



Transfiguration of our Lord
Sunday, February 15, 2026
Esther Lutheran Church, ELCA

Introduction

Today's festival is a bridge between the Advent-Christmas-Epiphany cycle that comes to a close today and the Lent-Easter cycle that begins in several days. On a high mountain Jesus is revealed as God's beloved Son, echoing the words at his baptism. This vision of glory sustains us as Jesus faces his impending death in Jerusalem. We turn this week to Ash Wednesday and our yearly baptismal journey from Lent to Easter. Some churches put aside the alleluia at the conclusion of today's liturgy. This word of joy will be omitted during the penitential season of Lent and will be sung again at Easter.

PRELUDE

BELL

WELCOME

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

Please stand as you are able

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

P: Often we enter this sanctuary expecting little,

C: Thinking we will get the same as last week.

P: But every now and then,

C: God surprises us.

P: Jesus' light blinds us

C: And we are changed forever.

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Incarnate God,

C: You have given us the most precious gift of all: yourself. And yet we live as if there is nothing extraordinary about being your children. We forget, ignore, or devalue your blessings of grace and forgiveness. We undermine ourselves and others, and refuse to seek help when it is available. Show us your mercy and forgive our stubborn ways, for the sake of Jesus. Amen.

P: Immanuel is here. Fear has been banished. Hear the words of your redemption in the angels' chorus and see your salvation in the real person of Christ on earth. We are forgiven, and we are never alone. **Amen.**

***GATHERING HYMN: "How Good, Lord, to Be Here!" (ELW 315)**

**1 How good, Lord, to be here!
Your glory fills the night;
your face and garments, like the sun,
shine with unborrowed light.**

**2 How good, Lord, to be here!
your beauty to behold
where Moses and Elijah stand,
your messengers of old.**

- 3** **Fulfiller of the past
and hope of things to be,
we hail your body glorified
and our redemption see.**
- 4** **Before we taste of death,
we see your kingdom come;
we long to hold the vision bright
and make this hill our home.**
- 5** **How good, Lord, to be here!
Yet we may not remain;
but since you bid us leave the mount,
come with us to the plain.**

Text: Joseph A. Robinson, 1858-1933, alt.

***GREETING:**

- P:** **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of
the Holy Spirit be with you all.**
- C:** **And also with you.**

***KYRIE : (ELW pg. 203)**

- 1** **Have mercy on us, Lord, and hear our solemn prayer.
We come to hear your living Word; it saves us from despair.**
- 2** **Have mercy on us, Christ, and wash away our sin.
Pour out your grace and make us whole, that new life may begin.**
- 3** **Have mercy on us, Lord; make sin and shame depart.
Renew us with your saving pow'r; create in us new hearts!**

***CANTICLE OF PRAISE: "*Glory Be To God In Heaven*" (ELW pg. 204)**

- 1** **Glory be to God in heaven;
peace, goodwill to all the earth.
Mighty God of all creation,
Father of surpassing worth:**

we exalt you, we adore you,
we lift high our thanks and praise.
Saints and angels bow before you;
here on earth our songs we raise.

2 Glory be to Christ forever,
 Lamb of God and Lord of love.
 Son of God and gracious Savior,
 you have come from heav'n above;
 on the cross you died to save us;
 now you reign at God's right hand.
 Hear our prayer; restore, forgive us;
 in your promise firm we stand.

3 Holy One we now acclaim you;
 Lord alone, to you we call;
 Holy One in faith we name you,
 throned on high, yet near to all:
 Jesus Christ, with God the Spirit,
 in the Father's splendor bright.
 For the peace that we inherit,
 glory be to God on high!

***PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

P: O God,

C: In the transfiguration of your Son you confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the witness of Moses and Elijah, and in the voice from the bright cloud declaring Jesus your beloved Son, you foreshadowed our adoption as your children. Make us heirs with Christ of your glory, and bring us to enjoy its fullness, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Please be seated

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song

FIRST READING: EXODUS 24:12-18

At Mount Sinai, Moses experienced the presence of God for forty days and forty nights. The “glory of the Lord” settled on the mountain, and on the seventh day God called out to Moses. On the mountain God gave Moses the stone tablets inscribed with the ten commandments.

¹² The Lord said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain and wait there; I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.” ¹³ So Moses set out with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up onto the mountain of God. ¹⁴ To the elders he had said, “Wait here for us, until we come back to you. Look, Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a dispute may go to them.” ¹⁵ Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. ¹⁶ The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud. ¹⁷ Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the Israelites. ¹⁸ Moses entered the cloud and went up on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights. Here ends the first reading.

PSALM: 2 ~ Congregation reads the *BOLD*

You are my son; this day have I begotten you. (Ps. 2:7)

¹ Why are the nations in an uproar? Why do the peoples mutter empty threats?

