



Camrose United Church  
Sunday February 14, 2021  
Transfiguration Sunday  
Rev. Helen Reed, Diaconal Minister

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***Candle Lighting***

*We light the Christ Candle, aware of God around, among, & within us. In a moment of silence, we prepare ourselves to celebrate God's presence in our community.*

**Mark 9:2, 7**

Jesus took Peter, James, and John  
and led them up a high mountain.  
His appearance changed from the inside out,  
right before their eyes.  
Then a light-radiant cloud enveloped them,  
and from deep in the cloud, a voice:  
“This is my Son, marked by my love. Listen to him.”

***The Call of the Mountain...***

In our early faith stories,  
there was a lot of mountain climbing to meet God  
because people thought that  
the gods lived in the mountains.

Climbing a mountain is hard work.  
It can be dangerous. The air is thin.  
The space between the world and the sky  
is smaller, reachable, real.  
People's lives can be changed by mountain climbing...  
Some never make it back down the mountain,  
Some come down  
and don't see the world the same way again  
Some return to the mountain  
to re-claim the experience of awe.  
Once you've experienced that Thin Place...  
life is never the same.

## ***Coming in to worship***

We gather our hearts together,  
creating a time and space for faith  
hoping that this will be  
a thin place where we can meet God.

Let us open our senses to know God's nearness  
in the stories of faith we tell,  
in the lives of the people we meet,  
in the words we use to speak.

Let us know God always with us:  
within our seeing,  
close enough for our hearing,  
and present in our living.

Let us move through this time of worship –  
meeting, looking, listening, preparing,

## ***Hymn: ♪ MV#44 Shadow and Substance***

### ***Mark 9:2-9 Common English Bible***

#### *Jesus transformed*

2 Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John,  
and brought them to the top of a very high mountain  
where they were alone.

He was transformed in front of them,  
and his clothes were amazingly bright,  
brighter than if they had been bleached white.

4 Elijah and Moses appeared and were talking with Jesus.

5 Peter reacted to all of this by saying to Jesus,  
“Rabbi, it’s good that we’re here.

Let’s make three shrines—  
one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

6 He said this because he didn’t know how to respond,  
for the three of them were terrified.

- 7 Then a cloud overshadowed them,  
and a voice spoke from the cloud,  
“This is my Son, whom I dearly love. Listen to him!”
- 8 Suddenly, looking around,  
they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.
- 9 As they were coming down the mountain,  
he ordered them not to tell anyone  
what they had seen until after  
the Human One had risen from the dead.

***Wondering: Mountain Top Moments ...the thin places of life.***

I wonder...

If there are places that life has taken us to  
that transformed or changed us in ways  
we would never have imagined possible?

I wonder if we have felt as overwhelmed as Peter was ...  
have we looked back at our reactions and thought  
“What was I thinking?”

I wonder what your thin place has been  
when God changed you?

***Hymn: ♪ Come to the mountain***

Come to the mountain

Come to the mountain

Come to the mountain and be transformed.

Changed by the light of God  
Changed by the love of God  
Changed by the power of God  
On the mountain top

***Prayer for Awareness and God's grace.***

Holy One,

You can transform the everyday routine.

**You can transform the ordinary with fresh insights  
and new ways of looking at what we know.**

**But we are not very good at being open for  
transformation.**

We know that transformation is in the air...

**We know that what is coming will change us**

But, like the disciples who didn't understand,  
we, too, are confused by what is before us.

**We, too, speak words that don't help  
to cover our own helplessness.**

**Forgive us God.**

Open our hearts to the possibilities you lay before us.

Help us acknowledge our flaws

**Help us to be confident in sharing what we have,  
through our voices, our hearts**

**to bring your presence to the world.**

**Let us find the courage to transform your world  
as you guide us and light us with your love.**

***Words of Assurance:***

God is the One who will take us on great adventures.

God offers us the light of love

to light our way and teach us new visions

When we look to God and listen for God's words,

we know that we are loved and blessed

at each moment of our journey together.

