

# Transfiguration Sunday

February 15, 2026

Gathering  
Welcome  
Announcements and Prayer

Prelude Laurie Knapp  
*(Prayerfully prepare your hearts and minds for worship.)*

\*Call to Worship  
Let's go to the mountaintop!  
**Let's go where our prayers are lifted and our voices shared in songs of praise.**  
Let's go to the mountaintop!  
**Let's go where Jesus heals our heartache and all who mourn are comforted.**  
Let's go to the mountaintop!  
**Let's surrender our worries to God and feel the warmth of God's grace call us home again.**

\*Opening Hymn *"Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"* (vs. 1-3) 103

\*Opening Prayer  
**Holy God,**  
**Shine on us that we might walk in your light and learn your ways. Give us courage, so we don't lose heart. Heal us where we need your touch, and give us the wisdom and the resources to do your will. Fill us with hope that our faith is bold, our vision is clear and our motives are righteous. Transform our lives, our church and our community that all are a reflection of your love, for we pray in the name of the One who loved us enough to die for us, Jesus the Christ. Amen.**

\*Psalter Psalm 99 with Response 819-820

\*Transfiguration Prayer 259

\*Gloria Patri 70  
**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.**

Passing of the Peace: *Let us greet one another with love and peace.*

"Let the Children Come!" Patsy Boggs  
*(Those 3 years of age through 8 years of age may go to Children's Church.)*

Anthem Choir

Scripture Lessons Exodus 24:12-18 Pages 69-70 (O.T.)  
2 Peter 1:16-21 Page 226 (N.T.)

\*Gospel Lesson Matthew 17:1-9 Pages 23 (N.T.)

Sermon Up a High Mountain Rev. Darlene L. Kelley

\*Hymn of Invitation *"Blest Be the Tie That Binds"* (vs. 1-3) 557

Pastoral Prayer  
The Lord's Prayer  
**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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Presentation of Tithes & Offerings  
Offertory Laurie Knapp

\*Doxology 95  
**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him all creatures here below; praise him above ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen**

\*Closing Hymn *"Hymn of Promise"* 707

\*Benediction  
\*Benediction Response *"May the Lord, Mighty God, Bless and Keep You"* Choir & Congregation

\*Please Stand As You Are Able

## Leading in Worship Today

Pastor: Rev. Darlene L. Kelley AV Director: Marie Stiles  
Pianist: Laurie Knapp AV Assistants: Chris Derrick; Erin Derrick  
Liturgist: Tom Geddens Time Together: Joyce Robinson; Slone Taylor

**VISITORS ARE WELCOME** in the service of worship! Please make use of the visitor's tags (located in the pew backs) to help us better welcome you as a visitor to Trinity this morning.

**Today's Lovely Flowers** are given to the **Glory of God.**

**“AS MEMBERS OF THIS CONGREGATION, WE WILL FAITHFULLY PARTICIPATE IN ITS MINISTRIES BY OUR PRAYERS ...**

Marie Stiles	Marilyn Lloyd	Ruth Frady	Rhett Hook	Raleigh Carter	Christopher McCroskey
John Ballentine	Diane Muszynski	Ray Frady	Latson Lewis	English Pearcy	Jeanette Hornsby
Hannah Glanz	Hilda Edwards	Fran Laska	Kaye Floyd	Libby Strickland	Jan Stamps

