

Sunday 14th February 2021

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God is love, let us adore God by sharing God's love.
God is ever present, around us and within us,
though separate let us worship together in God.

Suggested Hymn Lead us heavenly Father, lead us.

Listen [here](#).

Prayer

Loving God, we meet together in your presence and pause to reflect on all that has happened in the past week. We remember the good things, the phone calls and conversations, the sunlight glinting on frost, the first sight of buds and bulbs promising the coming of spring and we give you thanks and praise you. We think of the food we have eaten and all those who have collected or delivered food for us or served us in the shops; we think of opportunities to get out and about, walking in isolation and yet receiving the smiles of passers-by; we thank you that even in this pandemic we are never alone, and your love surrounds us in all that happens.

We think of the times we have struggled this week, times we have felt alone, times our joints have ached, times when the news overwhelmed us with fear and desperation, and we thank you that you are with us in those moments and we can sit and sense your presence with us and in our prayers we can reach out to you. Eternal God open our eyes to the wonder of your love present in the world in so many different ways and open our hearts to know you in the highs and the lows. We thank you that Jesus has opened the way for us to know you in these ways and united with Christians around the world we share together in the words of the disciple's prayer,

Our father

Reading 2 Kings 2:1-12

Exploration

This reading gives a wonderful picture of faithfulness as Elisha repeats time and again "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.", even though Elijah keeps trying to move forward on his own. Elisha wanted to be with Elijah at the end. Then we have the moment that Elijah rolls up his cloak and strikes the sea, it parts and they walk across, it is almost the last thing Elijah does.

When Elijah has disappeared, Elisha picks up his fallen cloak and turns to go back. He comes to the sea and lifts the mantle. I wonder what went through his head, was there a moment of doubt, or was he sure, believing fully that he had inherited Elijah's power? He had seen Elijah part the sea so he could do it also.

Within science there is a newish understanding described as Morphic Resonance. The idea that all actions leave a memory within the energy field of creation, a memory that enables those who follow to do the same. Until Hillary stood on top of Mount Everest, no one had successfully climbed the highest mountain in the world, but after thousands would achieve that feat. In 1875 Captain Webb was the first person to swim the English Channel but since then thousands have achieved this and in ever faster times. Until Elisha saw Elijah part the water, he would never have imagined it could be done but having seen it done he imagined he could do it and faith was all it took.

There is a moment in Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows when Harry sees a figure on the opposite side of the lake conjure a Patronus, a warding Spirit, which saves him from a deadly situation. Later in the story, through time travel, he stands on the other side of the lake and sees himself in peril and then he realises it was himself he saw conjure the Spirit, and this knowledge empowers him to create the Patronus needed to save his life.

Morphic Resonance is not magic it is the way we grow and learn through the knowledge of the energy of creation. It is one reason why the Guinness Book of Records is published every year as new tasks and times move humanity forward. Although how someone eating the most hotdogs in a minute moves humanity forward may be open to question!

Suggested hymn **Take this moment time and space**

Listen [here](#)

Reflection

Marcus Borg says of the transfiguration story that it is almost certainly metaphorical narrative and not memory but is no less important for that. It takes place on a mountain top, a place many people can associate with strange experiences and encounters. My father-in-law and his brother-in-law used to tell of an encounter on the top of Ben Nevis. It was a damp misty day, and it was still misty at the top when they stopped to rest and eat. Out of the mist came another man who stopped to chat but declined to share their lunch. After a while he waved goodbye and set off in the same direction he had been heading when he saw him and he simply disappeared. The problem was that he was heading for the sheer north face with no path down and there was nowhere else he could have gone. They often wondered who they had met, no one was ever reported missing from that day.

Marcus Borg suggests that the disciples had a vision that day, they see Jesus in a different form, perhaps somewhere in the depths of their being they drew on some unconscious knowledge.

Whenever I read the story of the transfiguration I am reminded of a Trevor Dennis story entitled The Ladder. It is a story of transformation.

