

15th February 2026. Sunday before Lent

Prayer for today: Almighty God, whose Son was revealed in majesty before he suffered death upon a cross: give us grace to perceive his glory, that we may be strengthened to suffer with him and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Among those who are sick we pray for Will Sadler, Leo Pyle, John Gibson, Brenda Clark, Elizabeth Wood, Nigel Baty-Symes, Andrew McKendrick, Graeme Common, Kate Marris, Maureen Stevens, Prue and Nancy, Ned Ryan, Daniel Bosman, Suzie Dent, Nick Cook, Christina Baldwin, Lorraine Dodd, Kathleen Lee, Carol McKendrick, Stuart Bell, Maggie Bennett, Elizabeth Sambell, and Heather Loughead.

Among those who have died we remember Sue Hanning, and pray for Keith, Tori, Izzi and all her family, and also Nancy Robson, Emily Herold, Alistair Robson, Sheila Robson, Derek White and Marjorie Roddam, whose year's mind is about this time.

Sue Hanning's funeral will take place at Whitley Chapel on Monday 2nd March at 10 a.m.

Wednesday is Ash Wednesday. There will be a sung service here in Church for the beginning of Lent at 6 p.m., with the participation of St. Mary's choir, under the direction of Paul Berry.

Our Lent Study course this year is an exploration of the Old Testament, created by Chris Simmons. We will be meeting on

Thursday afternoons in Lent, from 2.30 to 3.30 p.m. at High Juniper, by kind invitation from Mrs. Barbara Parker. All are welcome, and the course promises to be most interesting. Please contact me or Chris if you wish to receive the study notes to accompany this course.

Readings:

2 Peter 1: 16-21

¹⁶For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eye-witnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷He received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.' ¹⁸We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

¹⁹We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. ²¹For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 99

The Lord reigns,
let the nations tremble;
he sits enthroned between the cherubim,

let the earth shake.
² Great is the Lord in Zion;
 he is exalted over all the nations.
³ Let them praise your great and awesome name –
 he is holy.
⁴ The King is mighty, he loves justice –
 you have established equity;
 in Jacob you have done
 what is just and right.
⁵ Exalt the Lord our God
 and worship at his footstool;
 he is holy.
⁶ Moses and Aaron were among his priests,
 Samuel was among those who called on his name;
 they called on the Lord
 and he answered them.
⁷ He spoke to them from the pillar of cloud;
 they kept his statutes and the decrees he gave them.
⁸ Lord our God,
 you answered them;
 you were to Israel a forgiving God,
 though you punished their misdeeds.
⁹ Exalt the Lord our God
 and worship at his holy mountain,
 for the Lord our God is holy.

Matthew 17: 1-9

After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ² There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his

clothes became as white as the light. ³ Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

⁴ Peter said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters – one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.’

⁵ While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!’

⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground, terrified. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them. ‘Get up,’ he said. ‘Don’t be afraid.’ ⁸ When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, ‘Don’t tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.’

Thoughts on today’s readings

For a few days, usually in August, the rather muted colours of the hills that surround Hexhamshire are instead vibrant with the purple of the flowering heather. Indeed, walk in the heather on a hot day and an almost intoxicating perfume will rise from it as you pass. Thus these hills have their moment of glory, their transfiguration, but soon it is past for another year.

The bride on her wedding day, in her finery, and in the love and the excitement of the day, shines with a glory all her own. It is a kind of transfiguration. When the celebrations are past she will return to the

world of work and the daily round, but the memory of that glory will remain.

In the Gospels the description of the transfiguration comes directly after Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and the response of Jesus that it is his destiny to be put to death. The transfiguration has been described as God's response. There are deliberate echoes of the transfiguration of Moses described in Exodus: the location on the mountain, the 6 days' journey, the 3 who accompanied him and, indeed, the presence of Moses and Elijah.

This moment of glory is an assurance that Peter was not mistaken: it was indeed God who inspired him to declare that Jesus is Lord. This then is God's confirmation, underlined by the voice from the cloud: 'This is my Son.' But this is a vision which is overwhelming, terrifying even: who may endure the presence of God? At the beginning it seems Peter wants the moment to last: he speaks of providing shelters on the mountain top, but when he hears the voice he and his companions hide their faces in the earth.

It is Jesus who comes and touches them, who restores them and raises them from the ground. He is with them for now, but their journey will take them to Jerusalem and there he will have journey on, and come to the Father. This vision, this assurance, this moment of glory, will remain with them and they will witness to others.

For Jesus this transfiguration is a sign of the glory that was his from the beginning, yet hidden in his humanity, and will be his when his work on earth is done, but what of us?

We may indeed have our moments of glory in our lives, maybe even fame. High in the Italian Alps men and women from the across the world are competing for a gold medal in the winter Olympics: a moment of glory. For a few there will be joy and triumph, drama and disappointment for others. Hopefully for all there will remain a sense of fulfilment because they were there, and that will remain after today's headlines are forgotten.

We also were called, chosen, to be beloved children: a son, a daughter of the Father in Jesus Christ. The face, the flesh of Jesus which was transfigured upon the mountain was ours, human and mortal. We may not all achieve fame, but we may all embody the God News of Jesus Christ in our service, but above all in the witness of our lives. It is in love, in faithfulness, in hope, in the transforming power of Christ in our lives that we are transfigured, that we are a sign of his glory. And as we on our journey begin to enter the days of Lent, we hear the words of the Father to those followers of Jesus: 'Listen to him; listen to my beloved Son.'