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Weekly Letter – 15 February 2026

Matthew 17.1-7

The Transfiguration – a step along the road of faith!

In essence the transfiguration of Jesus (an event, I'm sure you know well) is about the journey of faith.

Over a year ago the three disciples, Peter, James and John had put down their nets and left the security of their daily routine of work in a small settled community to follow Jesus of Nazareth. They had seen him heal people, talk in such an uplifting and challenging way to thousands of people, and so they knew they had to leave their 'old life' behind and walk with him. From then on, they were challenged by their faith in Jesus.

Their journey of faith continued by following Jesus up a mountain, in which they experienced a vision – a clarification of who Jesus was.

Their journey of faith is in so many ways the same as the one you are on. For a journey of faith is NOT about whether or not you accept the doctrine of the Church, or you fully understand the constant flow of words from Church authorities. The journey of faith is fundamentally about the gospels insistence (not pressure), that we are open and willing to engage with God's truth, which means, a willingness to change, to be transformed, to continue to have a desire to be converted, and a willingness to change our perspectives, so that they are more in tune with Christ's message.

In other words, each day needs to be seen as a journey of faith, a faith which has a purpose. The purpose being an honest desire to hear God's Word and embark on a journey that seeks new life.

The pilgrimage that Peter, James and John were on with Jesus takes them to a high mountain to experience something of Jesus' nature, which they must have had an inkling of, but as yet could not put into words. (The same as us?)

Undoubtedly, this experience helped them to be stronger in their faith. Again, we have all had moments like these, and they need to be remembered.

But, as we all know, this journey of faith is never a constant upward curve for anyone. For from these significant moments, we like every believer have to face the 'darkness of Gethsemane'. Therefore, the purpose of the 'Transfiguration' was not so that the disciples could wallow and bask in that moment, or constantly say how wonderful the past was, or even how great it was. Rather, they are moments which God gives us to encourage us on our way to carry out daily acts of faith, showing our love for God and our neighbour. For this journey of faith is entwined with daily acts of hope and love, and it is in these divine gifts that we encounter grace and freedom, heaven and earth, God and humanity.

As far as this rather limited writer can see Jesus Christ offers no short cuts.

Stephen

Sunday Morning Worship in Christ Well, and on Zoom at 10.30 am will be led by Stephen Baker
Bible Reading: Luke 1.68-79

Cycle of Prayer in the Region – we will pray for Christ Well

Tuesday 17th - Tea and Chat - 2-4pm – Pancakes on Shrove Tuesday

VIEW FROM A MOUNTAIN

(Lectionary Readings: Exodus 24.12-18: Psalm 2 or 99: 2 Peter 1.16-21: Matthew 17.1-9)

There is a joy climbing a mountain,
breathing the beauty of God's creation as stillness caresses our soul.
But you ask us, Jesus to leave behind our heavy rucksack of cares today and come,
as we are, to climb a mountain with you.
We remember Peter, James and John, the disciples, their mountain experience, the
moments of truth, and your glory revealed as Living Son of God.
Heavenly skies stretch into eternity before us now, and in the loveliness, we touch the
essence of peace. We see why Peter longed to pitch a tent and stay in these moments
forever, for such time alone with you is precious, and like Peter, we want to linger.
Give us courage, like those disciples, to come back down the mountain into the valleys,
in to the suffering, hurting crowds, and there to share your love.
May we not only hear your voice, but truly listen.
And then we shall be changed too, as the Spirit renews the image and love of God within
us. **Amen.**

Hazel McCorricken

(URC Prayer Handbook 2026)



**ASH
WEDNESDAY**

18 February 2026

Matthew 6.1-6, 16-21

I hope you will take the time to read today's gospel, carefully and as always with charity. Why? Well these are truly wonderful words, which can help all of us to find a deeper happiness.

Jesus is once again opening up his 'chest of jewels' to reveal what will make us truly happy. So he says, 'don't waste your energy trying to convince others of your goodness. It's pointless! The danger in any of us believing we are good, or look good is that we will be destined to ignore God, and this inevitably leads to smugness, which only ends up in disorder. I've been there far too many times!

After almsgiving and praying, Jesus then focuses on fasting. Once again Jesus says, 'making any of these acts of giving, praying or fasting about 'me' is utterly senseless, for these choices are an opportunity, not to think about yourself, but to open your heart to the One who knows all your needs.

In other words, Jesus is saying, "Look into your heart and ask yourself, what are your deepest longings? How do you want to spend this life, on possessions, image, reputation, or eternal life?"

Perhaps today is a very good day to ask this fundamental question, "What am I looking for – what really makes your heart sing?" I hope you have a very positive and helpful Lent.

Stephen

We bring you the ashes of our world

*(Lectionary Readings: Joel 2.1-2, 12-17: or Isaiah 58.1-12: Psalm 51.1-17:
1 Corinthians 5.20b-6.10: Matthew 6.1-6, 16,21)*

Gracious God,
we bring you the ashes of our world from war to wildfire,
and we look for time; time to make a change and a difference,
time to turn back to you.
We pray for all whose homes have been reduced to ash,
and that we may turn away from war on each other and on the earth.
God in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Holy God,
we bring to you all whose lives have turned to ash,
who taste only bitterness and dust, and we look for time, for a wider perspective,
time to heal, time to find meaning, love and purpose,
and we pray that we may find courage to invest more in health care and society.
God in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Healing God, we bring you the power of ash to cleanse and heal,
for nothing in all creation is despised by you, and we look for time,
time to adapt to climate change, time to shelter the poor,
time to work for justice, and time to be agents of change and healing our world.
God in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Andy Braunston

(URC Prayer Handbook 2026)

