

The Hillside Messenger

A Message from the Rector: Reflections on the Transfiguration of our Lord

On Sunday, August 6th, the Church celebrates the Festival of the Transfiguration of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this article, I offer some reflections on the meaning of this festival for Christians today.

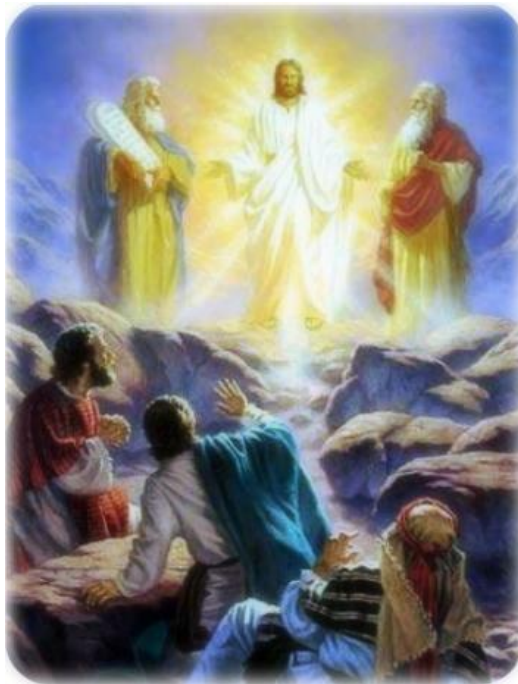
Though it is one of the major festivals of the Eastern Churches and was first celebrated in the fourth century, it was adopted in the West after the ninth century and only officially instituted as a universal festival of the Roman Catholic Church by Pope Callistus III in 1457 after a victory of the Western armies over the Turks at Belgrade (p. 247, Massey Hamilton Shepherd, Jr.: *The Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1950. 5th Printing, 1955).

The English Reformers omitted this as a festival of our Lord, and in the 1662 *Prayer Book*, it is only a Black Letter day festival (that is, a minor festival). The Episcopal Church, in its 1892 *Prayer*

Book, restored the Festival of the Transfiguration as a Red Letter day (a major Festival with its own Collect, Epistle, and Gospel), and this was mainly through the efforts of the Rev. Dr.

William Reed Huntington, who wrote the Collect for the Transfiguration which we still have in the 1928 *Prayer Book* (p. 247, Massey H. Shepherd, Jr.: *op. cit.*). The restoration of this festival by the Episcopal Church shows its importance for Anglican Christianity, as other Provinces of the Anglican Communion have followed the American example in its observation as a Red Letter day.

The Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ on a mountain, witnessed only by the apostles Peter, James, and John, was a spiritual revelation to those apostles of who Jesus really is, the Son of God as well as a human being. The Transfiguration account in *St. Luke 9:28-36* indicates that this revelation to those three apostles occurred while our Lord was praying. The appear-



er Book, restored the Festival of the Transfiguration as a Red Letter day (a major Festival with its own Collect, Epistle, and Gospel), and this was mainly through the efforts of the Rev. Dr.

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Reflections on the Transfiguration of our Lord

