

# Trinity Episcopal Church

Cranford, in the Diocese of New Jersey



"The Transfiguration of Jesus" – Anonymous Russian icon painter

## *Transfiguration Sunday*

*The Last Sunday after the Epiphany*

Holy Eucharist ~ Rite II

February 15, 2026 at 10 AM



The Reverend Andrew David Kruger ~ Rector & Presider

Anthony Joel Rafaniello ~ Director of Music & Organist

Casey Woodruff ~ Senior Warden & Kathleen M. Murray ~ Junior Warden

*The Sanctuary Candle, and the Altar Flowers are given to the Glory of God  
and in loving memory of Emily Sorvillo Vitale*

## Handbell Prelude

"I Want to Walk As a Child of the Light – arr. Cathy Moglebust

*At the end of the prelude, the bells are rung and the People stand.*

## Gathering Hymn

*Houston*

Hymnal 490

Handbell score for the hymn "I Want to Walk As a Child of the Light". The score is written for two staves, Treble and Bass, in a key of three flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor). The melody is simple and repetitive, using mostly quarter and half notes. The lyrics are arranged in three parts, with the first part having three verses. The second and third parts have three verses each. The score is divided into six systems, each with a Treble and Bass staff. The lyrics are written below the Treble staff. The first system has three verses. The second system has three verses. The third system has three verses. The fourth system has three verses. The fifth system has three verses. The sixth system has three verses. The score ends with a double bar line.

1 I want to walk as a child of the light.  
2 I want to see the bright - ness of God.  
3 I'm look - ing for the com - ing of Christ.

I want to fol - low Je - sus.  
I want to look at Je - sus.  
I want to be with Je - sus.

God set the stars to give light to the world. The  
Clear sun of right - eous - ness, shine on my path, and  
When we have run with pa - tience the race, we

star of my life is Je - sus.  
show me the way to the Fa - ther.  
shall know the joy of Je - sus.

In him there is no dark - ness at all. The

night and the day are both a - like. The

Lamb is the light of the ci - ty of God. *rit.*

*a tempo*

Shine in my heart, Lord Je - sus.

## Opening Acclamation

Enriching Our Worship 50

*Presider*

✠ Alleluia. Blessed be the one, holy, and living God.

*People*

**Glory to God for ever and ever. Amen. Alleluia.**

## Collect for Purity

Book of Common Prayer 355

*Presider*

Let us pray.

**Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## Gloria

Susan Caldwell Nelson

1. Glor-y to God in the high-est, — and  
 peace to His peo-ple on earth. 2. Lord God, heav-en - ly King, al -  
 -might - y God and Fa - ther, — we wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we  
 praise you for your glo - ry. 3. Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the  
 Fa - ther, — Lord God, Lamb of God, 4. you take, a-way the sin of the  
 world: have mer - cy on us; 5. you are seat - ed at the right hand of the

Fa-ther: re-ceive our prayer. 6. For

you a-lone are the Ho-ly One, you a-lone are the Lord.

7. You a-lone are the Most High, Je-sus Christ with the Ho-ly Spi-rit,

in the glo-ry of God the Fa-ther. A - - men.

## Collect

BCP 217

*Presider* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Presider* Let us pray.

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 People sit.*

## II. Proclaiming and Receiving the Word of God

### First Reading

Exodus 24:12-18

*Reader* A reading from the book of Exodus.

The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain, and wait there; and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction." So Moses set out with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God. To the elders he had said, "Wait here for us, until we come to you again; for Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a dispute may go to them."

Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud. Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. Moses entered the cloud, and went up on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

*Reader* The Word of the Lord.

*People* **Thanks be to God.**

All sing the Antiphon and Psalm.



I my - self have set my king up - on my ho - ly hill of Zi - on.



TONE VIII.1

- 1 *Why are* the nations in an úproar? \*  
Why do the peoples / mutter éempty threats?
- 2 Why do the kings of the earth rise up in revolt,  
and the princes plot togethér, \*  
against the LORD and against / his Anóinted?
- 3 “Let us break their yoke,” they sáy; \*  
“let us cast / off their bónds from us.”
- 4 He whose throne is in heaven is láughing; \*  
the Lord has them / in derísion.
- 5 Then he speaks to them in his wráth, \*  
and his rage fills / them with térror.
- 6 “I myself have sét my king \*  
upon my holy / hill of Zíon.”
- 7 Let me announce the decree of the LÓRD; \*  
he said to me, “You are my Son;  
this day have / I begóttén you.
- 8 Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for your inhéritance \*  
and the ends of the earth for / your posséssion.
- 9 You shall crush them with an irón rod \*  
and shatter them like a / piece of póttery.”
- 10 And now, you kíngs, be wise; \*  
be warned, you / rulers óf the earth.
- 11 Submit to the LÓRD with fear, \*  
and with trembling / bow befóre him;
- 12 Lest he be angry and you pérish; \*  
for his wrath is / quickly kíndled.
- 13 Happy are they áll \*  
who take / refuge ín him! [Ant.]

