

WELCOME 2nd March 2025 – Transfiguration '25 C

Luke 9:28-36 & Matthew 5:13-16

Welcome! It's great to be together again today! Along with your worship order you have in your hands & **Bible Study Qs** that are able to lead you deeper into God's word/work in your life, & help you share that w/ someone else. We also use them for our **Zoom Bible Study Catch-ups on Friday @ 1p.m.** Link is on website...

As we move into this week... 299,774 kilometers per **second** – Even the non-scientists like me know: That's the speed of light. No matter the origin or the destiny...From one edge of the universe to the other, from your headlights to the kangaroo hopping across the road, or from your bedside lamp to the toilet...the speed is the same *AS IS THE PURPOSE*. Light has but **one** purpose... Banish darkness. Light can only drive out darkness. It matters not how deep...vast... overwhelming the darkness...light always drives it out. In the presence of light, darkness flees.

"You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp & then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house."

Light has but one purpose: *BANISH DARKNESS*. In the presence of light, darkness flees.

God has called Living Water Fellowship to be a vibrant Christian community that glorifies God by inviting all people to become disciples of Jesus who grow in his grace and go in his power to show his love to the world

The only thing that drives out darkness better or faster than light is the love of God as we know it in the crucified & risen Jesus Christ...The light of his love is the light no darkness can overcome. The **"why"** for you/me...Living Water... Show His Love to the World...Called by God for God's glory... Inviting people into a life of living w/ Jesus as Jesus directs...Growing in likeness to him & being empowered by the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the grave...obeying his command to love others as he loved us...What is it we do as followers **of** Jesus... **WE. BANISH. DARKNESS.** By & in the love of Jesus...we banish darkness...Until our last breath.

You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world.

You are a city on a hill. Shine as Christ radiates in you!

Let's pray...then explore & experience that together...

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Living God, in your presence there is fullness of life and love. Draw us deeper into the life of your Son day by day that the fullness of his love may flow out of our lives to others. Use us as agents of your Kingdom of grace...We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ who stretched out his life for all. Amen.

Let's hear God's word...

FAITH CHAT:

1. Share one place where you experienced God's presence this week.
2. Where is the "darkest" place in your life right now?

Transfiguration '25 C – ANSWERING THE “WHY?”: FINISH WELL

So...when you look at **this**...what do you see? What about **this**...or **this**...or **this**...? Rorschach inkblots. Developed **by** Hermann Rorschach, for > 100 yrs they've been a tool some psychologists & psychiatrists use to explore how people perceive & organize reality. How we “see” those nondescript images is supposed to give some insight into personality, creativity, imagination, consciousness. They've been studied more than almost any other psychological personality measure.

Almost 40 yrs ago in a pastoral counselling seminar one of the presenters ran our cohort through a series of inkblot assessments to give us a feel for how they might be used. The kid from Texas was skeptical...so I hung around afterwards & said, “Really?” Patiently he explained they were a tool best left to those w/ some expertise. I took that to mean that wasn't me. But then I said, “Do you use it w/ your patients?” He smiled & glanced around the room as if we were about to be co-conspirators in some great secret...& he said, “I've found it less than helpful. **Most** people tend to see what they look for.” The patients or the psychologists? “Yes.” **THAT** is what I remember from that day-long seminar: Most people tend to see what they look for... farmers see blight across a paddock...Mom see spelling/punctuation/grammatical errors... Drs see “illness” Teachers see misbehaviour...glass half-empty/half-full...We tend to see what we look for.

In 1992, Gary Chapman published his earth-shaking book, The Five Love Languages: how to express heartfelt commitment to your mate – maybe you've read it – I'm sure I've mentioned it – His point **is** simple: All human beings look for love – we need to give/receive love - we “look” for it throughout our lives – our personal radar is always on the sweep for love - we all look for love. We see/receive & give it in different ways gifts, time, service, affirmation, or touch but we all look for love...like a thirsty outback traveler looks for H₂O

Now think about it...that need – that search for love is universal. It is bigger than culture, race or nationality. Our human radar constantly sweeps to find love. From Tolland to Tibet & Koorring to Kansas City...that search for love is universal. Why? Because **all** of us are crafted in the image of God who is love. And because sin distorts that image in all of us...all of us are on a universal search for that which we need most & have lost most dearly...intimacy w/ the God who made us in love for himself. But like that 1980's country song...we go looking for love in all the wrong places. What does John say: **Do** not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, & pride in our achievements & possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. – 1 Jn 2:15-17

John knows...We will pursue...attach our hearts to...devote ourselves to...offer our love to people, experiences, things, possessions...desperate to give & get love in return...but all that is fading/wasting away...fleeting/futile & fails to completely repair the wound in our hearts or fill that soul deep need for love. So when at the outset of his ministry Jesus says; **For** God so loved the world that he gave his one & only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. – Jn 3:16-17 Jesus promises us that if we look to him & only to him...we'll see love incarnate/love in the flesh w/ our name engraved on his hands branded into his heart...his voice calling our name because he has come for us...& in his love we are transformed into living like him...being like him...loving like him...