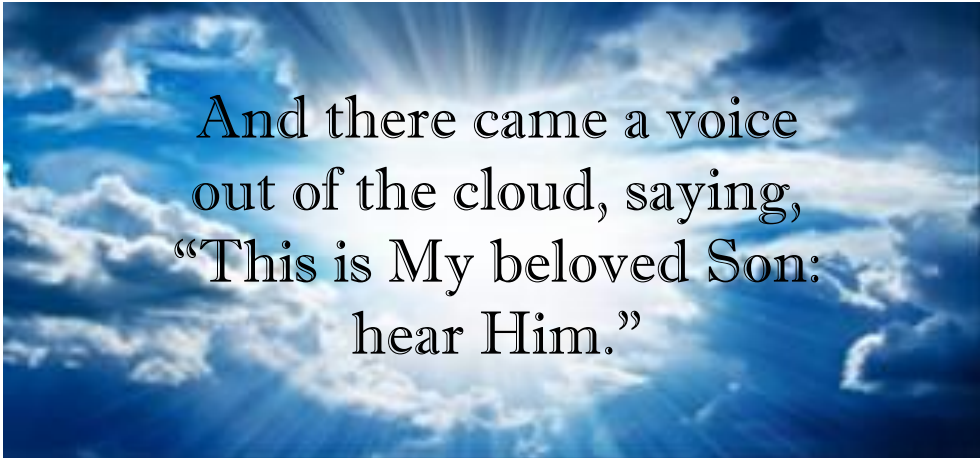
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ance of His face changed, and His clothes became white and glistening with the glory of God. Moses and Elijah appeared in glory with Him, speaking to Him of His imminent death in Jerusalem. Peter, James, and John were weighed down by sleep, yet they witnessed our Lord's glory. But as Moses and Elijah were departing, Peter spoke rashly about making three shelters, or tabernacles, for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. Just then, a cloud overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. The voice of God came from the cloud affirming that Jesus is God's beloved Son and commanding them to listen to Him. Once the voice had spoken, they found Jesus alone and, in obedience to His instructions, did not tell anyone what they had seen until after His resurrection (*St. Matthew 17:9*).

The appearance of Moses and Elijah with the transfigured Jesus was a prophetic sign of our Lord's role in the salvation of mankind. God had given Israel the Law through Moses and called Israel to live as a righteous and holy nation. God, through Moses, had led Israel out of slavery in Egypt and made known to them His commandments intending to lead them to life and bring them many blessings. Elijah, in the power of God's Spirit, had prophesied to King Ahab and recalled Israel to an undivided loyalty to God. In the power of God's Spirit, he had worked miracles and healings, even raising the widow of Sidon's deceased son to life. The appearance of Moses and Elijah in glory with Christ meant that they were to share in His eternal kingdom, and it signified that they were prophesying to Him of His great destiny that had to be accomplished by an ignominious death on a cross

at Jerusalem. Their appearance with Jesus was to encourage Him to stand firm in His resolution to perform God's will by dying on the cross outside Jerusalem to accomplish the salvation of the world. His *exodus* (*St. Luke 9:31*, referring to His death) would lead all the people of God who would believe in Him out of the bondage of their sin into the joyful and glorious freedom of eternal life in God's kingdom.

The transfigured, radiantly white appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ clearly demonstrated His righteousness, holiness, and perfection as God's beloved, elect Son. It was a visual demonstration of His divinity, a memorable sign to these three apostles of who Jesus is, the Son of God and a human being. It was a lesson to them that Jesus was not a misguided man conscious of His own impending

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And there came a voice
out of the cloud, saying,
“This is My beloved Son:
hear Him.”

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crucifixion and expecting His followers to take up their cross and follow Him for no apparent reason. Because this way of the cross was God's will for the Lord Jesus Christ, it is the way the Lord ordained for all His followers, a way of self-denial and obedience. As the Transfiguration showed Jesus and the three apostles that the way of the cross is the way of entering God's glory, so we must learn the same lesson with respect to our own lives as lived in Christ.

It is not time now for us to speak rashly of things we would do in our own strength for the Lord Jesus, as St. Peter did. St. Peter's experience was to learn that God rather wanted him to listen to and obey His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The test of a true vision given by God, a genuine insight or revelation, is the test that God the Father Himself provided at the Transfiguration: It is the test of whether or not such revelation, vision, or experience leads to obedience to the Son.

Clearly, the Church must learn from the Transfiguration not that Jesus is unreal or imaginary, but that He has received from God the authentication of His identity as God's beloved Son. The Church owes a love-debt of obedience to the Son in view both of who

He is and what He accomplished by dying on a cross at Jerusalem for the sins of the whole world to redeem the world from the curse of sin.

We do not listen or pay attention to the Lord Jesus Christ simply by wanting to extend a visionary experience of Him, as St. Peter did. Living a holy life is not simply living an unbalanced life which is all prayer and no work, for example. But the tendency of the world today is in the opposite direction— too much activity, too little prayer. If we do not pray, we shall find ourselves straying more and more into disobedience of God's will.