## Second Reading

2 Peter 1:16-21

*Reader* A reading from the second letter of St. Peter.

We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain. So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

*Reader* The Word of the Lord.

*People* **Thanks be to God.**

## Proclaiming Hymn

*Mowsley*

Hymnal 129

*The People stand.*

1 Christ up - on the moun - tain peak stands a - lone in  
2 Trem - bling at his feet we saw Mo - ses and E -  
3 Swift the cloud of glo - ry came. God pro - claim - ing  
4 This is God's be - lov - ed Son! Law and pro - phets

glo - ry blaz - ing; let us, if we dare to speak,  
li - jah speak - ing. All the pro - phets and the Law  
in its thun - der Je - sus as his Son by name!  
fade be - fore him; first and last and on - ly One,

with the saints and an - gels praise him. Al - le - lu - ia!  
shout through them their joy - ful greet - ing. Al - le - lu - ia!  
Na - tions cry a - loud in won - der! Al - le - lu - ia!  
let cre - a - tion now a - dore him! Al - le - lu - ia!

## Holy Gospel

Matthew 17:1-9

*Presider* ✠ The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St Matthew.  
*People* **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

Six days after Peter had acknowledged Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God, 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."

*Presider* The Gospel of the Lord.  
*People* **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

## III. Responding to the Proclaimed Word of God

### Children's Address

Anderw Kruger

### Nicene Creed

EOW1 53

*The People stand.*

**We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God,  
Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary  
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.  
We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father, \*  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come.  
Amen.**

## **Prayers of the People**

Common Worship

*The Presider says*

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father.

*The Intercessor prays*

Lord of glory, it is good that we are here. In peace we make our prayer to you. In trust we confirm our faith in you. Help us to set our faces steadfastly to where you would have us go.

Lord, look with favor: **Lord, transfigure and heal.**

Lord of glory, look with favor on your Church, proclaiming your beloved Son to the world and listening to the promptings of his Spirit. May she be renewed in holiness that she may reflect your glory.

Lord, look with favor: **Lord, transfigure and heal.**

Lord of glory, look with favor on the nations of the world, scarred by hatred, strife and war. May they be healed by the touch of your hand.

Lord, look with favor: **Lord, transfigure and heal.**

Lord of glory, look with favor on those in need and distress, suffering as your Son has suffered and waiting for the salvation you promise. May the day break and Christ the Morning Star bring them the light of his presence.

Lord, look with favor: **Lord, transfigure and heal.**



Lord of glory, it is good if we suffer with you so that we shall be glorified with you. According to your promise bring all the faithful departed to see Christ with their own eyes in majesty and to be changed into his likeness from glory to glory.

Lord, look with favor: **Lord, transfigure and heal.**

*The Presider concludes*

Holy God, on the mount of transfiguration you revealed your Son as the Christ: Transform our lives in his image, write your law of love on our hearts, and make us prophets of your shining splendor; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. **Amen.**

## **The Peace**

BCP 360

*Presider*      The peace of the Lord be always with you.

*People*      **And also with you.**

*The People greet one another in the Name of the Lord.*

## **Announcements**

Andrew Kruger

# IV. Celebrating at the Lord's Table

## **Offertory Sentence**

Psalm 96:8

*The Presider says*

Ascribe to the Lord the honor due his name;  
bring offerings and come into his courts.

*Representatives of the congregation bring the people's offering of bread and wine to the Holy Table.*

## **Offertory Anthem**

"To God, Let Us Sing Our Praises" – Marc Antoine Charpentier

Arr. John Bertalot. Words – Paraphrased from Psalms 95 and 96

To God let us sing our praises, rejoice in our salvation;  
With thanks let us praise the Father, and sing aloud to Him with psalms.

For the Lord our God is a great God, a great King above all other gods;  
He made the earth, the sea is His, and His hands prepared the land.

O come, let us worship Him, kneel before the Lord our God;  
He is our maker and our shepherd, we are His and He is ours.

Let us worship God in holiness, all nations stand in awe of Him;  
He comes, he comes to judge the world, and the peoples with His truth.

*The ushers bring the collection plates to the ministers.*

## Offertory Hymn

Salzburg

Hymnal 135

*The People stand.*

1 Songs of thank-ful - ness and praise, Jes - us, Lord, to thee we raise,  
2 Man - i - fest at Jor - dan's stream, Pro-phet, Priest, and King su - preme;  
3 Man - i - fest in mak - ing whole pal - sied limbs and faint - ing soul;  
4 Man - i - fest on moun - tain height, shin - ing in re - splen - dent light,

man - i - fest - ed by the star to the sa - ges from a - far;  
and at Ca - na, wed - ding - guest, in thy God - head man - i - fest;  
man - i - fest in val - iant fight, quell - ing all the dev - il's might;  
where dis - ci - ples filled with awe thy trans - fi - gured glo - ry saw.

branch of roy - al Da - vid's stem in thy birth at Beth - le - hem;  
man - i - fest in power di - vine, chang - ing wa - ter in - to wine;  
man - i - fest in gra - cious will, ev - er bring - ing good from ill;  
When from there thou led - dest them stead - fast to Je - ru - sa - lem,

an - thems be to thee ad - dressed, God in man made man - i - fest.  
an - thems be to thee ad - dressed, God in man made man - i - fest.  
an - thems be to thee ad - dressed, God in man made man - i - fest.  
cross and Eas - ter Day at - test God in man made man - i - fest.