**Shut-Ins:** Gillett Hipp; Linda Maloch

**Family and Friends:** **Donna Eidson** (former Trinity pastor); **Ghent Brewer** (brother-in-law of Jeanette Hornsby); **Kim & Sandra Meetze** (friends of Martha Cooke); **Dave Griffin** (husband of Chantel Griffen); **Matt Imel** (husband of Holley Gleaton Imel); **Cayla Watters** (friend of Karen Carter); **Tommy Stokes** (nephew of Joyce Robinson); **Kati Flowers** (mother of friend of Blake Kamoroff); **Berry Cochran** (son-in-law of Charlyn McNeill); **Jim Lewis** (father of Mark Lewis); **Christina Lindemuth** (daughter of Karen Carter); **James Leonard** (previous coworker of Mark Lewis); **Kathleen Varnadore** (Ted & Ruth Frady's neighbor); **Paul Frenzel** (friend of Chris Derrick); **Sissy Henry** (former member of Trinity); **Keith James, Jay Clark** (friends of Darlene Kelley); **Sean & Tucker Smith** (cousins of Darlene Kelley); **Colby Martin** (son of Donna Muszynski); **Lynne Powell** (friend of the Ballentines and Branhams); **Bryan Collard** (brother-in-law of Mary Sue Lewis); ; **Michael McNeill** (brother of Mary Sue Lewis); **Mary Davis** (daughter of Bob & Libby Strickland); **Linda Allen, Sandra Hornsby, Gloria Erd, Gwen Scott, Dana Ammer** (friends of Lynn Martin); **Nancy Wilson** (friend of Jeanette Hornsby); **David & Kristen Turner** (brother and sister-in-law of Pam Turner); **Chip Mixon** (friend of Tommy Gleaton); **James Boggs** (father of Claire Boggs); **Robert Bradley** (Business Associate of Simon Ross); **Monnie Tiller** (friend of Chris Derrick); **Adrin & Linda Hargett** (stepfather and stepmom of Christopher McCroskey); **Haidee Baehr** (friends of Ruth Frady); **Denise Paul, Scott & Karen Nelson** (cousins of Gale Frady); **Dan Conner, Max Johnson** (friends of Gale Frady); **Janet Beck** (friend of Jo Ann Heiting); **Adam Lavender** (son of Phil Lavender)

If you have a friend or family member on the Prayer List, we ask you to please keep us updated. If no word is received, we will trust that our prayers have been answered and remove the name. To update us, please call the office or e-mail us at [trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com](mailto:trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com).

#### **OUR PRESENCE ...**

Attendance 02/08 SS: 9 Worship: 37

#### **OUR GIFTS ...**

General Fund 02/08 \$ 8,029.00 Souper Bowl: \$ 144.47

#### **OUR SERVICE...**

#### **OUR WITNESS.”**

#### **Upcoming Events**

**02/16** Exercise, 10:30 a.m.

**02/17** Pancakes to Ashes, 6 p.m.

**02/18** T.a.G., 7 p.m.

**02/19** Exercise, 10:30 a.m.

**02/20** Office Closed

Book Club Dinner, 6 p.m.

**08/21** The Pines, 2 p.m.



**Ministers**  
**Pastor**  
**Resident Bishop**  
**District Superintendent**

**The Congregation**  
**Darlene L. Kelley**  
**Leonard Fairley**  
**Rev. Fran M. Elrod**

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***Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.***

***Our vision is to Connect, Nurture, Inspire and Transform***



**And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white.**

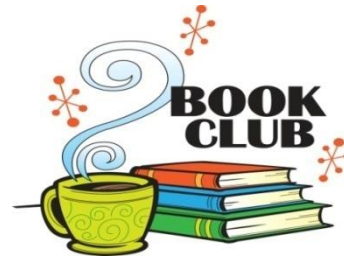
Matthew 17:2, NRSV

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**SHROVE TUESDAY**  
Pancakes to Ashes  
Tuesday night, February 17  
6 p.m.

Join us for pancakes in the fellowship hall at 6:00 p.m. on Shrove Tuesday, February 17. After we enjoy our pancakes and the sun sets, we will join together in prayer and begin our Lenten celebration with an imposition of the ashes. Everyone is welcome.



