to answer you. But this takes effort and may last a long time – but if we battle through then we may get a glimpse of the glory of God – it is always worth the struggle. And how can God speak to us in the words of scripture if we never read them? It takes effort on our part. Peter and the others would not have seen the glory of Jesus if they had not struggled up the mountain in the heat of the day.

Then, allied to mental lethargy is ***love of ease.*** Having 'time out' to recharge our spiritual and Physical batteries is a good thing – if we have done enough to make our batteries run low. However, we can be mentally lazy when faced with disturbing or difficult thoughts. For example we don't want to be bothered to change. But when we do make the effort, we discover new ways of doing things. God is using us in new and fresh ways. Bringing life and vitality where there had dullness.
Love of ease can be a drug so the time comes when our minds are asleep and we miss all that God has to show us.

Hymn: Singing the Faith: 248

I heard the voice of Jesus:
"Come unto me and rest:
Lay down, O weary one lay down
my head upon breast."
I came to Jesus as I was,
weary and worn and sad,
I found in Him resting-place,
and He has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Behold I freely give
The living water; thirsty one,
stoop down and drink and live."
I came to Jesus, and I drank
of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
and now I live in Him.

I heard the voice of Jesus
'I am this dark world's Light;
Look unto me, your morn shall rise,
and all your days be bright.'
I looked to Jesus I found
in Him my star, my sun
And in that light of I'll walk
till travelling days are done.

Sermon Part Two:
This all sounds a bit gloomy and challenging. However, there are things in this life, designed to wake us up – like a dose of cold water in the face.

And the first of those is ***sorrow and pain.*** Edward Elgar the composer once said of a singer who was technically perfect but lacked fire "She will be great when something breaks her heart." There are many of you I suspect that can point to a time of terrible pain – emotional or physical – when, through the tears we can glimpse the presence of God – if we are open to Him and turn to Him. I certainly can. Pain and sorrow comes whether we like it or not – it is the way we use it that makes the difference.
In recent years I was trying to look after a friend who became psychotic – My brother had just died after a long illness and I was decidedly fragile. I was working full time and was tired and feeling battered. During that time I wondered how on earth I was going to manage to find the time or energy to plan preaching. Yet during that time, every time I had to plan a service, before I had even tried, a whole service came into my mind, hymns, illustration, everything. It has not happened since, but my need at the time made me open to hear God, in a very practical way. No great visions or spiritual experiences but the voice of God never the less.

Then there is ***love.*** The poet Robert Browning tells of two people who fell in love. "She looked at him and he looked at her – and suddenly life awoke." As God can speak to us and reveal Himself through times of pain, He is certainly there when we experience great love. I wonder how many people have said that they were most aware of the presence of God when they first held their child in their arms. Love certainly jolts the mind awake and open to God.

More than anything else, we are only awake to the glory, the presence or the voice of God if we have an ***expectation*** that He will communicate with us in some way. Do you believe that God loves and cares for you enough that He wants you to experience Him? He does care that much. Your experience will be different from other people. Some, like the three disciples, will see visions of His glory - some will more like the other nine disciples experience of Jesus – much more ordinary and mundane. Some might hear the voice of God directly like Moses – others will hear His voice in the words of scripture or the words of a preacher – some like Mother Theresa will see the face of Jesus in the face of the poor and marginalised or in the stranger we speak to in church. Or again some others will feel His presence in the quiet hours in the middle of a sleepless night. All these are valid experiences of God – if we are not too far asleep to hear or see.

Perhaps we should pray every day 'Lord keep me awake and always ready to hear your voice or see your face.'

Meditation:

I've never had a vision like that Lord.
I have never even had what people call 'a mountain top experience.'
Oh yes, I have felt the thrill of seeing the great wonders of the natural world,
Or been carried away by soaring music,
But I usually put that down to emotions or my hormones.
I would love to have visions and experiences like that,
But I am comforted by the knowledge that they are not for everyone – after all it was just three of them up the mountain. The other nine were down the mountain dealing with the ordinary things.
Not for them the visions of your glory.
I wonder, did they feel jealous Lord when they knew?
But they need not have been, for they encountered you in a different way.
They saw what you did.
They encountered you in the healing and the teaching -
The dying and the rising again to new life.
May I encounter you today in the high mountains – or even in the ordinary?
Or even in the valleys – as I have need – to serve your Kingdom.

Prayers of Confession:
For closed minds and prejudice, our unwillingness to change and our failure to love,
Father forgive us.
For thinking that we know best; for our unwillingness to listen and to learn from other people,
Father forgive us.
For the neglect of you; for our slackness in our prayers,
Father forgive us.
For our failure to witness for you, for trying to keep Jesus to ourselves and for our lack of concern for the World Church,
Father forgive us.

Hymn: Singing the Faith: 424

God forgave my sin in Jesus' name,
I've been born again in Jesus' name,
And in Jesus' name I came to you
to share the love as He told me to.

He said
'Freely, freely, you have received,
Freely, freely, give;
go in my name and because you believe,
Others will know that I live'

All the power is given in Jesus' name,
in earth and heaven in Jesus' name;
And in Jesus' name I come to you
to share His power as He told me to.
He said …

Prayers of Intercession:
God who made the stars of heaven, God who spread the earth,
Breath of every living being, fount of life and birth,
You have formed a servant people led us by your hand.
Light of nations, shine in us; brighten every land.

We pray for the world. Those places where there is conflict – Gaza, Israel, Ukraine, Russia, Yemen, Sudan, Syria, Iran, and Greenland etc. We pray for refugees. We pray for all those affected by climate change – especially we think of those affected by drought and those places where there is flooding

Living Christ, light of the nations, radiant as the sun, build us up, a growing body;
knit your church as one.
May our loving be a witness all the world may see?
Send your Spirit, bond of peace, source of unity.

We pray for the church both in this country and where there is persecution. We pray for the morning service tomorrow. For work among young people – all the stewards and all those on duty tomorrow)

Spirit God, equip your people, all with gifts to share;
messengers to speak the Gospel, ministers who care.
So may valleys rise to greatness, mountains be a plain.
Come surprise us; change our lives; heal each heart in pain.

We pray for all those we know who suffer, grieve or those in pain

Hymn: Sing the Faith: 518

Father, hear the prayer we offer:
not for ease that prayer will be;
But for strength that we may ever
live our lives courageously

Not forever in green pastures
do we ask our way to be;
But the steep and rugged pathway,
may may we tread rejoicingly?

Not forever by still waters
would we idly rest and stay:
But would strike living fountains
from the rocks along the way.

Be our strength in hours of weakness,
in our wanderings be our guide;
Through endeavour, failure, danger
Father be there at our side.

Final Prayer: said together

God of the poor, friend of the weak,
give us compassion we pray.
Melt our cold hearts: let tears fall like rain;
come change our love from a spark to a flame.