



Last Sunday after the Epiphany

Holy Eucharist D

19 February 2023

The Episcopal Church of the
Good Shepherd in Athens, Ohio

Seeking to know and serve Christ
in loving service to the campus, the
community, and the world.

Today's printed [Order of Worship](#)

Lessons

Lessons for the Last Sunday after the Epiphany

Old Testament – Exodus 24: 12-18

Psalm – 2 (Sung)

New Testament – 2 Peter 1: 16-21

Gospel – Matthew 17: 1-9



<https://www.lectionarypage.net>

The Collect

O GOD, who before the passion of your only begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant to us that we, beholding by faith the light of his countenance, may be strengthened to bear our cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Gospel



Matthew 17:1-9

SIX DAYS LATER, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. Then Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, “This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!” When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Get up and do not be afraid.” And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, “Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

Gospel Engagement Questions:

What stands out to you in today's Gospel?
What would you like to learn more about?

The Sermon

Transfiguring Compassion

Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina, the Rt. Rev. Porter Taylor, recalled a wedding he attended. He wasn't the officiant and was seated with the congregation of the dearly beloved who had gathered to witness and celebrate the couple. He writes he was distracted because the

person he was sitting next to was taking pictures during the ceremony and kept looking at the pictures they had just taken, seemingly impressed with their own amateur photography skills. They were constantly showing those pictures to other guests seated around them. This person was so focused on their pictures, they missed the significance of the event. Even though they were there in person, they were not in the moment.

We can easily see the similarities between the person obsessed with their pictures at a wedding and Peter in today's Gospel. When witnessing a profound moment in Jesus' life, Peter seems guilty of wanting to capture and preserve that moment for as long as possible instead of being fully present and letting it reveal deeper truths about Jesus.

I don't want to be too hard on Peter. After all, I am sure he was not expecting anything like what happened: to see Jesus so close to God in prayer he was physically changed. It must have been overwhelming. No one would know the correct etiquette in that situation. It is a normal response to try and pause such an event, if only to attempt to create more time to try and figure it out. But that is not something any of us can actually do. Sometimes all we can do is hang on as best we can, try to pay attention, and let the moment happen.

The moment of transfiguration is an especially significant one in the Gospels. Three of the four Gospel writers record this event, with very little variation, which has led Biblical scholars to conclude it did happen. It is historical, not theoretical, or allegorical. And while it didn't last long, Jesus' transfiguration did reveal a lot.

To unpack it all, we need to step back a bit and note when the transfiguration occurred in Matthew's Gospel, which is much later than what we have been hearing the last few Sundays. We are no longer in the context of Jesus giving his Sermon on the Mount, although Jesus is on a mountain. Now there are only three disciples with him, not a large crowd. A lot has happened since the delivery of the Sermon on the Mount, and we have moved from the first part of Matthew's Gospel to the beginning of the end of it. At this point in the Gospel, the disciples had heard most of the stories and parables Jesus told, they had witnessed his miracles of healing and feeding. They had traveled with him, seen him walk on water and make raging storms suddenly disappear. Just before Jesus took the three disciples up the mountain, he asked them who they thought he was and Peter had given the right answer: the Messiah, the Son of God. But when Jesus told his disciples that means enduring suffering and death then rising to new life, Peter rebuked him. Which might be why Jesus invited him to join him on the mountain for prayer.

In this part of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus was preparing for what would lead to his arrest, trial, crucifixion, death, and resurrection. Because that is what it means to be God's Son, and that is what the transfiguration reveals. The transfiguration is in one moment all of who Jesus is, what has happened, what is happening, and what will happen.

One of the first things we notice about the Transfiguration is Jesus is flanked by Moses, the giver of the law who led the people of God into liberation and Elijah, the prophet who repeatedly called God's people to return to a right relationship with God. Their presence can be interpreted as Jesus fulfilling the law and the prophecies. The location of where they are standing, one on each side of Jesus, is also a prediction of the crucifixion, where Jesus will be flanked by two criminals. The fulfillment of the law and prophets is somehow part of the crucifixion. He will follow them, even when people will punish, torture, and kill him for it.

Another significant part of the transfiguration is Jesus was literally glowing. His clothes suddenly seemed to be made of light, not just sunlight or candlelight or neon lights, but a radiance. Many interpret this as evidence of Jesus' divinity, and perhaps this radiance is also a foreshadowing his resurrection, the love and life that defeats death and is so wonderful, so good, so powerful it cannot be contained, it shines out of Jesus like sunshine.

Then there was the cloud and the voice from heaven, bringing us back to the beginning and Jesus' baptism, suggesting this why Jesus came to us. To incarnate the love of God that will fulfill the law and prophets, even when that means suffering pain and death, and in so doing defeat the power of death and rise, bringing new life to the world.