**Friday, February 20**  
6:00 p.m.

Join us for an opportunity to share a meal and time together as we discuss Father Richard Rohr's book, *The Universal Christ*. Our Book Club gatherings have been a great opportunity to grow personally and as a community. A meal will be provided, and we will gather in the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 p.m. All you have to bring is an open mind and an open heart. Bring a friend and join us—even if all you've read is the title. What happens at Book Club stays at Book Club, and we hope to see you there!



**Saturday, February 21**  
2 p.m.

Our Love Your Neighbor Ministry continues at **2:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 21**. We will sing, pray and share a snack with them. Everyone is welcome to join us.



**Taste of Trinity**  
Sunday, February 22

Taste of Trinity, our church-wide covered dish luncheon, will be held on **Sunday, February 22**. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to share great food and fellowship!

**Please Note: The Ministry Team will meet following Taste of Trinity.**



**Columbia Community Concert Band's Winter Concert**  
February 22 at 4:00 PM

You're invited to join us for the sweet sounds of the CCCB as we present our winter concert on Sunday, February 22, at 4 PM in the Auditorium at Airport High School, 1315 Boston Avenue in West Columbia. From a special arrangement of Amazing Grace to the songs of Neil Diamond, the theme music from Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory, the rousing Sousa marches and so much more, there's music for everyone. We hope to see you there!



**Saturday, February 28**  
9:30 a.m.

The Ladies Group will meet at Lizard's Thicket on Hwy #1 in Lexington, at 9:30 a.m. on February 28, March 28, April 25 and May 23. Marie Stiles will send out an email each month to obtain your RSVP. If you are not on Marie's group email and wish to be added, contact her at 803.463.9706 or [mariebstyles@gmail.com](mailto:mariebstyles@gmail.com).

Trinity UMC  
February 15, 2026  
Rev. Darlene L. Kelley

## Up a High Mountain

One of my very favorite writers, Barbara Brown Taylor, opens her sermon on the Transfiguration like this:

*Who can talk about the Transfiguration? Jesus certainly did not talk about it, and neither did the three disciples who were with him. According to Luke, “they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.” You wonder how {the Gospel writers ever heard about it themselves, or whether they questioned the wisdom of writing it down.}*

*The moment they did, it became public property. All kinds of people started pawing through it for significance, explaining why so-and-so was there, why such-and-such said this or that. I guess that is all we know how to do with an experience that does not fit any of our categories. We just keep handling it until we wear it down to where it feels safe to us. We just keep analyzing it until we can say something intelligent about it.*

*The truth is that the {Gospel} has presented us with an intensely private moment between Jesus and God, so private that much of it happened in a cloud. <sup>1</sup>*

I think Rev. Taylor’s words speak to me because of my own experiences with Transfiguration Sunday. As Rev. Taylor explained: *it did not fit any of {my} categories*, and I found myself wrestling with an uneasy realization: things in the Bible can be confusing and maybe a bit frightening. Years of experience haven’t helped.

And I have to confess that every year when the church calendar declares “Transfiguration Sunday”, I still feel a bit uneasy. It is difficult to be in the front of the room sharing the story of Transfiguration. After all: *who can talk about it?*

And I want to do just what Rev. Taylor warns us about. I want to *handle* the story *until I wear it down to where it feels safe*. I want to analyze it and break it down into parts until I have something intelligent to say about it. I put the big theologian’s cap on, and my brain takes over, desperate to find a sermon-worthy nugget that penetrates the cloud and gives us a clear view of glory up on that mountaintop. I thumb through the commentaries and check my sources and mutter prayers under my breath and wonder where to start.

This year, I started with the dictionary. *Transfiguration*—*a complete change of form or appearance*

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<sup>1</sup> Barbara Brown Taylor, “Thin Place”, *Home By Another Way*.

*into a more beautiful or spiritual state: The Transfiguration—Christ's appearance in radiant glory to three of his disciples.* A Gospel story recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke. I am not sure that gives us more to work with. OK. So, the dictionary gave us a definition, but it wasn't much help.