## Presentation of Gifts

An Anglican Prayer Book 1989

*Presider*

Source of all life, everything in heaven and on earth is yours:

*People*

**All things come from you, and of your own do we give you. Amen.**

## Eucharistic Prayer for Children

Common Worship

*Presider* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Presider* Lift up your hearts.

*People* **We lift them to the Lord.**

*Presider* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*People* **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

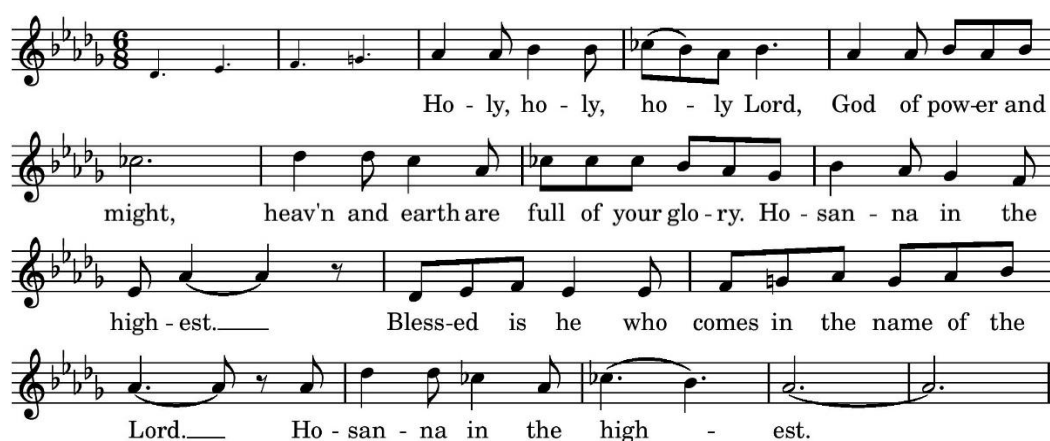
*Child* Why is it right to give thanks and praise?

Lord of all life, you created the universe, where all living things reflect your glory. You give us this great and beautiful earth, to discover and to cherish. You give us sun and moon and star-lit sky, everything that gives us light, light for our eyes, our hearts, our minds.

You made us all, each wonderfully different, to join with the angels and sing your praise:

### Sanctus

Susan Caldwell Nelson



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and  
might, heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho - san - na in the  
high - est.\_\_\_\_ Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the  
Lord.\_\_\_\_ Ho - san - na in the high - est.

We thank you loving Father, because when we turned away you sent Jesus, your Son. He gave his life for us on the cross and showed us the way to live. Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine may be for us Christ's body and his blood.

*Child* Why do we share this bread and wine?

On the night before he died, when darkness had fallen, Jesus took bread. He gave thanks, broke it, and shared it with his disciples, saying: "This is my body, given for you. Do this to remember me."

After they had eaten, he took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and shared it with his disciples, saying: "This is my blood, poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins."

So Father, with this bread and this cup we celebrate his love, his death, his risen life. As you feed us with these gifts, send your Holy Spirit, and change us more and more to be like Jesus our Savior.

*Child* How do we follow Jesus Christ?

Help us, Father, to love one another, as we look forward to that day when suffering is ended, and all creation is gathered in your loving arms. And now with all your saints we give you glory, through Jesus Christ, in the strength of the Spirit, today and for ever.

