

# IMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Organist: Karen Cain

Pastor: Rev. Dana Schindler

February 27, 2022

Transfiguration

“Extending God’s love with the work of our hands and hearts...”

## GATHERING MUSIC

### WELCOME

We welcome you to worship at Immanuel United Church of Christ in Hamel, IL, where our mission is “Extending God’s love with the work of our hands and hearts...” We are pleased that you are here to worship with us today! No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.

Please leave a comment to let us know you are here. Also note any joys and concerns you may have and feel free to greet each other in Christian love.

For worship today you will need your worship guide.

### PRELUDE

### POINT TO PONDER

“Change is the law of life, and those who look only to the past and present are certain to miss the future” -*John F. Kennedy*

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Let the radiance of Christ be evident among us:

**All: in our songs and our words;**

One: in our deepest thoughts and desires;

**All: in the youthful and the experienced, the exhausted and the energetic;**

One: in the hungry and the scared.

**All: We are here together. We join our voices and our hearts in praise.<sup>1</sup>**

### \*HYMN

“There’s Something About That Name”

# 115 Chalice (x2)

**Jesus, Jesus, Jesus; there’s just something about that name.**

**Master, Savior, Jesus, like the fragrance after the rain;**

**Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, let all Heaven and earth proclaim**

**Kings and kingdoms will all pass away,**

**But there’s something about that name.**

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Though we want to see God's holy radiance, we hide in the mist of our own desires, unable to perceive the presence of God's grace. While we want a world of justice and peace, we walk in clouds of selfishness, unable to share God's loving-kindness. Though we want to follow Jesus up the mountain, we cower in fear, unable to bear the light of God. Forgive us and help us to follow and do your will. Amen.

## **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

In the blazing light of God's grace, Jesus touches us to say, "Get up and do not be afraid." In the name of Christ, all is forgiven. Amen.<sup>1</sup>

## **FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART**

Today is Transfiguration Sunday. Transfigure means to change. If you saw the movie Shrek, you might remember the princess Fiona who was under a spell in which she was a princess by day and an ogre by night. Love's first kiss was to allow her to take "love's true form". She very much expected to end up a beautiful princess married to her prince charming. But the prince who came for her (Lord Farquar) was far from charming and the ogre Shrek, who actually rescued her mainly to force Lord Farquar to give him back his swamp home, was loving and kind. At her forced wedding to Lord Farquar just before the kiss, Shrek appears to claim her for himself. The sun sets during the confrontation turning her into an ogre who Lord Farquar finds hideous. After a tussle in which a dragon ate Lord Farquar, Shrek proclaims his love for Fiona. With their kiss she rises into the air with all sorts of lighting effects. When she comes back, she is an ogre. At first she is dismayed, but Shrek assures her that she is beautiful to him and is indeed in "love's true form." They head off to happy a life in the swamp.

Our Gospel story today talks about Jesus changing and it was marked by his clothes turning a dazzling white. And as this happened, the disciples who were with him heard God say, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!"

When we listen to Jesus and do what Jesus tells us, we change too. Our clothes don't turn dazzling white and it doesn't scare our friends, but we change on the inside. We are nice to people and help people because those are some of the things we do when we love each other. God told the disciples to listen to Jesus and God tells us to listen to Jesus and do what Jesus tells us to do. So, let's work on that together. OK?

## **PRAYER:**

Loving God remind us to listen to Jesus and to always love other people just like he did. Help us to change our hearts to be more like him. Amen.