Jesus then spent the next 3 years showing/teaching his followers that it is not the theological astuteness of the Pharisees not the fundamentalism of the Sadducees not the revolution of the zealots & not the austerity of the Essenes but the love of the Father poured out through Jesus & his people that will transform the world & drive out sin/death/evil & ultimately wipe every tear from every eye eliminate death sorrow crying & pain & make all things new...That in his love was the radiant brightness of the Father's presence driving out every shadow of darkness...overcoming every fear...comforting every heartache & restoring all things to the Father. Best of all he imparted that radiant brightness of the Father's love to all who would trust in him...believe in his name...be overtaken by His Spirit. **THAT'S YOU!**

You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp & then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father. Jesus knows that the world will know we are His not by our sermons our sacraments our festivals buildings proper theologies family values cool Christian jewelry publishing houses concerts or workshops or how many of us we can elect to Parliament...but by our love. Cyprian, early Bishop of Carthage, said, **“We** do not preach great things – we live them.”

Jesus goes to the cross to show in word & deed that God is love & that all of us, world over, made in the image of that love, are loved to the very end & beyond what we would ever hope for or imagine. Which is why this “command” about “good deeds” or some trans light...that love that you've received in Jesus...is really a gift. It's not a command like we give to our children clean your room eat your vegetables, practice your music...because if all we see there is just another command, we fail like the 11 did. But this command is a gift because God – who made all that is – passionately loves each & every human soul on this planet & pledges himself to be

intimately involved/hands-on in our lives...especially those times when absolutely everything hurts...nothing is right...even if it costs him his One & only Son. And then God invites us into that passionate involvement w/ the world & the people around us ...whatever the cost...& works in us to make his love real through us.

We who have been embraced by the love of God in the crucified & risen Jesus now have the possibility & the responsibility & the power of Jesus living in us to be forerunners, first visible residents, of this new creation God will one day bring to completion. The new heaven & the new earth where “tears... death...sorrow...crying & pain” are eliminated from the landscape are gifts of God by the hand of the One who defeated death itself...But the new heaven & new earth are also a gift Jesus gives to the world through us. Through our deeds & words of love, generosity, the joy we bring to any circumstance...the hope we manifest in the face of life’s painful days... our active seeking for opportunities to serve & do good & make this world less “tearful, painful, sorrowful & deathlike.” When we are bold enough to forgive... courageous enough to apologize...audacious enough to reconcile by doing good to someone who’s hurt us...God promises to make a home in those who make themselves vulnerable in love – who open the corners of this world to God’s love by their own love.

Martin Luther in his booklet “*On Christian Liberty*” says it like this: “I will give myself as a Christ to my neighbour, just as Christ offered himself to me; I will do nothing in this life except what I see is necessary, profitable & salutary to my neighbour since through faith I have an abundance of all good things in Christ.” Since in Christ I have an abundance of all good things I have nothing to prove & nothing to lose...so I will give myself as a Christ to my neighbour...If they’re going to see Jesus at all they’re going to have to first see him in me.

Jesus Christ’s only method for widening the reach of his kingdom...is us... “To make each person he touches magnetic enough w/ his love to draw others.” (Frank Laubach) I put this up last week...still true...

The greatest proof of Christianity for others is not how far you can logically analyze your reasons for believing,

but how far in practice you will stake your own life on your belief. -- T. S. Eliot

How far will you & I stake our lives on the love we’ve been given? How deeply will we trust it to transform someone else if we simply live it & share it w/ them?

Aaron...Heydon...baptisms...

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As you leave today, be specific & share w/ your neighbour...

TAKE IT HOME

Where & to whom Jesus is sending you to shine the light of his love this week?

(Be specific...where do you hear Jesus saying, “Go”?)

Prayer after the sermon...

Lord Jesus fan into flame the gift of love & life you have given to us. Make us radiant with your presence & power. By your Word and your Spirit move us into your world to share with others the life and love we have received from you. We pray especially for those we know who live distant from God’s grace Make us agents of their salvation...In your holy name we pray...Amen