## Great Amen

Susan Caldwell Nelson



## The Lord's Prayer

BCP 360

*Presider* As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray,

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever.**

**Amen.**

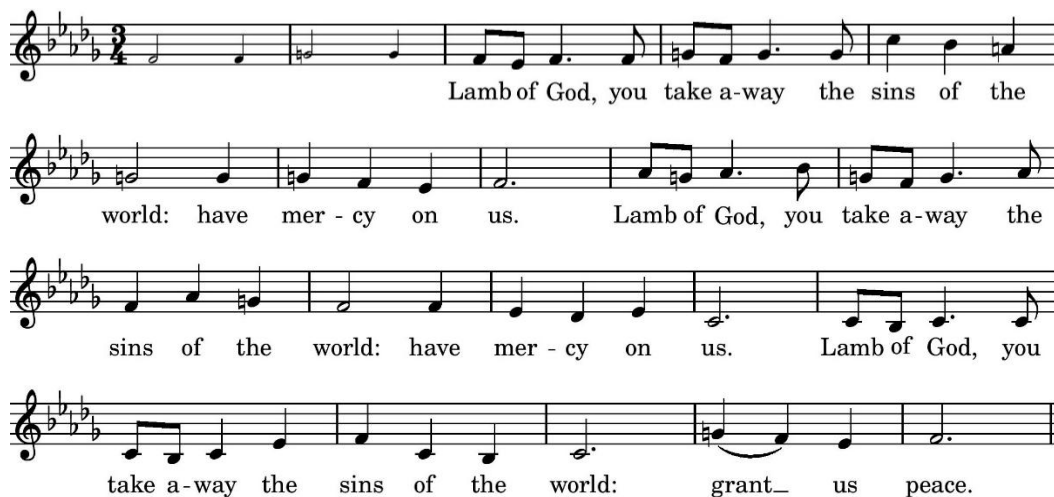
## Breaking of the Bread

BCP 364

*The Presider breaks the consecrated Bread and a period of silence is kept.*

## Agnus Dei

Susan Caldwell Nelson



## Invitation

BCP 364

*Presider*

The Gifts of God:

*People*

**for the People of God.**

The ushers guide the people to receive Holy Communion.

All who hunger for God, including children, are cordially invited to share the Gifts of God offered at this table. Whoever you are, wherever you are in your life's journey, you are welcome here.

All persons may, but no person must, receive communion in both kinds to receive the full spiritual benefits of communion.

Wine is offered by way of a sip from the common cup. You may choose to receive only the host.

Gluten-free wafers are available by request to the priest.

## Communion Hymn

## Bread of Life

Hymnal 335

1 I am the bread of life; they who  
2 (The) Bread that I will give is my  
3 (Un-) less you eat of the  
4 I am the re-sur-rec-tion, that  
5 (Yes,) Lord, we be-lieve that

1 come to me shall not hun-ger; they who be-  
2 Flesh for the life of the world, and they who  
3 Flesh of the Son of Man and  
4 I am the life. They who be-  
5 you are the Christ, the

1 lieve in me shall not thirst. No one can come to  
2 eat of this bread, they shall live for  
3 drink of his Blood, you shall not have life with-  
4 lieve in me, e-ven if they  
5 Son of God who has

1 me un-less the Fa-ther draw them.  
2 ev-er. they shall live for ev-er.  
3 in you. you shall not have life with-in you.  
4 die, they shall live for ev-er.  
5 come in-to the world.

*Refrain*  
And I will raise them up, and I will raise them  
up, and I will raise them up on the  
last day. day.

## Communion Chant

*Within our darkest night*

Taizé Community

With - in our dark - est night, you kin - dle the  
fire that nev - er dies a - way, nev - er dies a -  
way. With - in our dark - est night, you kin - dle the  
fire that nev - er dies a - way, nev - er dies a - way.

The musical score is written for two staves, Treble and Bass clef, in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of five systems of music. The lyrics are written below the notes. The melody is simple and repetitive, with a focus on the words "Within our darkest night, you kindle the fire that never dies away".

## Post Communion Meditation

"A Joyful Ring" – Barbara Kinyon

## Post Communion Prayer

Common Worship

*Presider* Let us pray.

*The People stand.*

**Holy God, we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ:  
may we who are partakers at this table reflect your Son's life in word and deed,  
that all the world will know your power to change and save.  
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## Blessing

CW

*The Priest blesses the people, saying*

Christ Jesus, the splendor of the Father and the image of his being, draw you to himself that you may live in his light and share his glory; and the blessing of God Almighty, ✠ the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always.  
**Amen.**

# V. Going out as God's People

## Sending Hymn

*Hyfrydol*

Hymnal 460

1 Al - le - lu - ia! sing to Je - sus! his the  
 3 Al - le - lu - ia! bread of Hea - ven, Thou on  
 4 Al - le - lu - ia! King e - ter - nal, thee the

1 scep - ter, his the throne; Al - le - lu - ia! his the  
 3 earth our food, our stay! Al - le - lu - ia! here the  
 4 Lord of lords we own: Al - le - lu - ia! born of

1 tri - umph, his the vic - to - ry a - lone; Hark! the  
 3 sin - ful flee to thee from day to day: In - ter -  
 4 Ma - ry, earth thy foot - stool, heaven thy throne: thou with -

1 songs of peace - ful Zi - on thun - der like a  
 3 ces - sor, friend of sin - ners, earth's Re - deem - er,  
 4 in the veil hast en - tered, robed in flesh, our

1 might - y flood; Je - sus out of ev - ery  
 3 plead for me, where the songs of all the  
 4 great High Priest: thou on earth both Priest and

1 na - tion hath re - deemed us by his blood.  
 3 sin - less sweep a - cross the crys - tal sea.  
 4 Vic - tim in the eu - cha - ris - tic feast.