² **Why do the kings of the earth rise up in revolt, and the princes plot together, against the Lord and against the Lord’s anointed?**

³ “Let us break their yoke,” they say; “let us cast off their bonds from us.”

⁴ **God whose throne is in heaven is laughing; the Lord holds them in derision.**

⁵ Then in wrath God speaks to them, and in rage fills them with terror.

⁶ **“As for me, I have anointed my king upon Zion, my holy mountain.”**

⁷ Let me announce the decree of the Lord, who said to me, "You are my son; this day have I begotten you.

⁸ **Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance and the ends of the earth for your possession.**

⁹ You shall crush them with an iron rod and shatter them like a piece of pottery."

¹⁰ **And now, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.**

¹¹ Submit to the Lord with fear, and with trembling bow in worship;

¹² **lest the Lord be angry, and you perish in a sudden blaze of wrath. Happy are all who take refuge in God!**

SECOND READING: 2 PETER 1:16-21

At the transfiguration, God's voice was heard, declaring Jesus to be the beloved Son. By the activity of the Holy Spirit, God's voice continues to be heard through the word of scripture.

¹⁶ We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." ¹⁸ We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹ So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰ First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, ²¹ because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. Here ends the second reading.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: "Alleluia" (ELW pg. 205)

**Alleluia! Lord and Savior: open now your saving word.
Let it burn like fire within us; speak until our hearts are stirred.**

Alleluia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 17:1-9

Shortly before he enters Jerusalem, where he will be crucified, Jesus is revealed to Peter, James, and John in a mountaintop experience of divine glory called the transfiguration.

¹ Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. ² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became bright as light. ³ Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴ Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will set up three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁵ While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" ⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." ⁸ And when they raised their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone. ⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead." The Gospel of the Lord... **Thanks be to God!**

CHILDREN'S TIME & SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY: "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise" (ELW 834)

- 1** Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
 in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
 most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
 almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise!
- 2** Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
 nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
 thy justice like mountains high soaring above
 thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.

**3 To all, life thou givest, to both great and small;
in all life thou livest, the true life of all;
we blossom and flourish like leaves on the tree,
and wither and perish, but naught changeth thee.**

**4 Thou reignest in glory; thou dwellest in light;
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
all laud we would render; oh, help us to see
'tis only the splendor of light hideth thee!**

Text: Walter Chalmers Smith, 1824-1908, alt.

NEW MEMBER WELCOME:

P: Dear friends, we give thanks for the gift of baptism and for Ryan & Ann, one with us in the body of Christ, whom we welcome as new members into the life and ministry of this congregation. In baptism, we are welcomed into the body of Christ and sent to share in the mission of God. We are called to live among God's faithful people, to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper, to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, to serve all people, following the example of Jesus, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

Ryan & Ann, our brother and sister in Christ, do you intend to continue in the covenant of your baptism among God's people in this place?

Ryan & Ann: We do, and I ask God to help and guide me.

P: People of God, do you promise to support and pray for Kathy in her life in Christ?

C: **We do, and we ask God to help and guide us.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:

Prayer Response: "O Lord, Hear My Prayer" (ELW 751)

L: As God's beloved children united in Christ, let us pray for the church, the whole human community, and the well-being of the earth, our home.

A brief silence.

L: Revealing God, your Spirit sustains the church. Strengthen the faithful with the revelation of Christ transfigured, that we may joyfully follow him in the way of the cross. Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

L: Life-giving God, creation is full of your majesty. Nurture in us a deep respect for the interdependence of all life, and make us wise and vigilant stewards of your good earth. Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

L: Peacemaking God, the nations are in turmoil. We pray for an end to violent conflict. Give wisdom to negotiators and sanctuary to refugees. Defend any who are in danger. Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

L: Healing God, you desire wholeness for all people. Bring healing to any who are experiencing illness, chronic pain, or mental anguish. Comfort the dying and those who grieve especiall Jerry, Chris, Bruce, Jaxson, Kristy, Larry, Joan, Dennis, Lois, Brad, Dale, Doug, Gary, Shirley, Joyce, Bev, Reilly, Allison, Cadence, and Becky.. Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

L: Holy God, in our worship we glimpse your glory, hear your voice, and receive assurance of your love. Inspire all who prepare, lead, and participate in worship to serve you with reverence and joy. Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

L: Transforming God, you bring life from death. We give thanks for the witness of those who have died in faith, and we praise you for the hope we have in Christ, our Morning Star. Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

L: Confident that the Holy Spirit receives our prayers and answers us, we commend all for whom we pray to God's loving-kindness made known to us in Christ Jesus our Savior.