Every day we must spend time in the kind of Christian prayer called meditation. Meditation begins with the consideration of a verse or passage of Scripture and continues with prayerful reflection upon it. Meditation allows the Holy Spirit to illuminate certain aspects of the selected Scripture for our good and concludes with the implementation of these revealed truths in our daily life. In this way, the Bible becomes God's written guide to remedy various sins and maladies in our life, and when we read or hear passages of the Bible read, we see the living and active word of God penetrating to the depths of our lives and commanding our full obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some have called this meditation on Scripture *contemplation*, but traditionally contemplation refers to a more passive waiting on God and a wordless longing for Him. For contemplation in this sense to be effective, it needs to be fueled by a healthy discipline of meditation, since we can really only love God fully if we love His word and His will fully. To do these things, we must daily let His Spirit fill us with His word, the written word of the Holy Bible.

Today some Christians have a tendency to set too much store by dreams and revelations to which they sometimes give more importance than to the Bible itself. The Transfiguration does not teach us to do this, but rather to obey the Son. We can best obey Him by paying close attention to His teachings in the Gospels and the teaching of the apostles in the Epistles and the *Acts of the Apostles*. We must return to these as well as to the Ten Commandments and the essence of the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament. We must remember that our Lord said to His disciples, "You are My friends, if you do what I command you" (*St. John 15:14*). In the same chapter of *St. John's Gospel*, our Lord tells His disciples to remain in His love by keeping His com-

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mandments just as He has remained in His Father's love by keeping His commandments.

I believe that the most important lesson the three apostles' witness to the Transfiguration teach-

es us is to hear and obey the Lord Jesus Christ. This we do through a growing study of and obedience to the written word of God as well as to the direction of the Holy Spirit as He speaks through the pages of the Bible in the quiet of the soul as we wait on God in

silence. Jesus is God's beloved Son: Let us all hear and heed His word.

*– The Reverend
Christopher Parrish*

*At the Transfiguration,
heavenly Father,
You showed Jesus in glory,
a glimpse of what His disciples would see in His risen life.
Bless us in our humanity
with an awareness of Your presence,
leading us to share in Your divine life
even in our daily struggle.
Help us to deepen our knowledge
of the Law and the Prophets,
channels of Your grace throughout history
and signposts for our journey.
Finally, Father,
we ask that You would help us to obey Your command
to listen to Your Son's words,
not only hearing them
but fully obeying them in sincere love.
All these we pray in Christ Jesus' Name
to the honor and glory
of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
one God, world without end.
Amen.*

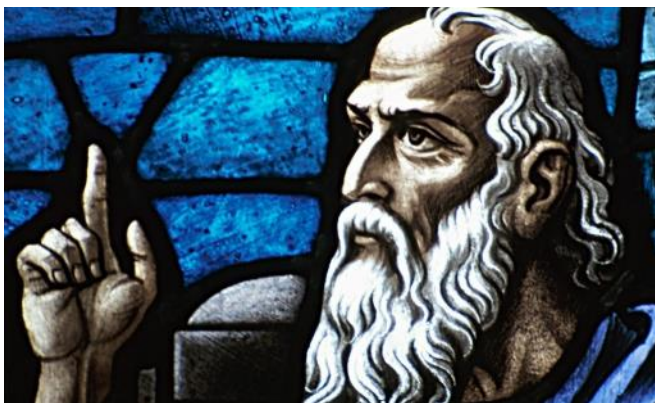
About the Prophets

Here are five points about the prophets you may have missed:

1. **The prophets provide the primary link between the Old Testament and the New Testament.** Much of the theology of the New Testament is built upon the prophets, and the New Testament is difficult to understand apart from the message they proclaimed. In addition, most of Jesus' colorful imagery (e.g., springs of living water, fishers of men, bride and bridegroom) is drawn from the imagery of the prophets.

