**Springfield Presbyterian Church**

**February 27th, 2022**

**A Transformative Transfiguration**

1. When I read this text…

When I read this text, I’m transported back to a different time in

my life during my middle school years. During those years, Mom and Dad sent me to a Lutheran Middle School, which was a blessing as I learned more about religion and faith. Yet, because it was a religious school, every time, or so it seemed, that we had a substitute, the lesson plan was the same. All of us would gather on the carpeted floor and they would roll in the clunky TV stand and there was one movie to choose from…The Ten Commandments.

Yes, the Ten Commandments from 1956, which starred Charlton Heston, alongside other famous characters of the day. But for kids in the 90s, the cinematics, for the most part were lost on us. But, as an adult – I can appreciate it was a different time in cinematic history. If you haven’t seen it, which, on the record, I’m fairly sure that I have seen it fifteen times, if not more…the scenes are very very vibrant. The movie is trying to portray this mountaintop experience with Moses and the fire and the cloud and this intensity made of Hollywood movies of the day. Looking back, I’m not sure it made me a more faithful youth, in fact, particularly during that sassy age, it made me more cynical because it seemed overdone, overproduced, and just too much to believe as true.

1. Transfiguration

So, as an adult, as I come to the text of the Transfiguration, I

recognize that I come with some level of skepticism. The scene reminds me of a movie – Jesus’ face changes, suddenly there’s a change of outfit, and two men appear out of nowhere. Then there’s this huge cloud that overwhelms them all and horror and terror was amongst Peter, John, and James because they hear the voice of God.

It seems too dramatic and too cinematic for my human mind and intellect to understand.

1. Becca Translation

Yet, for the disciples of the day and for us to get the point, Jesus

kind of has to make this big show – this big presentation to get his point across. Let me share with you my interpretation in very Becca language. Here’s what I see happening -   
 Jesus wants his closest friends, his disciples, to understand that he is the very manifestation of the prophecy that they have heard all their lives. So he brings the guys up to the mountain and this brightness shines all around him because this brightness points to the light of God. And then, in the way of mystery, Moses and Elijah show up. Why do they show up to the mountaintop? Well, Jesus again is trying to enforce this fact to the guys that he is indeed the answer to prophecy. I can almost imagine a well meant sigh from Jesus when Peter wants to build them dwellings – like Jesus would say, ‘Thanks, but you’re still not getting it. Hold on, my Dad’s showing up.’ So God comes in with a cloud and says that yes, indeed, Jesus is the answer to prophesy and the guys are so startled that they shut down and don’t say anything.

Thank God that Jesus is a patient soul, but you can hear his frustration when they all come down the mountain. He heals the boy from this demon, it’s almost like Jesus is trying to let the guys know again and again – you can say it outloud, you can say that I am God’s chosen one. I don’t know what other mysterious and miraculous things I can do, look! And finally, in that one last line in the Scripture, it’s like they all the sudden just get it – they were all astounded by the greatness of God.

1. Cynics need signs

And there the reading of Becca’s translation ends. But as I think

about the grandness of all of this, my cynicism turns to a bit of realism. I think we’ve all done it, we’ve all said it – God, give me a sign. Or, God, show me that you are here with me. The cynics, even the most faithful among us, myself included, sometimes need the abundant sign that takes this transfiguration moment and makes us transformed people.

When we have those mountaintop moments, which some of us will have many and some will have few, those moments are the ones that change our lives and our direction. They tell us that we need to reassess, we need to realize who and whose we are. If we sustain the fact that God can do the very impossible – these signs of mystery and glory – then we must believe on the ground level of our everyday lives that God can make all things possible.

And when you move from cynicism to openness to transformation with this text, the world seems a little bit bigger, a little bit brighter, and a little more full of possibility. So, this morning I get to ask you, what are you going to do in this transfiguration and transformation moment.

1. Big Question

And I’ll fully admit – that’s a big question, it might feel mammoth

in fact. While I’m all for big dreams and big visions, I think it’s important to acknowledge that transformation can take time, it can take work, and it takes a lot of listening, prayer, and learning to discover what transformation God is calling you to in this time of your life.

One way I’ve heard transformation defined is the act of changing who you are and becoming the person you want or envision yourself to be. Another word that you might think of here is metamorphosis – and you might think of the one that is so familiar, when the cocoon springs open into a butterfly. The being is the same, but the ways in which that butterfly will move and act around its environment is forever changed. What is also wonderful about this moment of transfigured transformation is that as we enter Lent, we are invited to take up something new or put something that does not give life down and that journey helps us to grow.

I’m speaking in intellectual and intangible language though, so let’s think about some very real ways I’ve seen transformation. I’m thinking of some of you, I won’t call you out by name, but some changes or transformations I’ve seen that has been lifegiving and life changing. Sending cards out to those who need a word of comfort or peace is an act of transformation. Choosing to dare to give a little bit more when we live in an uncertain world, that is a bold act of transfiguration. When you open doors, when you sing a little bit louder, or smile at a stranger, that is transformative. When you choose to give up your seat for another, when you read or write or seek understanding, when you simply choose to live differently – these are acts of transformation. They may not be big, they might seem underrated, but they are important, they are vital to becoming the disciples we are called to be.

1. Benediction

My friends, listen to the words on the mountaintop, let your

cynicism move to a belief in the mystery of God, and may God’s Word be done as you actively choose to transform your lives in the face of a transfigured and transformative God. Amen.