

# NEW BEGINNINGS LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Transfiguration of our Lord – March 02<sup>nd</sup>, 2025 (11:11 am)

## THE BRIDGE

*Psalm 99*

*Deuteronomy 34:1-12*

*Hebrews 3:1-6*

**Luke 9:28-36**

### **God Gives the Gift of a Child to Destroy Death**

The Lord opened the barren womb of Hannah and gave her the gift of the son for whom she prayed, and in grateful response she presented and gave the child, Samuel, to the Lord's service. *"As long as he lives, he is lent to the LORD"* (1 Sam. 1:28). So, too, did Mary and Joseph present the Child promised from the fall, born of a virgin's womb. The true offering wasn't the turtledoves or young pigeons. It was the Child they carried. This Child has come to *"destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery"* (Heb. 2:14b-15). Set free by His advent in our flesh and the promise of what He would do *"in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people"* (Heb. 2:17b), Simeon and Anna rejoiced. We also rejoice, for we, too, can face death unafraid and *"depart in peace"* (Luke 2:29) when our time comes.

We find ourselves at Transfiguration Sunday once again. It can sometimes feel like a bridge in the middle of nowhere, with pastors and liturgists searching for meaning within it. The Transfiguration was a unique event, one that may seem distant or difficult to connect with today—just another date on the Church calendar. However, this day carries important lessons for us as believers.

### **1 – The Bridge Between Epiphany and Lent**

Transfiguration Sunday serves as a bridge between Epiphany and Lent—between glory and the cross, between Jesus' glorious ministry and His suffering ministry. That is why it holds significance in the Church calendar.

One striking aspect of the mountaintop experience is that, despite having spent months with Jesus—learning directly from Him and witnessing His miracles—the disciples still needed the voice from heaven to point them to Jesus. How could that be?

Now, let's reflect on our own lives. Many of us have been baptized for 40, 50, or even 60 years. We have spent decades in contact with Jesus' teachings and have walked a long road with Him. Yet, we still need to be reminded by the voice from heaven, spoken through His Word: **"Listen to Him!"**

We need this bridge—Jesus. To those outside the faith, He may seem like a bridge to nowhere, an irrelevant connection. But in faith, Jesus is the bridge that connects ears and heart, faith and action, Word and world, life and eternity.

## **2 – Jesus is the Bridge**

In our lives, He is:

- **The bridge between our sins and forgiveness** – Romans 5
- **The bridge between despair and hope**
- **The bridge that connects us to God beyond ourselves**

## **3 – Four Invitations from Transfiguration Sunday**

### **Bridge to Forgiveness: *Repent and Believe Him!***

If Jesus worked in public relations, He would be the greatest name in the field. In one sentence, He summarized His entire message and mission: **“Repent and believe the good news.”**

### **Bridge from Ears to Heart: *Listen to Him!***

Of the four basic forms of communication—reading, speaking, writing, and listening — three are formally taught in school. But do we ever receive training in how to listen?

It is easy to keep people busy—engaging their hands, feet, eyes, and tongues — but our ears often remain idle more than they should. Yet, faith comes by hearing (Romans 10:17). Listening to Jesus is essential.

### **Bridge Over Difficult Waters: *Walk with Him***

Jesus is part of our daily lives. Walking with Him means staying close—both to Him and to His body, the Church.

Except when He withdrew to pray alone, Jesus was always surrounded by His disciples. As we walk with Him, we too must descend from the mountaintop into our daily routines, facing life’s challenges.

Faith is not about pursuing endless mountaintop experiences. Sometimes, churches face pressure to make every Sunday a remarkable event, but the Church reflects life—and life is frequently steady, repetitive, constant, and even liturgical. There are, of course, chaotic moments, but in the midst of uncertainty, **God’s constancy anchors us.** Church and daily life go hand in hand. Special moments exist, but so does the steady rhythm of daily faithfulness. Jesus is the bridge that connects both.

### **Bridge to God’s Presence: *Adore Him!***

As Christians, we often feel like we always need to be busy, doing something. As one internet cartoon humorously put it: **“Jesus is coming—look busy!”**

Imagine if Jesus returned while you were napping or relaxing on the beach. Would that be a problem? It seems Peter had a similar mindset—believing they had to *do* something rather than simply be present with Jesus.

But worship is not about productivity—it is about being with Him. **Adore Jesus. Enjoy His presence. Listen to Him. Learn from Him. Receive His sacraments. Simply be with Him.**

In our city, there is a bridge often considered the largest over the smallest body of water in the world—**the Albert Memorial Bridge**.<sup>[3]</sup>

Jesus, however, is the **ultimate** bridge. Compared to Him, sin, death, and the devil are nothing more than a small, muddy stream. **He has conquered them all.** He is the bridge over this troubled world, leading us into the life that will never end—the bridge to eternity.