C: **O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: when I call, answer me.
O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: come and listen to me.
Amen.**

Please stand as you are able

***APOSTLES' CREED: (ELW pg. 217)**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
on the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen**

***SHARING OF THE PEACE:**

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: **And also with you.**

Please be seated

OFFERING

We thank you for your gifts of time, talent, and treasure that help this congregation, to continue our ministry together, and to make Christ known in our communities and the world.

OFFERING HYMN: "We Are Marching in the Light" x2 (ELW 866)

**We are marching in the light of God,
we are marching in the light of God.
We are marching in the light of God,
we are marching in the light of God.**

**We are marching, (marching, we are marching, marching,)
we are marching in the light of God.
We are marching, (marching, we are marching, marching,)
we are marching in the light of God.**

Text: South African traditional; tr. *Freedom Is Coming*, 1984
Tr. © 1984 Utryck, admin. Walton Music Corp.

Please stand as you are able

***THE OFFERING PRAYER:**

**P: You have promised us, O God,
C: That if we give up our lives to you, we will know the abundance you offer.
Accept these gifts of our wealth and effort, given for the sake of those
who need it more than we do. Bless our giving and guide our actions, for
the sake of the one we follow, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

***GREAT THANKSGIVING: spoken (ELW pg. 206)**

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift our hearts to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
C: It is right to give our thanks and praise!

***THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION: “Remember Now My Children” sung**

The night of His betrayal, our Lord took bread.
He broke it and he blessed it, and then he said,
“My body given for you is what this means,
remember now my children what you have seen.”
And then He took the chalice, and raised it high.
“My body broken for you, a full supply...
a covenant, a promise, a cleansing stream.
Remember now, my children, what you have seen.”
We share this food together, remembering Christ;
we share a common treasure and know the price;
we share it without measure, a gift of love;
we share our life forever, with God above.

***LORD’S PRAYER: *spoken* (ELW pg. 208)**

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 and ever. Amen.

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION:**

All-loving savior, just as you gathered disciples around you so long ago,

gather us now in fellowship at your table. Be truly present with us in this meal, and feed us on your promises, just as true today as they were two thousand years ago. Come to the table and know yourself as the beloved of God.

Please be seated

COMMUNION

Congregation may be seated The acolytes, ushers, organist and those assisting with communion should come forward at this time and receive communion. Following the assistants, we will celebrate Holy Communion around the altar. The ushers will direct you. We welcome all baptized Christians to the Lord's Table where we experience the unity that God intends for all people. Those who do not receive the bread and wine may receive a blessing from the pastor. Gluten-free wafers and apple juice are available.

COMMUNION HYMN: "I Love to Tell the Story" (ELW 661)

- 1 I love to tell the story
of unseen things above,
of Jesus and his glory,
of Jesus and his love.
I love to tell the story,
because I know it's true;
it satisfies my longings
as nothing else would do.**

Refrain

**I love to tell the story;
'twill be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story
of Jesus and his love.**

- 2 I love to tell the story:
how pleasant to repeat**

what seems, each time I tell it,
more wonderfully sweet!
I love to tell the story,
for some have never heard
the message of salvation
from God's own holy word.

Refrain

I love to tell the story;
'twill be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story
of Jesus and his love.

- 3 I love to tell the story,
for those who know it best
seem hungering and thirsting
to hear it like the rest.
And when, in scenes of glory,
I sing the new, new song,
I'll sing the old, old story
that I have loved so long.

Refrain

I love to tell the story;
'twill be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story
of Jesus and his love.

Text: Katherine Hankey, 1834-1911

COMMUNION HYMN: “Beautiful Savior” (ELW 838)

- 1 Beautiful Savior,
King of creation,
Son of God and Son of Man!
Truly I'd love thee,
truly I'd serve thee,

light of my soul, my joy, my crown.

**2 Fair are the meadows,
fair are the woodlands,
robed in flow'rs of blooming spring;
Jesus is fairer,
Jesus is purer,
he makes our sorrowing spirit sing.**

**3 Fair is the sunshine,
fair is the moonlight,
bright the sparkling stars on high;
Jesus shines brighter,
Jesus shines purer
than all the angels in the sky.**

**4 Beautiful Savior,
Lord of the nations,
Son of God and Son of Man!
Glory and honor,
praise, adoration,
now and forevermore be thine!**

Text: *Gesangbuch*, Münster, 1677; tr. Joseph A. Seiss, 1823-1904

Please stand as you are able

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION:**

P: Radiant God,

C: We have seen your glory in the face of Jesus Christ. In the sacrament of his body and blood you have drawn us to your heart. Send us from this table with delight, that our lives may reflect the beauty of your love, and bear witness to all we have seen and heard, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to our neighbor in need

***BLESSING**

Christ, whose glory fills the skies,
fill you with radiance
and scatter the darkness from your path.

✙ bless you now and always.