**God is with us. We are not alone.**

**Thanks be to God.**

**Scripture Reading:**

**2 Corinthians 4:3-6** The Message (MSG)

3-4 If our Message is obscure to anyone,  
it's not because we're holding back in any way.  
No, it's because these other people  
are looking or going the wrong way  
and refuse to give it serious attention.

All they have eyes for is the fashionable god of darkness.  
They think he can give them what they want,  
and that they won't have to bother believing  
a Truth they can't see.  
They're stone-blind to  
the dayspring brightness of the Message  
that shines with Christ,  
who gives us the best picture of God we'll ever get.

5-6 Remember, our Message is not about ourselves;  
we're proclaiming Jesus Christ, the Master.  
All we are is messengers,  
errand runners from Jesus for you.  
It started when God said, "Light up the darkness!"  
and our lives filled up with light  
as we saw and understood God in the face of Christ,  
all bright and beautiful.

Scripture is our song for the journey,  
the living word passed on from generation to generation  
to guide and inspire.

**God calls us to be doers of the word  
and not hearers only.**

***Reflection: Meeting God in the Thin Places. Then what?***

What was he thinking? What was Peter thinking when he experienced something so far out of his reality that it was incomprehensible to him? I wonder if he was just so bedazzled and bewildered that he felt as though he needed to do something... anything... to hold onto the moment so that he could take time to learn from it.

There are many moments in life that appear to us quickly – moving on before we have truly had a change to cherish and hold them. There are also moments that linger that we would much prefer to push on their way.

This moment that Jesus shared with the disciples, a moment where he found himself speaking to, and remembering lessons from, the faith elders of the past, a moment when God's voice clearly spoke love and support is simply a moment. There was no time to consider, just time to accept. There was no complicated message – just a simple one of 'follow the lessons.'

In this thin moment of time, the presence of God upset everything, explained everything, confused everything. The disciples were told to consider all that they had experienced and not to share it yet. They had some learning to do.

They tried to hold onto the moment but you can't stay in what was if you want to grow and move forward. In their story we see the power and light of God, shining through the faith filled Christ and we know that God will continue to move them forward on a hard road of faith until they finally figure out what they are supposed to do. In that moment, God's thin place is found in letting go of the old and moving toward the new.

In the story from 2 Corinthians there is learning about what we must do if we are to open ourselves up to another Thin experience.

We are told that it is very easy to slip into the ways of darkness... not the warm, surrounding darkness of peace and rest... but the darkness that makes us popular: the darkness that makes it easy to judge others, to hurt others, to push others aside, the darkness that smothers life and light.

Don't forget, we are told, this isn't about us. This is about putting God first, about sharing the light (not holding it for ourselves) In this story, God's thin place is found in sharing with others, honouring God's words and God's people.

In both of these stories today, we are asked to be open to what God offers us, to hear the lessons of love we are to live, to take our time to learn them, but also to be aware that we never want to get to the place when we look back and say "What was I thinking?"

It's hard to see the thin places when it's easier to judge and take sides. It's hard to find the Thin Places when we're busy trying to justify our rightness, to stubbornly hold on to what we used to be and we know it's not who we should be.

In our world today, we are weary of being asked to hold back, to hold on. We are fighting the gods of power, or persecution, of selfishness, of violence grown by fear. It is hard to find a moment to hold onto when people around us don't want to hear messages of caring for others, they just want to get going with living as they used to.

So how do we do it?

How do we find that place where God touches us and we touch God?

We shine. We show the light of God's love into the world.

We teach that the colour of our skin doesn't make us better or worse than the person next to us. We speak God's love.

We shout God's message of care, of justice for all. We use our voice to say... it's not about "me" ... it's about "all of us."

We listen to someone else's story and try to put ourselves in their place. We feel their sorrow, we hear their anger and then we ask: How can we support you? How can we do better together?

We ask ourselves which god are our words serving?  
The gods of darkness, of hatred, of fear?  
Or the God of love, kindness and compassion.