**HYMN****“Fairest Lord Jesus”****# 97 Chalice (383 TH)**

**Fairest Lord Jesus,  
ruler of all nature,  
O thou of God and man the Son,  
Thee will I cherish,  
Thee will I honor,  
thou, my soul's glory, joy, and crown.**

**Fair are the meadows,  
fairer still the woodlands,  
robed in the blooming garb of spring:  
Jesus is fairer,  
Jesus is purer  
who makes the woeful heart to sing.**

**Fair is the sunshine,  
fairer still the moonlight,  
and all the twinkling starry host:  
Jesus shines brighter,  
Jesus shines purer  
than all the angels heaven can boast.**

**Beautiful Savior!  
Lord of all the nations!  
Son of God and Son of Man!  
Glory and honor,  
praise, adoration,  
now and forevermore be thine.**

**SCRIPTURE READING****Luke 9:28-36**

*Our scripture lesson takes place after the commission of the disciples to heal and preach the good news, the feeding of the 5 thousand and Peter’s proclamation that Jesus is the Christ. Hear the word of the Lord from Luke 9:28-36 (37- 43):*

Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. Just as they were leaving him,

Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" — not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

## **SERMON**

### **"Listen Up!"**

*Rev. Dana Schindler*

Mountain top experiences are exciting! They make us "stand up and pay attention," they are out of the ordinary.

Our scripture from Luke describes such a mountain top experience. As I read this passage, I tried to imagine what it must have been like to have witnessed such an event. Peter, James, and John, good Jewish men all, went up to the mountain with Jesus to pray. They were present to see Jesus, Moses and Elijah meet. God was showing them that Jesus was the continuation of their faith. God spoke, telling them of Jesus' divinity and that they should listen to him. This was certainly more than the men had bargained for. Peter, like many of us, tried to talk it out, to try to make sense out of the experience. Recalling the tradition of the Jewish feast of Tabernacles, Peter offered to build booths for each of them, but God rebuked them, stating that they should listen to Jesus. But he, as well as James and John, almost missed the whole point of the experience. They had already heard but not listened to Jesus' proclamation that he would be rejected, killed and raised from the dead on the third day. They did not listen to hear the meaning of the conversation between Jesus, Moses and Elijah with its veiled terms of departure and fulfillment. They missed that this conversation was evidence that the Christ had come in fulfillment of Israel's laws and prophecies.

The transfiguration of Jesus offers a glimpse of what is possible, not only for Him, but for all of humanity as well. One would expect that after such an awe-inspiring event, the three disciples would have told as many others as possible about it, but they did not. Because of their silence, the public healing of the boy with an unclean spirit in the verses just after the story of the transfiguration is heightened. When they came down from the mountain, they found a father and a child gasping for life. Even though they had been given the power to heal the child in the name of Jesus, they did nothing. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. Then the father and son found transfiguration. The transfigured Jesus is changed in the way He is seen. He acts in and for the world. When we see Jesus differently, we can then see ourselves and others differently as well. The point of the transfiguration is not living up on that mountaintop, apart from the world, but how we live right down in the middle of it all. The point is not for us to remain within the walls of the church, but to take our spirituality out into the world. We must know not only *who* we are, but *whose* we are. Yes, we will take into account the local and wider community forces, but we must continue to listen to Christ. The transfiguration bears witness to the mission of

redemption through His suffering, rejection and death. The presence of Moses reminds us of the exodus of the past, present and future, as we live into the prophecies of Elijah regarding the end times.

We are to listen to the call of the transfiguration to the life of faithfulness. The church must listen to the call to develop a spirituality of mission learning to discern, discover, participate, be patient and be dependent on God's grace. We are called to listen to Christ and to live, trusting His guidance. We must listen to the call not to focus on the cultural measures of success such as membership size, church budget, breadth of programs, expansiveness of church property, as well as by the church's status and influence in the public arena, but to focus on Jesus Christ. We must listen to Christ in order to focus on ways to put our faith into words and actions.

Mountain top experiences are exciting, exhilarating. When they happen, we feel called to behave in new ways. We vow that we will never be the same. We go back to our daily lives, determined that our lives will change through our actions. When we come down from the mountaintop, we are faced with a culture of violence, divisiveness, poverty, illness and all of the rest. In the midst of the challenges we face in our world, let us remember to listen to Jesus the Christ for the direction we need. Amen.