It's all there in that one moment. It's a lot. No wonder Peter and the other disciples couldn't take it all in. No wonder they were so afraid their physical strength failed them, and they fell to the ground.

And then it was over. Like so many significant moments in life it didn't last long. Then Jesus was there. No longer visibly radiating light, but perhaps no different than he had been before.

One of my favorite parts of the transfiguration is when Jesus reached down to his disciples, gently touched them, and told them not to be afraid. Maybe he realized it was too much too soon for them. Maybe he learned they were not ready to see him in all his glory. Whatever Jesus realized, I like how after he challenged them, he comforted them by reminding them he was still there with them. We might all do well to remember any time we share something challenging, we have an opportunity to be like Jesus and temper it with compassion and comfort.

Speaking of challenging, the transfiguration also serves the purpose of signaling a transition in the Gospel from the ministry of Jesus to his crucifixion, death, and resurrection. That is why every Sunday before the start of the season of Lent, a time the Church sets aside to prepare for Easter, we remember the Transfiguration. Lent can be challenging for those who do not like to focus on our need for forgiveness. There is always that temptation to ignore such things and stay in the false security of the nostalgia of a past we create for our own comfort. But to do so is like focusing on the picture you took instead of letting yourself be present to the moment at hand. It might feel

good, but you could miss the holy.

Perhaps the significance of the transfiguration for us today as we approach Ash Wednesday and Lent is that when God gives us difficult challenges, God also gives us comfort. That comfort might be in the hug of a friend, a kind word, a bit of beauty, whatever reminds us to not be afraid. There could be any number of ways God's compassion manifests alongside challenges that we can notice when we stay in the moment, which is where Jesus is, in that moment with us.

A sermon by The Rev. Deborah Woolsey, , 19 February 2023, at The Church of the Good Shepherd, Athens, Ohio.

Sermon Engagement Question:

What is one thing you can do to be more compassionate?

Please include in your prayers

IN OUR WORLD, we pray for Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury, and for Michael, our Presiding Bishop; we pray for peace with justice throughout the Middle East. We pray for all families and law enforcement affected by gun violence. We pray for the victims of the coronavirus. We pray for all people affected by natural and environmental disasters. We pray for the people who are suffering from war, especially the people of Ukraine, and we pray for all asylum seekers, immigrants and refugees. We pray for Joe our President, Kamala our Vice-President, Mike, our Governor, the Supreme Court and the members of Congress.

IN OUR DIOCESE, we pray for our Provisional Bishop Wayne, the search process for a new bishop, and for Kenneth, Nedi, and Wendell our assisting bishops.

IN OUR PARISH, we pray for Good Shepherd's continued growth, for our Rector Rev. Deborah Woolsey, for our Associate Priests, Rev. Leslie Flemming, and Rev. David McCoy, for our ministry to students, the university, and the community.

THOSE WHOM OUR PRAYERS ARE REQUESTED: Al S., Bud and

Carol, Chris L., Connie D., Gloria R., Jean R., Lia, Miriam, Sharon, R.C., Ann Carswell, Zelma Coleman, Lee Kembell-Cook, Richard DeNune, Roy DePue, Norm Fox, Lindsey and Regina Golden, Debbie Hunsberger, Bob and Nancy Jackson, John Jefferson, Peter Kachenko and family, Ann Lloyd, Christine McGinn, Jeff Maiden, Julie Nehls, Betty Oltorf, Donald Oney, Sandy Oney, Dan and Nancy Reedy, Virginia Richards, Flo and Jack Roach, Annette Secoy, Dale Showman, Michael Vaughn, Mary-Anna Welch, and we pray for all who care for them. **

BIRTHDAY: Jeffrey Ugim-Adie (2/23), Jane Forest Redfern (2/25)

FOR THE DECEASED: Charlotte Booth

** Full names are normally not published online. However for the Sunday 10:30 service we will publish full names unless requested otherwise. If you have a name to be added to the prayer list, Lynn Graham maintains this information. Lynn may be reached at 740-593-5098 or grahammowery@aol.com.

At-Home Worship

Christ Church Cathedral Cincinnati live streams its services Sundays at 10 a.m. These are saved and can be watched anytime later.

<https://cincinnati.cathedral.com/ccj/online/>

Washington D C -- there's much to explore at the the National Cathedral's online portal. <https://cathedral.org/worship/>

Coming up on the Calendar

Tuesday, February 21, 5:30 p.m. - - Pancake Supper

Wednesday, February 22, 11:30 p.m. - - Ashes to Go

Wednesday, February 22, 5:30 p.m. - - Service from Book of Common Prayer

Sunday, February 26, 9:15 a.m. - - Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, February 26, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

Coffee Hour Schedule

Feb. 26 Anne Walker

Taken Dates for Altar Flowers

During Lent there are no flowers and for Easter we will have an announcement for lilies.