2. **The Old Testament prophets primarily wrote in poetry.** Although the Old Testament prophets occasionally wrote in narrative (prose), they primarily wrote in poetry. Poetry is quite different than prose, and we will interpret the prophets better if we keep these differences in mind. Unlike St. Paul and much of the New

Testament literature, the Old Testament prophets (through their poetic expression) appeal primarily to our emotions. Furthermore, they do not build complex grammatical arguments (as does St. Paul), but rather they use images to convey their meanings. They paint colorful pictures with words to express messages loaded with emotional impact. This doesn't mean that they ignore logic or



argue illogically. It simply means that they focus on emotional more than on logical aspects. Likewise, St. Paul's letters are not devoid of emotion, but his focus is on reasoning.

3. **A central feature of Hebrew poetry is the extensive use of figures of speech. The Old Testament prophets do not write essays; they paint pictures.** Like master artists they use figures of speech,

wordplay, and verbal nuances, along with structural elements, to paint the complex interacting shades of color that proclaim their message.

Since most English speakers and writers today use figures of speech and wordplay all the time, we are not strangers to this feature. In English, if someone takes a figure of speech literally, he or she will misunderstand what the speaker

is trying to say. If someone says, "I'm so hungry I could eat a horse," they just mean that they are extremely hungry. If we take the figures of speech in the Bible literally, we

will misunderstand the text as badly as thinking that the person could actually eat an entire horse. If we want to understand the Old Testament prophets, it is crucial that we recognize figures of speech for what they really are and then interpret them accordingly. On the other hand, we must not forget the connection between figurative language and literal reality.

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About the Prophets

Figures of speech use figurative language to express literal realities. The speaker above does not actually believe that they could consume an entire horse, but recognizing this fact does not diminish the literal truth being communicated. The speaker is really hungry. That is the literal reality that the figurative language communicates.



“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

St. Matthew 5:17

Our job as readers is to grapple with the figures of speech and to strive to grasp the literal reality as well as the emotion that the poets are conveying by their figurative language.

4. **Theologically the prophets proclaim their message from the context of the Mosaic covenant, primarily as defined in *Deuteronomy*.** After Yahweh delivered the Israelites from Egypt and as He led them to the Promised Land, He entered into a covenant agreement with them, as spelled out in *Deuteronomy*. This defined the relationship Yahweh was to have with His people, and it spelled out clearly the terms by which the Israelites could live prosper-

ously in the land under the blessing of Yahweh. As the people enter into the Promised Land (see the book of *Joshua*), the driving question is: Will they be obedient and keep the terms of the law as spelled out in *Deuteronomy*?

The tragic answer recorded in *Judges* to *II Kings* is “no.” In general the Israelites abandon Yahweh to worship idols, and they also succumb to the low judicial and moral standards of their neighbors. The prophets deliver Yahweh’s word in a situation of flagrant covenant violation and of almost total disregard for the book of *Deuteronomy*.

5. **The message of the prophets expands beyond Israel.** The Scriptures open with two major story cycles. In the first story cycle, *Genesis 3-11* presents the cosmic, worldwide story of sin and scattering (exile from the presence of Yahweh); *Genesis 12:3* presents the hope of restoration (blessings for the scattered nations in *Genesis 10-11*).

The other story runs from *Genesis 12* to *II Kings 25* and is about Israel. It parallels the first story and follows the same pat-

tern of sin, exile, and promised restoration. The remarkable theological contribution of the prophets is that they wed these two stories together. Sin will result in judgment on both Israel/Judah and on the nations. Likewise, the prophets proclaim, the true picture of the future restoration is one in which Yahweh restores Israel and the nations to Himself.

Thus the prophets declare that the specific theological story of Israel will merge with the cosmic universal theological story of *Genesis 3-11* into a spectacular restoration that will bring Israel and the nations together in a true worship of Yahweh.

This new people of Yahweh will be led by a glorious and righteous messianic Davidic king who will fulfill the Abrahamic promises both for Israel and for the nations. They will enter into a new covenant and will be empowered and enlightened by the very indwelling presence of Yahweh’s Spirit.