### **PASTORAL PRAYER**

Holy God, we live in a world complicated by our inability to live peacefully with one another. We live in a culture of violent thoughts, words and actions. The voicing of hatred for those who are different is commonplace. Violence directed toward children, women and other marginalized people occurs all too often. Lord, we pray that you will not allow us to accept these things as the norm. We pray that you will enable us to bring about peace and justice in the communities and world in which we live. Help us to hear your voice and follow as you lead. We pray for those who are in the midst of winter storms and for those who work to help them. We pray for those who are sick, and ask that you will let them feel your healing touch. We pray for those who grieve. Touch their pain and provide them with the comfort they need. We pray for those in need, asking that you will help us to hear their distress and help to meet their needs. And lastly, we pray for ourselves, asking that you will help us to transfigure ourselves into the faithful Christians we were created to be so that we may make your love and grace known to this hurting world. All these things we pray in the name of your son, Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray, saying: **Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.**

### **SERVICE OF GIVING AND SHARING**

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided

in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

Offerings may be placed in the offering plates in the Narthex, mailed in to Immanuel United Church of Christ, 5838 Staunton Road, Edwardsville, IL 62025, or by going to our website at iucchamel.org, clicking on the GIVING tab and then clicking on the DONATE button.

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION – Unison**

**Giver of all good things, in your presence, everything is gift. Bless these gifts that they may help us to do the work you call us to, in the name of Christ, our light and the light of the world. Amen.**

**\*CLOSING HYMN**

**“Be Thou My Vision”**

**# 595 Chalice**

**Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;  
naught be all else to me, save that thou art.  
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,  
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.**

**Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word;  
I ever with thee, and thou with me, Lord.  
Born of thy love, thy child may I be,  
thou in me dwelling and I one with thee.**

**Riches I heed not, nor vain empty praise;  
thou mine inheritance, now and always.  
Thou and thou only, first in my heart,  
Ruler of heaven, my treasure thou art.**

**“True Light of heaven, when vict’ry is won  
may I reach heaven’s joys, O bright heav’n’s Sun!  
Heart of my heart, whatever befall,  
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.**

**GOING FORTH TO SERVE** As we go forth to serve, please remember our opportunities this week. Join us for:

**CONFIRMATION** will meet Monday at 3:30 pm on Zoom.

**CHURCH COUNCIL** will meet Tuesday at 6:30 pm.

**PRAYER GROUP** will meet Wednesday at 10 am. Please take time during the week to

pray for our church, our members/family/friends, our leaders and our community.

**ASH WEDNESDAY** come by the sanctuary between 4 and 6 pm to receive ashes and a blessing.

**LENTEN STUDY** join us on Thursday March 3 at 1:30 pm on Zoom as we talk about Stories Jesus Told by Greg Carey. This discussion will help us to better understand the parables Jesus used.

**HELP NEEDED FOR LIVESTREAMING AND POWERPOINT** Folks who volunteered to be part of the Livestreaming Team are needed. Dave S. will be happy to set up a time to teach you what you need to know and Mark and Frank will be happy to mentor you through the process. Ruth will be happy to provide training for PowerPoint.

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**LENTEN SERVICES** The clergy group pastors are planning to do Wednesday Night Lenten Services. Our theme for the series will be Parables of Jesus.

**BOOK STUDY** On behalf of the church council, I would like to invite all members to attend our 5-6 week study using the book Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory by Tod Bolsinger. We have spent a lot of time wishing for things to return to the way they used to be, but the reality is that will simply not happen. Our world has changed and if we want to survive and thrive as a church, we are going to have to change our approach to how we are the church that God is leading us to be in this time and place. We need some new ideas and methods and those can come from anyone. Change is hard but failure to change can be fatal. Call/text/e-mail me to ask any questions you may have and sign up for this study to begin after Easter...

### **BENEDICTION**

As we leave this place of worship, let us listen to the call of Christ to transfigure ourselves so that we may bring His message of peace, love and hope to our church, home, community and world.

And now, until we meet again,  
may each one be held safely in the palm of God's hand.

### **POSTLUDE**