Let our reaction to this moment that we are living in be one of learning, of seeing and hearing possibilities to move forward with.

Let us be the ones who are so secure in our own Thin Place, our connectedness with God, that we offer sanctuary and support to all others who search for that in a way that brings them closer to The Holy.

May our learning from this moment bring us to a thin place, a closeness with God that will be an experience that will transform us and make us love as God's light in an imperfect world.

When we speak, may we do so wisely. May we speak words that remind us of the power of God with us in all times and places. When we speak, may our words recognize the good around us. When we speak, may we be the light in someone else's world that brings them to a Thin place with God.

***☪ Hymn: ♪ MV#49 When We Seek Language***

### ***Offering Invitation***

We are called to be  
God's agents of transformation in the world.  
What is it that we can offer to create spaces for God's  
church to grow to where it is needed most?  
We respond to God's challenge by giving our best,  
stretching our limits as we offer  
our hearts, our hands, and our treasure  
to transform God's world.

***Hymn: ♪ VU#102 Jesus on the Mountain Top (Choir)***

### ***Prayer of Dedication***

You bless us, O God,  
by inviting us to mountain top experiences  
that change how we see the world.

**We respond by bringing our best efforts and ourselves.**

**May our gathered gifts offer**

**transformation to a world in need.**

**May our lives be your light of love in the world.**

### ***Prayers of God's People for God's People***

Holy One,

We are grateful for those thin moments in time  
when our spirit and yours are connected.

You wait patiently for us to  
notice your presence in our daily lives  
and when we do your love sighs in us.

We pray for the brave ones in the world

For those who have the courage  
to shout for freedom, for justice.

**For those who give all they have  
for the love of others.**

For those who refuse to give up  
on encouraging changes  
to structures that no longer offer  
welcome and safety to those who need it.

We pray for the weak  
For those whose spirits are torn,  
**For those whose health weighs them down,**  
For those who live in violence  
with no visible way out,

We pray for the grieving  
For those whose loved ones are torn from them,  
**For those whose loved ones are quietly gathered to you.**  
For those who struggle with broken hearts and sore souls.  
**May they find comfort and strength in your presence.**

We pray for ourselves.  
**For strength of faith,**  
**For clear minds and hearts,**  
**For openness to possibilities,**  
**For a Community of Faith willing to be**  
**all that you would have us be. Amen.**

*Hymn: ♪ “Transform us” Sylvia Dunstan*

### ***Blessing/Sending Forth***

God is beside us every day,  
and calls us to be the Church in a world that needs  
the love of God,  
the guidance of Jesus  
and the Strength of the spirit.  
Hear God’s voice around you, within you, among us.  
**We are God’s blessed people. Thanks be to God**

### ***Changing the Christ Candle:***

The light of Christ, shining into all the corners of the earth,  
showing us where we are and where we are meant to be.  
The Spirit of God. Breathe it in...and know that God is with  
us wherever we go.

**♫ Sending Song: ♪ VU#104 We Have Come At Christ’s  
Own Bidding.**

## Inspired by:

Seasons of the Spirit™ SeasonsFUSION Advent • Christmas • Epiphany 2020–  
2021 & 2015  
Gathering, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2020-2021  
Prayers to Share: David Sparks 2002



Your church continues to be a presence in the community, lending support to get us all through these challenging times together.

There are those who offer words of care in cards and in phone calls.

Those who offer prayer and compassion to others.

Those who continue to offer financial support to enable the church to be an active participant in world connections and healing.

With all of these things, God's world is richer, bolder, more loving.

Financial support may be offered

### 1. By Mail.

Camrose United Church, 4829-50 Street, Camrose T4V 1P6  
Oyen UC, Cereal UC Box 392, Oyen T0J 2J0

### 2. By PAR

Sign up with your church office to have your offerings automatically come to the church from your bank account each month.

### 3. By E-transfer

E-mail your donation through your on-line bank account.

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4. Deliver in person at the church.  
Camrose United Church – mail slot in South Door.  
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TSN – Top Sacred Newsletter –  
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