*Presider* Alleluia. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

*People* **Thanks be to God. Alleluia.**

## Postlude

“Trumpet Tune in D” – David N. Johnson

## For Friends, Visitors and Newcomers

Welcome to Trinity Episcopal Church in Cranford, New Jersey. Thank you for joining us in worship. The bulletin is designed to make you feel at home; and includes everything you need for the service (liturgy, hymns, rubrics, etc.). Please connect with us; introduce yourself to the ushers so they can make you feel more comfortable. Father Andy is in the narthex (entrance) at the end of the service; it is an opportunity to connect on a more personal level. All are invited to Fellowship Hour in Sherlock Hall, immediately after the service. Every Thursday by 2 PM, an email blast is sent with hyperlinks to sign-up sheets, methods to contribute to the parish or other charitable organizations, ways to contact individuals or receive information on events, etc. Please contact the parish office to receive it or alternative methods of communication.

## What you need to know today...

**Intergenerational Service** On the third Sunday of the month Trinity holds an intergenerational service at the 10 AM Eucharist. In place of going to Sunday school during the service, our younger baptized members have the opportunity to exercise their gifts alongside those who have been baptized for many years.

**Annual Mardi Gras Celebration** Today after both services; at the 10 AM service, it will be replete with feasting, 50/50 raffle, baskets of the “7 deadly sins” and fun. Thank you to Justin Bain and John Beier for offering to be the parish chefs.

**Trinity Episcopal Senior Youth (TESY)** Today from 12:30 to 1:30 PM in Witherington Hall. Confirmed youth, ages 13-18, are welcome.

**Seamen’s Church Institute** Today through March 1, Outreach is collecting for SCI’s annual “Christmas at Sea” program. Check this week’s email blast for items needed which can be placed in the box for Seamen’s in the conference room. Thank you.

**Altar Flowers and Sanctuary Candle** There are no altar flowers during Lent; however, the sanctuary candle is available for personal attribution, to remember loved ones, to honor others, to celebrate lives. The deadline is 4 PM Wednesday each week; multiple attributions are allowed.

## What you need to know this week...

**Parish Office Hours** Office Manager Marion Nechuta is available Tuesday through Thursday from 12:30 to 3:30 PM. Please call before arriving; at other times she may still be contacted via parish email.

**Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer** Monday to Friday at 8:30 AM and 5 PM, respectively, online.

**Handbells and Choir Rehearsals** Ash Wednesday, February 18; no rehearsal for Handbells (normally 7 to 7:50 PM) due to the worship service) and Adult Choir (normally 8-9 PM) will rehearse before the 7:30 PM service.

**Ash Wednesday** February 18, there will be a 7 AM and 12 noon Rite I Service, and a 7:30 PM Rite II Service with choir.

**Fellowship Luncheon** Thursday, February 19 from 12:30 PM to 2 PM in Witherington Hall. Ray Lord will speak of the Prison Ministry, of which he and his wife Estelle are very involved. Meal is stuffed peppers with sides and desserts. Call Susan Olszewski (908-757-9561) or Susan Nelson (908-397-3944) for more information.

**Compline** This Thursday at 8 PM online.



## What you need to know in the future...

**Sandwich Sunday** Sunday, February 22; contact Marion Nechuta (marionnechuta@yahoo.com or 908-451-4498) or Helen Shteynberg for information. There are several ways to participate in this ministry (links to sign up are in the email blast):

- Sign up to supply items needed for the bags and the sandwiches
- Saturday, February 21 from 10 AM to 11 AM – assemble food bags in Sherlock Hall
- Sunday, February 22 after Fellowship Hour – transport sandwiches & food packets to St John's and help serve food

**Trinity Episcopal Senior Youth (TESY)** Saturday, March 14 from 10 AM to 12 Noon. TESY is hosting a cleanup of the Sherlock Hall loft; pizza and refreshments will be provided. Volunteers of all ages are welcome. To sign up, email Katie Annarelli (kathleen.m.annarelli@outlook.com).

## 2026 Lenten Course: The Eight Passions of the Soul

This Lent and Holy Week, the congregation will explore the 8 passions of the soul as they were taught by St John Cassian, who died around 435 AD. He was a disciple of St. John Chrysostom and in his writing and teaching he shared much of the spiritual wisdom of the Christian East with his Western brothers and sisters. The focus is on his treatise to Bishop Kastor, titled 'On the Eight Vices' taken from *The Institutes, Books V-XII*. Cassian's writing teaches us how to develop our self-knowledge and awareness, so that we can relate to the world without selfish illusions.

The course begins on Thursday, February 26 at 7:30 PM and continues every Thursday in Lent and includes services on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Holy Week; 8 sessions in all. Each session (listed below) will begin in the church with evensong and conclude in Witherington Hall with a simple soup supper and an opportunity for further discussion. An excellent book to read in conjunction with taking the course is Rowan William's "Passions of the Soul."