For a moment imagine yourself in an old-fashioned Hall of Mirrors; you are surrounded by mirrors and everywhere you look there is an image of you, and they are all different. These mirrors are trick mirrors with differently shaped surfaces that do strange things to the people reflected within them, there are subtle changes and gross changes. All are you and yet not you. Several years ago, there was a makeover programme on television, 'What not to wear', in which the presenters Trinny and Susannah persuaded people to stand within their 360 degree mirror, in their underwear. It was revelation, there was nowhere to hide as people saw all sides of themselves in a way they had avoided before, and they were forced to accept the reality of their body, and then taught how to cope with it in terms of clothing. When we look in a mirror, if we do, we are very good at seeing only the things we want to see.

Trevor Dennis uses this as the starting point for his story and in his hall of mirrors there were patches of frosting which obscured parts of the image but then slowly cleared revealing an image full of truth. In the very first Harry Potter book there is a mirror, it is the Mirror of Erised, and when you look into this mirror you see your heart's true desire which can be quite confronting. The mirrors in The Ladder are like that, they reflect you as you are from the inside out and the character is confronted by the very truth of himself. The mirrors then morph, and he sees himself in the form he recognises, the image he presents to the world, just as we all present an image to the world. He laughs, and as he laughs the mirrors shatter and he finds himself on a ladder 'that seemed to stretch from earth to heaven', and he is no longer alone, all humanity is on this ladder some climbing upwards, some climbing downwards and some, like the character, frozen to the spot clinging to the rung in fear and terror. Our character then feels a gentle touch on his shoulder and a hand slowly prises his fingers from the rung and supports him as he begins to climb upwards. The climb becomes easier the higher he goes, and the light becomes brighter and he begins to recognise the truth of all things around him. At the same time, he is aware of an intense feeling of being loved and the suspect his face is glowing, as the faces of others around him are glowing. The ladder carried on upwards and seemed to have no end, but why would it for there is no end to God.

It is a moving and powerful story and reminds us of our call to know God more deeply, more intensely and reflects the idea that we are changed as we get to know God, we are transformed or even transfigured.

I have often wondered what would have happened if the disciples had approached the light that surrounded Jesus instead of standing on the edge, their hands frozen to the metaphorical ladder. Would they have entered that place of all knowing and been transformed in that moment?

One of my favourite theologians Adrian B Smith, writes of morphic resonance in his book 'God, Energy and the Light', saying, '*To lift humanity out of its state of disharmony and to raise us to a higher state of spiritual evolution there needed to be one person who could break through the barrier of self-seeking and in doing so empower the whole of humanity to follow the same path. This is what Jesus did, as a completely fulfilled and enlightened human being, the most perfect icon of the Divine in human form. Through his total and unconditional love, being completely for the other, free of the inner enslavement to which we are all held captive, he opened up for humanity the possibility, indeed the ability, to live in the same way.*' Adrian suggests that Jesus does not save us from the wrath of God but sets us free from the fear of God. Jesus example, his morphic resonance with the memory of creative energy overcomes our indoctrinated understanding of separation and releases us into the oneness that is God. The seed of the Divine is implanted within each one of us; we are invited to first recognise it, as Jesus did in himself, and then consciously tap into it, going deeper into ourselves, or as in The Ladder climbing higher into it, allowing the seed to grow more and more, and ourselves to become more fully human.

The example of Hillary called people to climb the highest mountain, the example of Jesus call us to climb the ladder of evolution and discover our full humanity and in the power of this knowledge we too can strike the water see a new reality.

You can find 'The Ladder' in 'Speaking of God' by Trevor Dennis.

Suggested hymn Christ is our light, the bright and morning star

Listen [here](#)

Prayers

There is a longing in our hearts O lord – [Listen here](#)

As you sing this song try and imagine how the world would be changed, and then believe we have the power, as followers of Jesus, to make that change.

Offertory

As we continue to worship apart but together, we pledge our commitment to sharing in the work of our church through our continued offering and by exploring new ways of living generously, and may we know your blessing on all we do. Amen

Suggested hymn Longing for light we wait in darkness

Listen [here](#)

Blessing

May the blessing that is the knowledge of God, source of all being, the love of God discovered through Jesus and the inspiration of the Spirit which binds us together be with us on our journey this day and every day. Amen.