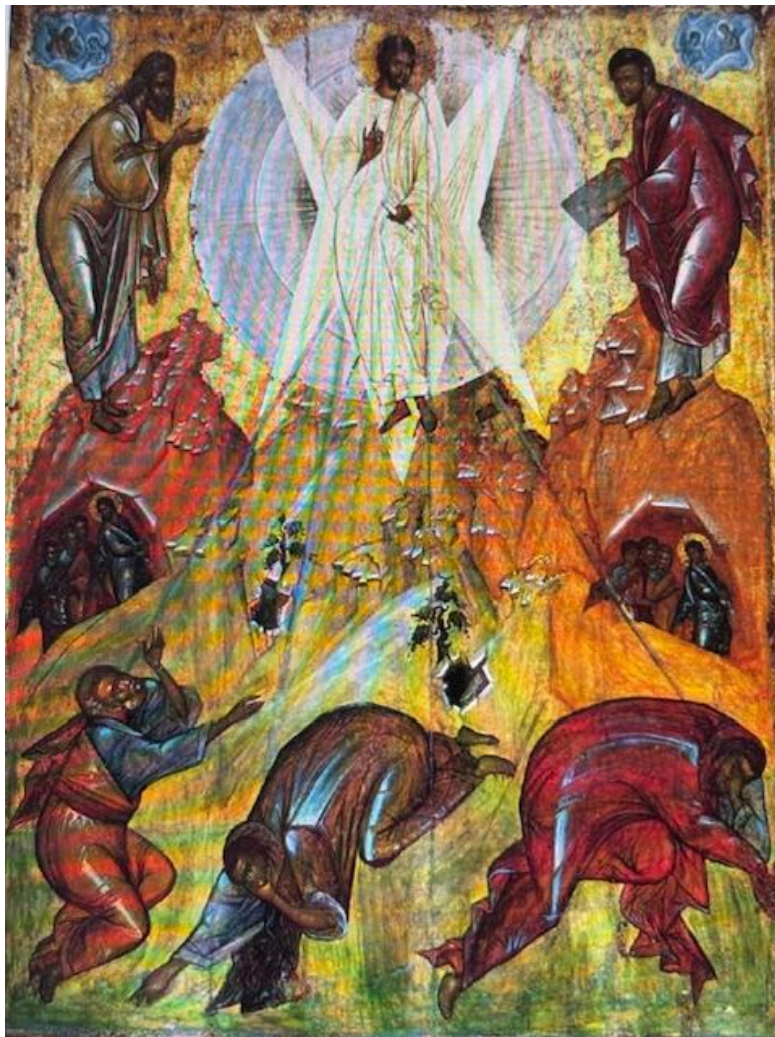


Springfield Church
Sunday 15 February 2026

On the Mountain of Transfiguration



The Gospel of Luke The Road to Golgotha

Exodus 34 vv 29 - 31

St Luke 9 vv 21- 36 & 43b - 45

 **Call to Worship** 



Hymn 189 Be still, for the presence of the Lord



The Church of Scotland

Presbytery of Fife

CITATION

The Presbytery of Fife

Saturday 21st February 2026 - 10.00 am

The Presbytery of Fife will meet in person on Saturday 21st February 2026 from 10.00am. The meeting will be held in Heart of Fife Church (St Margaret's), 228 Woodside Road, Glenrothes, KY7 5HD.

At this meeting the Presbytery will be asked to approve:

The Basis of Linking of the following Congregations -

- Ceres, Kemback and Springfield Church of Scotland l/w East Fife Rural Parish Church of Scotland (Carnbee, Kilrenny, Kingsbarns, Largoward)

The Presbytery hereby cites up to a maximum of 4 representatives of each congregation (in addition to the Minister/Interim Moderator and the Presbytery Commissioned Elder from the charge), to attend the meeting. The meeting will hopefully also be available via YouTube for anyone from the congregation wishing to join us remotely. Please note, however, the meeting is not a hybrid meeting therefore those watching remotely can only listen and observe proceedings.

It would be extremely helpful if you could notify the Presbytery Office by email how many representatives of your congregation are intending to attend the meeting. The Moderator will invite one member to speak if they so wish. This will be a maximum of five minutes in duration, and a warning bell will sound which will advise the speaker that they should conclude their remarks.

Signed by:

Rev Alec Shuttleworth MA BD
Presbytery Clerk

Presbytery Clerk: Rev Alec Shuttleworth
Office Address: Presbytery of Fife, Wellesley Centre, Wellesley Parish Church,
Wellesley Road, Methil, KY8 3PD
Clerk's Mobile: 07340461921 Email: fife@churchofscotland.org.uk
Charity No. SC050563

Prayer Of Adoration And Confession

Hymn 789 Holy, holy, holy

Introduction & Reflection

Some Context

It's impossible to date the oldest texts in the Bible ... modern scholarship points towards what's called the Patriarchal era which includes Moses ... and the patriarchal era comprising oral traditions could be as old as 2000 years before Christ's birth ...