NB: Please sign up to volunteer to read at evensong; assist with setup and takedown; offer to make soup; and indicate the intention to attend so that it can be catered appropriately. Either scan the QR code or click on the link on the weekly email blast. Here are the session dates and themes:

- |                                   |                                  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Thursday, February 26: Gluttony | • Thursday, March 26: Dejection  |
| • Thursday, March 5: Unchastity   | • Monday, March 30: Listlessness |
| • Thursday, March 12: Avarice     | • Tuesday, March 31: Self-esteem |
| • Thursday, March 19: Anger       | • Wednesday, April 1: Pride      |

## Mission in the Early Church

The growth of the Christian church in the Roman Empire is mysterious. Scholars who spend their entire lives studying this phenomenon continue to find it surprising. Why did this minor mystery religion from the eastern Mediterranean – marginal, despised, discriminated against – grow substantially, eventually supplanting the well-endowed, respectable cults that were supported by the empire and aristocracy? What enabled Christianity to be so successful that by the fifth century it was the established religion of the empire? If our ancient Christian ancestors had strategies for converting people, they did not teach these or write about them. As Origen put it in a Sunday sermon: "You catechumens [*those seeking baptism*] – who gathered you into the church? What goad compelled you to leave your houses and come together in this assembly? We did not go to you from house to house. The Almighty Father put this zeal into your hearts by his invisible power." Instead of urging the Christians to go from house to house, or recommending that they replace their evangelistic methods with something more effective, Origen expressed his patient trust in God's "invisible power."

Alan Kreider, author of 'The Patient Ferment of the Early Church: The Improbable Rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire,' asserts that there are three primary reasons for the rapid growth of the early church: A focus on the virtue of patience; A way of being in the world that was compelling; and an insistence on forming Christian character in those seeking baptism.

Patience was centrally important to the early Christians. They talked about patience and wrote about it; it was the first virtue about which they wrote a treatise, calling it the “highest virtue.” They believed that trusting in God, should be patient – not controlling events, not anxious or in a hurry, and never using force to achieve their ends. The source literature rarely indicates that the early Christians grew in number because they won arguments; instead they grew because their habitual behavior (rooted in patience) was distinctive and intriguing. Their way of being in the world enabled them to address intractable problems that ordinary people faced in ways that offered hope. The early Christians were also uncommonly committed to forming the habits of their members. They believed that impatient habits were deeply ingrained in people who were raised in Greco-Roman societies. From experience they knew that if people were to develop patient reflexes, they needed time, the friendship of mentors, and the opportunity to grow in patient ways of living that were the normal standard for Christians. Amen.

*Kreider, Alan. The Patient Ferment of the Early Church: The Improbable Rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire. Kindle Edition.*

## Mission & Patience – from Fr Andy

Last week I wrote about the unlikely numerical growth of the early church, and identified that our Christian ancestors’ elevation of the virtue of patience was one of the catalysts for this growth. This week I’m going to dive into the writings of two early North African theologians to explore what they had to say about the connection of mission and patience.

Let’s begin in the 250’s with Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage, who was dealing with a ‘boatload’ of problems: Christians had been through severe testing; some believers were tired, many had died from a recent epidemic, some were losing hope, some were in danger of lapsing into impatient practices, even engaging in acts of violent revenge against their enemies. In the face of these developments, Cyprian sensed that patience was the characteristic virtue that would help the church live as Christians in their pressure-filled situation. According to Cyprian, all of Jesus’ behavior – his entire missional style – was patient. This culminates in the passion, in which Jesus does not proclaim his majesty but silently perseveres even through death. Cyprian shifts the emphasis of his day from obeying Christ’s precepts, to following in Christ’s footsteps. Cyprian witnessed the church growing and believed that the growth was because Christians were distinct from their contemporaries – living patiently in relation to their neighbors and enemies, doing good to them, and waiting for them to come to faith.

To Augustine, the 5<sup>th</sup> century Bishop of Hippo, the Christian tradition of patience as taught by Cyprian – emphasizing a life that trusts God and therefore does not control things, is not in a hurry, and does not use violence – must have seemed anachronistic. Conceived in a time of persecution, it seemed out of touch with a world in which emperors now ‘served’ the Lord. In a way that Cyprian had not acknowledged, Augustine could see that when patience is an unqualified virtue, it can lead vulnerable people and groups to be uncreatively servile in the face of their oppressors. Augustine argued that patience, for all its beauty, has its limits; it must never stand in the way of actions that love deems necessary: When “the lust of the world” brings about calamities that people fail to resist, and when pride leads people to put up with “what seems intolerable,” then what is at work is “not patience but madness.” Ironically, Augustine articulates this theology of the need for love to direct patience in order to provide a rationale for his own impatience with those he deemed heretics. In doing so Augustine opened the way for ecclesiastical and political powers to rapidly unify and grow the church.