[To Altar Flower Procedure](#)

Notes & Announcements (additional items in the Friday Bulletin)

Special Announcement from the Vestry

In January the Vestry invited the Rev. Michael Ralph, Canon Missioner to the Southeastern Region of the Diocese to attend their meeting so they could listen to a proposal he had that might help ease some of the parish's financial strain.

The proposal is to share our Rector with another parish who would financially compensate Church of the Good Shepherd for a more consistent clergy presence provided by our Rector. **This arrangement would NOT interfere with the Sunday and Holy Day church services at Church of the Good Shepherd.**

The Vestry met again with Fr. Michael at February's Vestry meeting to share concerns and ask questions. After that meeting, the Vestry feels the next step in considering this proposal is to invite the parish to meet with the Vestry and weigh in on idea with your thoughts.

You are invited to meet with the Vestry and Mother Deborah on **Sunday, March 19 after the Sunday service**. For those who cannot attend in person, there will be the option to attend via Zoom.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact any Vestry member: Geoff Buckley, David Burton, Dana Carlson, Ty Carr, Malin Irwin, Norm Fox. Gregory Proctor, or the Wardens Alex Buckley and Deb Hillard.



"Steve Steward" Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Mark your calendars for **Tuesday, February 21**. That's the day the great tradition of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday returns to Good Shepherd!!!

Since we're returning in a smaller version of former years, we'll only serve from 5:30-6:30. And our offerings will be a little different. We'll provide regular pancakes, gluten-free pancakes and coffee.

We ask YOU to volunteer to bring butter, syrup, and juice.

We also need volunteers to help set up (beginning at 5), to cook, to serve and to help clean up.

Sign-up sheets are available in the Narthex and in Hobson.

Ash Wednesday February 22, 2023

Ashes to Go 11:30 – 12:30

Mother Deborah will be distributing ashes on the front porch of the church.

Service from the Book of Common Prayer 5:30 p.m.

Please join us as you are able for this lovely liturgy to begin the season of Lent.



Something to Look Forward To

A March Lenten Program - - "Practicing Compassion"

Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. (Nehls Hall downstairs)

[TO MORE DETAILS](#) Please consider joining us.

For Bishop Transition News and Updates

[-- Follow this link --](#)

If you want to help the folks who have been negatively impacted by climate disaster and war anywhere in the world (including Ukraine) please consider contributing to [Episcopal Relief and Development \(ERD\)](#) which is the official ministry of the Episcopal Church.



Are we supposed to be here?



Contacts, Information

Quick Links

[Parish website](#)

[Sermons](#)

[Parish calendar](#)

[Staff](#)

[Campus Interest](#)

[E-News Guidelines
and Back Issues](#)

[Diocese Southern Ohio](#)

[Bishop Transition](#)

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[Episcopal News Service](#)

[Episcopal Journal & Café](#)

Pandemic Notes:

[Link to the DSO guidelines
for in-person worship](#)

In light of local conditions we request all persons wear masks inside the church building **regardless** of vaccination status.

Office Hours: 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Masks are required.

The **Church Building** is not open for public meetings and gatherings but during office hours the thrift shop and chapel are available for individuals. Masks are required.

CrossRoads Café is temporarily closed.

Contact Information

For pastoral needs, please contact The Rev. Deborah Woolsey at 937-689-8895 (cell) or 740-593-6877 (church), or by e-mail at revdebwoolsey@gmail.com.

To find out more about **Good Shepherd** and other matters,

[DONATE to Good Shepherd](#)

The above takes you to the Parish page where you can find instructions or donate on-line via PayPal, If you have a preference, please indicate on the the

please contact Alex Buckley,
Senior Warden, at 740-593-
5513 or by e-mail at
macbuck@yahoo.com.

For maintenance matters,
please leave a note at the office
or contact Dana Carlson,
Junior Warden, at 740-664-
2022 or by e-mail at
carlsondana@hotmail.com.

For emergencies, please call
The Rev. Deborah Woolsey at
937-689-8895.

NON-emergency messages
can be left on the church's
answering machine (740-593-
6877).

The parish office
administrator is Barbara
Martin (740-593-6877) or
barbara@chogs.org.

The Episcopal Church of the
Good Shepherd, 64 University
Terrace, Athens OH 45701

740-593-6877
chogs@chogs.org
www.chogs.org

"Add special
instructions to the
seller" section the
purpose of the
donation
-- e.g. organ fund,
plate collection, etc.

Check out the
Church's
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[45701](#)

Office Hours:
Masks are required.

10:00 am - 2:00 pm
Monday - Thursday
740-593-6877
chogs@chogs.org

Blessings !

Church of the Good Shepherd | 64 University Terrace, Athens, OH 45701

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