We'll shortly hear from one of those oral traditions about Moses who lived in the landmass known as the ancient near east ... and the ancient Near East covered a vast region roughly corresponding to today's Middle East ... In those days it encompassed Mesopotamia (which is modern day Iraq, Kuwait, NE Syria, SE Turkey), the Levant (Syro-Palestine/Israel/Jordan), Anatolia (Turkey), Egypt, and Iran ...

It was a huge area and we can imagine the many different and diverse peoples living across such a huge land mass ... and as we consider the story of the Israelites covering the distance between Egypt heading north to what they called The Promised Land it's no wonder there were problems along the way ... and it's no wonder that from time to time there were rumblings of discontent and in such a nomadic, dangerous, uncertain life someone had to take charge ..

That someone was Moshe ... the Hebrew word for Moses literally meaning 'drawn from the water' ... and as we know Moshe is an unusual human being in that he's one of less than a hundred people who, we're told 'come face to face with God' ...

Two of those times are when he's recorded to have climbed a mountain, talked with God and come down

with what we're told are '*These Words*' better known as *The Ten Commandments* ... but in the version we'll hear shortly '*These Words*' in Exodus chapter 34 are different from those in chapter 20 ... why?

You'll remember in what we know as The Ten Commandments recorded in the 20th chapter of Exodus there are laws about murder, adultery, stealing, false accusation and envying others ... these correspond closely to the wider laws which governed people across the land mass known as The Ancient Near East ... so we could say that *The Ten Commandments* were very much in keeping with the general policy statements agreed and governing many cultures and religions in the area at that time ...

The Words we'll hear today from the 34th chapter are different - and they're more nuanced towards the Israelite people and their particular faith ... 'These Words' in chapter 34 are focused on what was the *Cult of the Israelites* ... they're concerned not so much with moral behaviour like not murdering people and being faithful to one's spouse ... they're about worship and the rituals precious in their faith ... so for example to pick two - six days you shall work but on the seventh you shall rest and keep that day holy and you shall keep the feast of unleavened bread - that is the Passover...

So why - we could ask is there a second version of 'Words' and why does Moses have to go back up the mountain again? And why are we told the skin of his face shone? A school of thought is simply this ... that the people's worship practises had been backsliding ... practises which weren't good had been slipping in meaning ... so in this second diet of 'Words' from the mountain, Moses brought the people the means to remember how to worship ... how to draw near God ... and the shining in his skin evidenced how closely God came to him in that encounter ... so in this second diet of 'Words' from the mountain Moses was bringing the people the means to remember how to draw near to God ... and the shining in his skin evidenced how closely God came to him in that encounter ...

Bible Readings **Exodus 34 vv 29 - 31**

Discussion

St Luke 9 vv 21- 36 & 43b - 45

Homily *Who is he?*

When Luke was writing his gospel, Jesus had been dead for something like 40 years ... Writers like Luke would have gleaned stories about Jesus from three sources we know of ... Paul's letters written earlier than the gospels ... the gospel of Mark which is the earliest one written after Jesus' death ... and of course the oral tradition in a time when people relied upon memory and story-telling rather than digital notebooks and podcasts ... and these three sources kept Jesus' life and ministry alive ... and sometimes in these accounts we encounter Christ in a way which tweaks our memories, reminds us of stories told thousands of years before about other great Biblical characters ... today we'll hear again the awesome account of what's called The Transfiguration of Jesus when he claimed a mountain with a few of his close friends and they witnessed him glowing with an incredible light ... Luke's readers and community would have been reminded immediately of Moses climbing Mount Tabor, coming face to face with God and returning with what we call The Ten Commandments ... and in both stories an awesome bright shining light permeated the scene ... symbolic, symptomatic of the heavenly breaking into the worldly ...

The tops of mountains are revered as holy sites in many world religions and beliefs - and both Old and New Testaments tell several stories of awesome events on mountain tops ... and mountain tops do engender a sense of awe don't they ... for those of us who've even claimed a humble slope such as The Lomond Hill over Falkland or the Largo Law the view from the top takes effect ... it is awesome ... the air is clearer, we can see far, far more than usual ...

And then there are other high tops which incur not only awe but terror too ... In his 1999 book called 'Facing Up' the adventurer Bear Grylls, the then youngest Britain to ever summit Everest writes this:

We huddled together in the small plane and my feet began to cramp ... I tried to tense them and get the blood flowing ... the parachute made a comfortable backrest, but I felt nervous leaning against it in case I damaged it or accidentally deployed it! I shuffled again ... as if often the case there was no eye contact with the others in the little plane as we climbed to nearly 16,000 feet ... people were engaged in their own little worlds - the air was electric with tension ...

Bear Grylls went on to climb all 29,035 feet ...