I wonder how you respond to these two quite different approaches to patience? Personally, I’m moved by the purity of Cyprian’s vision of patience, but I’d be lying if I didn’t also admit to finding it somewhat idealistic (perhaps I’m guilty of underestimating the power of God). Like most moderns I identify quickly and easily with Augustine’s impatience with injustice, but I’m decidedly uneasy with the implication of coerced conversions therefore being appropriate; when motivated by love. Both of these theologians help me to think more deeply about the various challenges of our time, and the kind of patience required by Christians in our context.

## Lenten Preparation

Ash Wednesday is this week; it’s time to give some attention to the disciplines and spiritual exercises we plan to include in our Lenten observance. The liturgy and readings for Ash Wednesday invite our repentance – turning back to God – and suggest that we recommit to deepening our commitment to scripture reading, prayer, fasting, and almsgiving or charity. But before we launch into a laundry list of Lenten resolutions, it is beneficial to remember that the purpose of Lent is not to force on us a few formal obligations, but to “soften” our heart so that it may open itself to the realities of the spirit, to experience the hidden “thirst and hunger” for communion with God.

As part of your prayerful preparation for the season of Lent, I commend to you the Lenten prayer attributed to St Ephrem the Syrian:

O Lord and Master of my life:  
Take from me the spirit of sloth, faint-heartedness,  
lust of power, and idle talk.  
But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience,  
and love to your servant.  
Grant me to see my own errors and not to judge my neighbor;  
For you are blessed, for ever and ever. Amen.

Christians through the ages have found this prayer so helpful because it enumerates in a unique way all the negative and positive elements of repentance and constitutes, so to speak, a “check list” for our individual Lenten effort. This effort is aimed first at our liberation from some fundamental spiritual diseases which shape our life and make it virtually impossible for us to even start turning ourselves to God. The prayer acknowledges that sloth, faint-heartedness, lust of power, and idle talk are obstacles that God alone can remove when we confront our human helplessness.

Then the prayer moves to the positive aims of repentance, which also are four. It’s worth unpacking chastity because it is so often, and erroneously, reduced only to its sexual connotations. In the ancient tradition chastity is understood as the positive counterpart of sloth. The exact and full translation of the Greek *sofrosini* ought to be something like ‘whole-mindedness’. Sloth is, first of all, dissipation, the brokenness of our vision and energy, the inability to see the whole. Its opposite then is precisely wholeness. If we usually mean by chastity the virtue opposed to sexual depravity, it is because the broken character of our existence is nowhere better manifested than in sexual lust – the alienation of the body from the life and control of the spirit, and the reduction of the other to an object for my sole gratification.

All this is summarized and brought together in the concluding petition of the Lenten prayer in which we ask “to see my own errors and not to judge my neighbor.” For ultimately there is but one danger: pride. Pride is the source of evil, and all evil is pride. Yet it is not enough for me to see my own errors, for even this apparent virtue can be turned into pride. Spiritual writings are full of warnings against the subtle forms of pseudo-piety which, in reality, under the cover of humility and self-accusation can lead to a truly demonic pride. But when we “see our own errors” and “do not judge our neighbor,” when, in other words, chastity, humility, patience, and love are manifested in us, then and only then the ultimate enemy – pride – will be destroyed in us.

*Adapted from Schmemmann, Alexander. Great Lent: Journey to Pascha. Kindle Edition.*

## Lectionary

On this final Sunday before Lent, we always have as our Gospel reading the account of Jesus’ transfiguration. This event is chosen primarily because it marks the turning point in the story of Jesus. It was on this occasion that Jesus foretold his approaching death and resurrection. Thus we are pointed in our Lenten pilgrimage toward the cross and Easter.

We began the season of Epiphany with the revelation of Jesus to the Magi and we conclude the season with the theophany of Jesus to the disciples on the mount of Transfiguration. Two profound events in the adult life of Jesus Christ frame the season: his baptism in the river and his transfiguration on the mountain – scenes of glory and moments of revelation.

The Old Testament reading records Moses’ meeting with God on Mt. Sinai in an event like the transfiguration. His forty days and nights with God on the mountain are a prefiguring of our time with God in Lent. The second reading records the memory of the transfiguration event as a sign that the writer’s message is truth, being an eyewitness of Jesus’ ministry. We are also witnesses as God transforms us into the likeness of Christ.

Today the Church uses the Easter word “Alleluia” for the last time until the resurrection is proclaimed at the Great Vigil of Easter. “Alleluia” is omitted from the liturgy throughout Lent in order that its restoration at Easter will underscore our experience of renewal on that day.