—J. Daniel Hays
(General Editor: Tremper Longman III),
Message of the Prophets

Our Chapel Family Prayer List

O God, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, we humbly beseech Thee for all sorts and conditions of men; that Thou wouldest be pleased to make Thy ways known unto them, Thy saving health unto all nations. More especially we pray for Thy holy Church universal; that it may be so guided and governed by Thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. Finally, we commend to Thy fatherly goodness:

Archbishop Foley Beach;
Bishop Bill Ilgenfritz;
Canon Michael Penfield,
our Vicar-General;
Father Chris Parrish;
Deacon Peter Vogel; and
Deacon Linda Bracken;

also all those who serve as Thy ministers in governing our nation and state, particularly:

President Donald Trump;
and
Governor Jerry Brown;

as well as all those who are any ways afflicted, or distressed, in mind, body, or estate; especially those for whom our prayers are desired:

the soldiers, sailors,
marines, airmen,
police officers,

firefighters, and pilots
who protect us every day;
our persecuted Christian
brothers and sisters
throughout the world;

all refugees;
Estelle Wilson;
Julia McNeely;
Joya de Rossett;
Sharon De Souza;
Debbie;
Scott;
Brittany;
Chuck;
Don Cottam;
Tanya Theiler;
Christian McKagan
and his parents;
Lois Martins;
Dale Quinn;
Lisa;
Ben;
Marion;
Max;
Bishop Richard Boyce;
Dorian;
Kate Ward;
Kendra, Dan,
Emmalyn, and Dayna
Pack;
Ernst Hernandez;
Ray and Elodia Boreham;
Jan Martins;
Louanne Norman;
Reagan and
the Stanko family;
Kim Vogel
the life and
continuing longevity of
St. Luke's
Chapel in the Hills;
and for all those
who are in our hearts,

that it may please Thee to comfort and relieve them, according to their several necessities; giving them patience under their sufferings, and a happy issue out of all their afflictions. And this we beg for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Please note: This prayer list was current as of July 25th. Please contact Father Parrish to make corrections.



Ministry Update: Cupboard Keeper

Martha's List of Parish Ministries has an announcement: We are seeking volunteers to assist Bridgitte Parrish with the Cupboard Keeper ministry.

Cupboard Keepers regularly check and replenish kitchen and restroom supplies. Bridgitte



manages the pantry and is seeking helpers to make some of the necessary purchases. (Look for a list of needed items on the refrigerator in McNeely Hall.) If you are willing to help on either a one-time or an ongoing basis, please let Bridgitte know.

Note also that those who make purchases on behalf of the parish may either offer them as in-kind gifts or submit their receipts to the Vestry for reimbursement of their expenditures.

Thank you for your help with this ministry!

— *Martha*
(aka Julia McNeely and Kim Vogel)

Parish Postings

Please join us for prayer on behalf of St. Luke's and its needs at 11:30 AM on Sunday, August 13th, in the Chapel sanctuary.

“When two or three are gathered in My Name, there am I in the midst of them.”

St. Mathew
18:20

Let's nurture the seeds of God's kingdom with prayer. God asks us to put our faith into practice and trust Him:

“Then Jesus told His disciples a parable that they should always pray and not give up.”

St. Luke 18:1

Ministry Update: Monkey Toy Hosiery Collection

Wow! Libby Codd and her daughter went through their drawers and gathered up half of a kitchen can bag full of used, clean nylons to donate to the Monkey Toy Makers at Los Altos Senior Center! Their donations are very welcome, and yours will be, too! The monkey toys are donated to the Lucille Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford University to be given to all of the young patients there. You can take your clean discarded nylons to the

Senior Center yourself, or give them to Lee Ann Vojvoda and she will be happy to deliver them. Every little bit helps, so ask around: You may know someone who wants to find a place to reuse their nylons, too!

— *Lee Ann Vojvoda*



The Vestry will meet on Sunday, August 20th, immediately following the worship service. The meeting is open to all.