But as with so many things ... what appears to be his greatest achievement - that of scaling the tallest peak on the face of the earth is rivalled by another achievement - that of gaining insight through the experience of making the climb ... for example, when he was asked, *How does it feel to have conquered Everest?* we may expect a relatively young man in his early 20's to say something like, *Wow ... it was a blast ...*

amazing ... I can't believe I did it! Awesome thrill ... instead, he replied, *I didn't conquer Everest - Everest allowed me to crawl up one side and stay on the peak for a few minutes ... Everest allowed me to crawl up one side, and stay on the peak for a few minutes ...* I wonder if Bear would have learned much humility and

wisdom if he'd stayed on the ground? If he'd not made the climb ... Bear Grylls had an experience on top of the world ... he saw more and he learned precious things he might otherwise never have learned ...

Yes ... there's something about climbing a mountain ...

Travel Writer and Anglican Vicar Peter Walker says,

The precise location of where The Transfiguration took place must remain a mystery ... the event is likely to have taken place on the lower slopes of Mount Hermon, which is 50 miles to the north of Lake Galilee... or perhaps in the adjacent hills in what we now know as the Golan Heights, or Gaulinitis in those days ... and actually there's nothing in the Biblical accounts to determine that Jesus and his companions were on a mountainous peak at all ... they only speak of Jesus "going up a high mountain ..."


But what is the meaning of this story ... Luke is writing to tell his community something in the late C1st ... He writes to tell his community something about Jesus' identity ... and in telling this story he's deliberately jogging his readers' memories ... he tells the story of a powerful spiritual leader going up a mountain ... he describes a cloud coming down over the top of the mountain ... he tells how after having the awesome experience he comes down to the bottom of the mountain and into the hard reality of everyday annoyances ...

... Now here's Luke telling almost the same story ... a powerful spiritual leader in the Jewish tradition goes up a mountain, accompanied by awesome reports of a no less dramatic and spiritual experience than Moses, and on returning to the lower slopes, walks straight into real life ... he's asked to deal with a demon which is possessing his son ... he also tells Jesus that his disciples couldn't exorcise the demon which is why he had to come direct to him ... Jesus doesn't hold back his frustration and anger and isn't that such a human response .. rather like returning from a blissful holiday break and on arriving home the phone rings and a friend or relative gives you horrible news and tells you you're the only one who can deal with it

...

But there is something hopeful here, surely ... about the act of worship ... about the times perhaps they're prayer times ... perhaps they're when we're with out brothers and sisters and we experience a moment of lightness, enlightenment, when hopefulness and joy touch us and change the atmosphere around us ... the hard stuff will keep happening ... isn't that clear from today's awesome story? The hard stuff will happen but our encounters with Christ ... be they together, today in our shared worship ... in the shared delicious joy of John and Ken's carefully planned and prepared Shrove gifts ... in the sheer uplifting light of this sanctuary filled with fond faces and faithful ... in the reading yet again of ancient stories which beat in time with today's cares as much as ever they did ...

Yes ... the shining light is offers heavenly resilience for the difficult days ... we
don't have to climb a
mountain ... Christ is around us and within ... released from the confines of the
human body at his resurrection ... with his energy and light flooding the
universe ... for us for you ... for the world ...

 **Hymn SGP** How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him
How Lovely On The Mountains Are The Feet Of Him
Who Brings Good News, Good News
Proclaiming Peace, Announcing News And Happiness
Our God Reigns, Our God Reigns

Our God Reigns, Our God Reigns x2

You Watchmen Lift Your Voices Joyfully As One
Shout For Your King, Your King
See Eye To Eye The Lord Restoring Zion
Our God Reigns, Our God Reigns

Our God Reigns, Our God Reigns x2

Waste Places Of Jerusalem Break Forth With Joy
We Are Redeemed, Redeemed
The Lord Has Saved And Comforted His People
Our God Reigns, Our God Reigns

Our God Reigns, Our God Reigns x2

Ends Of The Earth, See The Salvation Of Your God
Jesus Is Lord, Is Lord
Before The Nations He Has Bared His Holy Arm
Our God Reigns, Our God Reigns

Our God Reigns, Our God Reigns x2

The Offering and Prayer Of Dedication

Prayers For Others, Ourselves & The Lord's Prayer

Hymn 755 Be still and know that I am God



Be still and know that I am God

Be still and know that I am God

Be still and know that I am God



I am the Lord that saves and heals

I am the Lord that saves and heals

I am the Lord that saves and heals



In you, Lord God, I put my trust

In you, Lord God, I put my trust

In you, Lord God, I put my trust

Hymn 172 Sing for God's glory

Sending & Benediction

Go,
and climb the mountains
face your fears,
and let Gods light surround you,
knowing that God's people are with you,
and heavens glory tells our story,
that good will triumph in the end.
And let God speak to you,
let God comfort you,

let God guide you
today and every day,
now and forevermore.