We know that Jesus was transfigured—changed into a more beautiful state, shining and dazzling. But even with the aid of a definition or two, we're still left with questions. We're still left *handling the story, analyzing it until it feels safe*, and that's just part of the story.

Then there's Moses and Elijah. We can analyze their appearance—Moses with the Law, and Elijah the Prophet. So, now Jesus is dazzling, shining like the sun, *changed into a more beautiful state*, and deep in conversation with the Law and the Prophet. There's real possibility for analysis here.

And what about the voice coming out of the cloud? "This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him". Doesn't it fit nicely with the voice coming down from heaven the day that Jesus was baptized in the Jordan? "*And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "This is my beloved Son; with whom I am well pleased."* (Mk.1: 10-11).

A voice coming down from the heavens when Jesus starts his ministry, and a voice up high on the mountaintop as the end draws near and Jesus prepares to ride into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey. Surely, there's much to think about here.

But Rev. Taylor's words are haunting me. It is Transfiguration Sunday, and *all kinds of people* have started pawing through the story for significance, explaining why so-and-so was there, why such-and-such said this or that. I guess that is all we know how to do with an experience that does not fit any of our categories. We just keep handling it until we wear it down to where it feels safe to us. We just keep analyzing it until we can say something intelligent about it.

And I am left sighing and muttering more prayers under my breath. Perhaps, sometimes we have to sit with the tension of mystery.

After all, God is mystery beyond comprehension. And isn't that one of the grand things about God? Whether you are an apostle or a lowly shepherd, whether you are a Bishop or a cashier at Walmart—you can experience God. You can be in relationship with God. You can pray and surrender and read the Gospel, and feel the truth in your heart, and you can feel the tension of unanswered questions. That's one of the best things about being a United Methodist. We believe in Scripture, Tradition, REASON and Experience. We don't believe you have to stop asking questions to live a faith-filled life.

We can ask questions of ourselves. What brings us to the top of the mountain? What am I searching the horizon for?

I was blessed to hear Adam Hamilton speak last week at the Bishop's School, and the fact that Methodists can ask questions was a big part of his message. Born into a Catholic family that didn't

attend church regularly, then moving on to a very rigid, evangelical tradition left Hamilton with few opportunities to ask questions or share any of his doubts. He was made to feel that asking questions weakened your faith or insulted God in some way. It wasn't until he discovered Methodism that he felt comfortable examining his faith critically.

We can ask questions of our tradition. What does the church believe? What do we stand for as United Methodists? And we don't all have to agree on the answers either.

We can gather together and share our experience of God; we can analyze the Scriptures and the tenets of our faith. We can share. We can debate. We can analyze all day long. And we worship in community. Yet, all of us experience God in intensely private moments. God is cloaked in clouds of mystery, yet God whispers in our ears.

When I was in seminary, there was a great teaching assistant in our New Testament class. One day two students were in a big debate over something in the text. And the debate got heated, and the whole class started to get nervous—here were two people with strong opinions about what the Scripture was saying, and they were dug in, both so sure that they were right.

And the teaching assistant said: “This is one of the reasons I'm a believer”. And the whole class got quiet. He stopped us in our tracks. After all, wouldn't the fact that two people could have such different interpretations of the Scriptures and argue so vehemently on opposite sides leave you a bit shaky in your faith? How would disputes over Scripture make you a believer?

And the teaching assistant said: This is why the Bible is the *living* Word of God. As long as it speaks to us in different ways, we'll keep reading it and talking about it.

This morning we are taken to the mountaintop, and we may analyze the climb for days and still look out over different views. But that is one of the grand things about God. God is a mystery, whispering in our ears. We are all on an equal playing field, all children of God, all loved beyond imagination, all invited into relationship with God. God is an equal opportunity lover, a mystery and a close companion—all at once. And though we cannot stay on the mountaintop... if we invite God in—we will be transformed. What do you want to change in your life?

Amen.