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Parish Postings

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Please join your Chapel Family for Evening Prayer on Friday, August 25th, at 7:00 PM. This choral service is a beautifully reverent way to end one's week while also providing an excellent way to introduce friends to St. Luke's Chapel in the Hills.



Joanna's Circle will meet on Saturday, August 26th, at 10:00 AM for a time of prayer, fellowship, and mutual support in living according to Christian principles. Any interested woman is invited to join us! August's meeting will be at Le Boulanger, 301 Main Street in Los Altos.



The Missionary Diocese of All Saints will host its twelfth annual Women's Retreat from Thursday, October 18th, to Saturday, October 21st. The retreat will answer the question "How on earth does a Christian woman keep her balance in an unbalanced world?" through the study of *Phi-*

lippians 4:8. The retreat will take place at Dunes Lodge in Ocean City, Maryland. Brochures with complete information are available in the Narthex. Registrations must be received by September 19th.



Father Parrish is seeking Lay Readers to assist him with our 10:00 AM and noon worship services. Any confirmed parishioner is eligible to serve, and training will be provided. Please prayerfully consider joining this important ministry.



As our third quarter Community Missions Project, the Vestry has chosen to collect funds for the American Diabetes Association. If you would like to contribute to this project, please make a note of your gift on your

offertory envelope or check memo line so that our Treasurer may know how to allocate your donation. Thank you!



Please remember the hungry when you do your grocery shopping. Bring donations of non-perishable foodstuffs to church with you any Sunday and place them in the basket in the Narthex for transport to the Downtown Palo Alto Emergency Food Closet. Thank you!



Please note that large-print and extra-large-print versions of *The Hillside Messenger* are available. If you wish to receive one of these versions, please let Kim Vogel know.

Large Print
**Extra-
Large
Print**

Upcoming Events

Sunday, August 6th

The Transfiguration
of Our Lord Jesus Christ

The Eighth Sunday after Trinity

*Bible Study: **Philippians***

9:15 AM

*Holy Communion
with Healing Service*

10:00 AM

Sunday, August 13th

The Ninth Sunday after Trinity

*Bible Study: **Jonah***

9:15 AM

Office of Morning Prayer

10:00 AM

Parish Prayer Meeting

11:30 AM

Holy Communion

noon

Sunday, August 20th

The Tenth Sunday after Trinity

Requested deadline for submissions
to the September issue of
The Hillside Messenger

*Bible Study: **Jonah***

9:15 AM

Holy Communion

10:00 AM

Vestry Meeting

immediately following the worship service

Friday, August 25th

Office of Evening Prayer

7:00 PM

Saturday, August 26th

Joanna's Circle
meeting at Le Boulanger
301 Main Street
Los Altos
10:00 AM

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Upcoming Events

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Sunday, August 27th

The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

*Bible Study: **Jonah***

9:15 AM

Office of Morning Prayer

10:00 AM

Holy Communion

noon

Sunday, September 3rd

The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

*Bible Study: **Jonah***

9:15 AM

*Holy Communion
with Healing Service*

10:00 AM



The Hillside Messenger

A PUBLICATION OF
ST. LUKE'S CHAPEL IN THE HILLS
ANGLICAN CHURCH

A PARISH OF
THE CONVOCATION OF THE WEST,
PART OF THE
MISSIONARY DIOCESE OF
ALL SAINTS IN
THE ANGLICAN CHURCH
IN NORTH AMERICA

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Worship Schedule

St.

Luke's Chapel in the Hills is a traditional Anglican parish which uses the 1928 edition *Book of Common Prayer*. We invite you to join us for worship soon!

*"A place
where the Bible is taught."*



Biblical in teaching.
Liturgical in worship.
Loving in practice.

First Sunday of each month

Holy Communion with Healing Service
10:00 AM

Second and fourth Sundays each month

Office of Daily Morning Prayer
10:00 AM

Said Holy Communion
noon

Please note that both services on Feast Days occurring on these Sundays will be Holy Communion.

Third and fifth Sunday each month and Feast Days

Holy Communion
10:00 AM