*From The Rite Light: Reflections on the Sunday Readings and Seasons of the Church Year. ©2007 Michael W. Merriman. Church Publishing Inc., NY*

# Liturgy

- † **Cover art** – “The Transfiguration of Jesus” (1497) by an anonymous Russian icon painter. This image depicts the Transfiguration of Jesus, a pivotal moment in Christian tradition. The event is described in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). It occurred on Mount Tabor, where Jesus revealed his divine glory to three apostles: Peter, James, and John. Jesus is shown with the prophets Moses and Elijah. The icon is a 15<sup>th</sup> century Russian piece of art. Found in the collection of the State Open-air Museum Kirillo-Belozersky Monastery.
- † **Handbell Prelude** – A setting of Kathleen Thomerson’s hymn tune *Houston* by Cathy Moklebust who has been at St. Olaf Lutheran, Austin MN since 1987; she has nearly 500 pieces in print and been described as “incredibly emotional, delightfully fresh, and uncommonly creative for the unique medium of handbells.” –[© 2011 Choristers Guild]
- † **Gathering Hymn** – Words & Music: Kathleen Thomerson (b. 1934), currently Organist and Music Director at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Austin, TX; her best-known hymn was written in Summer 1966 when she was part of a charismatic group at the Church of the Redeemer, Episcopal in Houston, the town after which she named the tune. “On one, hand it may be sung as a prayer for illumination. On the other hand, it may be sung as a song of dedication. The worshiper commits to live in the light of Christ.” –[©1970, 1975 Celebration, Aliquippa, PA]
- † **Gloria** – Words: Anonymous, 15<sup>th</sup> cent. medieval. Since the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, Christians recite this as part of weekly worship. Music: Susan Caldwell Nelson has composed new service music which the parish is using for the full season of Epiphany.
- † **Collect of the Day** – The rubric makes clear that, regardless of the number of Sundays after the Epiphany, this proper is used on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday. The English revision of 1928 first included this modern collect for the feast of the Transfiguration, the subject of the Gospel lesson in all three years for this Sunday in the Eucharistic lectionary. It is particularly appropriate on this Sunday, when we recall our Lord’s having set His face to go to Jerusalem, for us to pray 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.” –[*Notes on the American Prayer Book* by Marion Hatchett]
- † **Proclaiming Hymn** – Words: Brian A. Wren (b. 1936), a major British figure in the revival of contemporary hymn writing, wrote this text at Mansfield College in Oxford. Published in the British supplement *100 Hymns for Today* [1969], it was the second hymn text that Wren wrote. –[© 1977 Hope Publishing]. Music: Cyril Vincent Taylor (1907-1992). –[© 1985 Hope Publishing].
- † **\* Nicene Creed** – Designed to contain “all the expansive language texts currently authorized.” It is almost identical to the version in the BCP. The omission of the words ‘and the Son’ (*filioque*) restores the text of the Creed to the original wording agreed upon at the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (381 CE). The addition of that phrase was a later development implemented only in the Western Church and without the approval of a General Council.
- † **Offertory Anthem** – Composed by Marc Antoine Charpentier, who dominated the Baroque musical scene in 17<sup>th</sup> century France during the reign of Louis IV because of the quality of his prolific output; he mastered all genres, and his skill in writing sacred vocal music was especially hailed by his contemporaries. Arranged by John Bertalot, this choral anthem for choir and organ is published by Shawnee Press and is designed for general worship. The words are paraphrased from Psalm 95, which is a call to worship.
- † **Offertory Hymn** – Words: Stanzas 1-3 by Christopher Wordsworth (1807-1885) who wrote, “It is a recapitulation of the successive manifestations of Christ, which have already been presented in the services of the former weeks throughout the season of Epiphany; and anticipation of that future great and glorious Epiphany, at which Christ will be manifest to all, when he will appear again to judge the world.” Stanza 4 by F. Bland Tucker (1895-1984). –[© Church Pension Fund]. Music: Melody by Jakob Hintze (1622-1702); harmony by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750).
- † **Communion Hymn** – Words (adapt. John 6) & Music: Sister Suzanne Toolan (b. 1927), who said “I think its popularity stems from its message of resurrection, which is so strong in these words of Jesus. We so need that message of hope.” She wrote the words in 1964 in between classes and claims to have discarded the original, but was inspired by a student to keep it. Originally presented at a diocesan music educators’ conference in 1966. –[©1971 G.I.A. Publications]
- † **Communion Chant** – Words & Music: Taizé Community. –[© 2011 Les Presses de Taizé, GIA]
- † **Post Communion Handbell Meditation** – Barbara Baltzer Kinyon has spent her professional life as a solo pianist, college professor, church organist, private piano and pipe organ instructor, as well as handbell conductor, composer and clinician. Published by Agape.
- † **Sending Hymn** – Words: Sts. 1-3 Christopher Wordsworth (1807-1885); st. 4 F. Bland Tucker (1895-1984) –[© Church Pension Fund]. Music: melody Jakob Hintze (1622-1702); harmony Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750).
- † **Postlude** – A classic from the Augsburg Fortress organ library, this 1962 publication is consistently one of their best-selling titles.

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