

Transfiguration B 2018
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St. Matthew's Kellers Church
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Grace, mercy, and peace to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. Amen

I like the challenge of working puzzles, seeing what goes with what. The colors that are similar, the shading and highlighting that matches, the shape that is needed right there. I do the outside first, then group together similar colors. Before long, parts of the picture are revealed. Then a little more. Often about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through, I wonder, "Where are all these pieces going to go?" The next day I question if I have all the pieces. But, one, by one, the picture fills up – the whole scene is revealed. Then that one piece that was flat on one side but obviously not part of the edge made sense!

This season of Epiphany has been about revealing who Jesus is. Revealing God's desires, God's plans. Like putting together a 1,000 piece puzzle, we have seen little bits of the picture of God's desires revealed.

Today is Transfiguration Sunday. The end of the season of Epiphany. On the first Sunday after Epiphany we celebrated the Baptism of Our Lord. Jesus baptized by John in the River Jordan. Today Jesus is on the mountaintop, meeting with Moses and Elijah. !!! On both days, Baptism of Our Lord and Transfiguration, we hear God's words in the gospel: "This is my Son, the Beloved!" All that we have learned about Jesus since his baptism, God confirms in the voice from the cloud. Jesus is God's Son, God's beloved. He who called followers, telling them he would have them fish for people, is God's beloved. He whom the unclean spirit called Holy One of God, and who commanded that unclean spirit, is God's beloved, still. He who healed Simon's mother-in-law and many others, is loved by God. He who proclaimed the good news that God has come near is still beloved by God.

Now, in addition to being beloved by God, God has transfigured Jesus. Made his face and body and even his clothes to become bright, shining, whiter than any human could bleach them. (And, no, this is not a Tide commercial.) Jesus' body was shining like Moses was shining on the mountain where he met with God, where God gave Moses the tablets of the 10 Commandments. The same mountain where Moses would come to speak with God about his problems with the people. Moses would go down the mountain with his face shining so brightly he had to wear a veil, so the other Israelites could stand to look at him. Here is another part of the puzzle: God allows Moses to appear to the transfigured Jesus and his companions. And Elijah, too. Elijah, the great prophet who had defeated hundreds of the prophets of the god of the foreign queen. Elijah, who after fleeing from the angry queen to a solitary cave, heard God in the sound of sheer silence. Elijah, the prophet who, in today's first reading, was carried up from earth in fire and wind, as Elisha watched. God allows Elijah to speak with Jesus, too. The great leader of the people; the great prophet of the people; meet the son of a carpenter. Who is then declared, again, to be God's beloved Son. And God says more: "Listen to him!"

Get the picture? Almost. The picture is not yet complete. Jesus cautions his disciples who joined him on the mountaintop to keep this event quiet. The disciples do keep this secret. Until "after the son of man had risen from the dead." For while much has been revealed, while the picture is getting clearer, there is more to come. There is more to listen to. There is more to see. And feel. And dread. We are about to enter into Lent, the season of Jesus' suffering. The season of Jesus' pain. The season of sin rising against God's love and God's will. In one sense, when Lent is over, we will have a complete picture. But again, not quite. For the puzzle of what God is doing will not be complete until each of us stands before God – humble before our Creator. Then the beauty of all that God has in mind *will* be clear to us.

In the meantime – let us remember the shining experiences of this day; and the echo of God's words from the cloud: This is my Son, the beloved; listen to him! We will. Oh, we will. Amen