THREE-FOLD AMEN

***SENDING HYMN: *"Will You Come and Follow Me"* (ELW 798)**

1 "Will you come and follow me
 if I but call your name?
 Will you go where you don't know
 and never be the same?
 Will you let my love be shown,
 will you let my name be known,
 will you let my life be grown
 in you and you in me?

2 "Will you leave yourself behind
 if I but call your name?
 Will you care for cruel and kind
 and never be the same?
 Will you risk the hostile stare,
 should your life attract or scare?
 Will you let me answer pray'r
 in you and you in me?

3 "Will you let the blinded see
 if I but call your name?
 Will you set the pris'ners free
 and never be the same?
 Will you kiss the leper clean,
 and do such as this unseen,
 and admit to what I mean
 in you and you in me?

4 **"Will you love the you you hide
if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
to reshape the world around,
through my sight and touch and sound
in you and you in me?"**

5 **Lord, your summons echoes true
when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same.
In your company I'll go
where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
in you and you in me.**

Text: John L. Bell, b. 1949

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***DISMISSAL:**

P: Go into the world with assurance, hope and promise.

C: **Thanks be to God!**

IN OUR PRAYERS

Jerry Anderson	Chris & Bruce Carter
Jaxson Bosl	Kristy Fyhrie
Larry Sather	Joan Burquest
Dennis Rosenquist	Lois Rosenquist
Brad Sanvik- nephew of Jewel Townsend	
Rev. Bruce Miller- father of Karin Wagner	
Dale Flemming – father of Laurie Ratajesak	
Doug Tvedt – brother of Joan Burquest	
Jerry Pogose – father of Chuck Pogose	
Gary Borst – friend of the Andersons	

Shirley Nesges – friend of the Thoms
Joyce Muyres – friend of the Thoms
Bev Guse-Ohlrech – friend of the Pedersons
Reilly McCormick – friend of Esther congregation
Allison Dotzler – friend of Kathy Mittag
Cadence Smith – friend of Mandy Arvidson
Becky Yttrie – friend of the Townsends
Family and Friends of: Sarah Pomeranz, David Anderson, Ron Myren, Katie Jahnke, Dave Bendix, Megan Sheen, Colleen Burquest, and Chad Way

SERVING IN FEBRUARY

Pastor: Feb 15-SAM Jewel Townsend, Feb 22-Pr. Greg Billberg
Organists: Marcia Guenther, Brad Lambrecht
Altar Care: Donna Pederson
Usher: Brady Arvidson & Jeremy Arvidson
Acolyte: Logan Arvidson
Lay Reader: Jim Arvidson
Communion Assistant: Christy Hart
Birthday Card Sender: Mandy Arvidson
PowerPoint: NEED VOLUNTEER
Tech: Mike Lage

THIS WEEK AT ESTHER

Sunday, February 15th – Transfiguration of our Lord

Sunday fellowship before and after worship

9 am – Sunday School

9:15 am – Choir Practice

10 am – Worship with Holy Communion led by SAM Jewel Townsend -New Member Welcome

11 am - VBS Planning Meeting

2 pm – Worship at St. William's

7 pm – Church Youth Lock-In

Wednesday, February 18th

7 pm – Ash Wednesday Service

Sunday, February 22nd – First Sunday of Lent

Sunday fellowship before and after worship

9 am – Sunday School

10 am – Worship led by Pr. Greg Billberg

2 pm – Worship at St. William's

NEWS AND NOTES

Join us in welcoming Ryan Grewe & Ann Sundberg to Esther during worship today. Before and after worship we will be serving refreshments in Ryan & Ann's honor.

Sign-up sheets for 2026 Worship Tasks are on the Narthex table.

VBS Planning Meeting will be held Sunday, February 15th following worship. VBS will be held Sunday, June 14th – Thursday, June 18th. ALL ARE WELCOME!

Join us for Ash Wednesday Service with Holy Communion on February 18th at 7 pm.

You are invited to a Spaghetti Feed hosted by the youth groups of Grace Christian and Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church on Friday, February 27th from 5 pm-8pm. Free will offering. Youth activities 9 pm-12 am for youth ages 13+. Any questions please call Isaiah Schneider 320-491-082 or Luke Luedeke 320-808-3831. Flyer is in the Narthex.

World Day of Prayer will be held at church on March 6th from 7 am – 7 pm. More info to come. Any questions please ask Jewel.

Check out our new Esther Calendar on our website to keep up to date! Go to estherlutheran.com and click on "Esther Calendar."

We believe everyone has a unique and valuable place in God's family and we welcome all to share in the community of faith here at Esther. If you would like to become a member please contact Mandy in the church office at 218-338-2171 or secretary@estherlutheran.net or Jewel Townsend at 320-760-2503 or jewellht17@gmail.com

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