

Sunday, February 11, 2024 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church
Bible Study
Transfiguration Sunday
“Crossing Over”
2 Kings 2:1-12 and Mark 9:2-9

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, have participants discuss, “What’s a significant moment in your life where you felt you were ‘crossing over’ into a new chapter?” (i.e., graduating from high school, getting married, having first child/grandkid, changing jobs, getting sick/recovering from being sick, losing loved ones)

2 Kings 2:1-12 Context. The 2 books of Kings tell the story of the tribes of Israel from the death of David, the succession of Solomon, and the rebellion of the ten northern tribes (the “Divided Kingdom” that followed Solomon’s death in 922 BC), to the destruction of the northern kingdom by the Assyrians in 722 BC and the destruction of the southern kingdom of Judah in 586 BC. This week’s reading takes place in the middle of the 800s BC and describes the ascension of Elijah into heaven and Elisha’s witness to it. Elijah sees the fiery chariot and horses, a representation of the heavenly host, the power of God. Elijah is the only person in the entire Hebrew Bible that is said to have ascended into heaven. From this has arisen the tradition that Elijah never died, and would return to usher in the “Day of the Lord.” In Jewish tradition from Jesus’ day even to today, Elijah is anticipated as the forerunner of the Messiah.

Mark 9:2-9 Context. This week’s reading reports the episode of the transfiguration of Jesus. It occurs at the mid-point of the gospel account, and is the starting point of Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem, from which there will be no turning back. The transfiguration is a classic theophany, i.e., revelation of God: Jesus’ appearance “changes” and his clothes appear dazzling. The scene takes place on “the mountain,” and is surrounded by the glory of Moses and Elijah, the greatest religious leaders of Israel who were thought to be still alive in God’s presence. Their mighty works were echoed in the deeds of Jesus: commanding the sea, reviving the dead, feeding the multitude, healing the sick, etc. Not only was Jesus worthy of their company, but as the voice from the cloud proclaims, “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!” But the disciples still didn’t understand – not even Peter, who six days before had confessed Jesus as the Messiah.

Read 2 Kings 2:1-12 and Mark 1:29-39

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the text?

Read 2 Kings 2:1-12 and Mark 9:2-9 again -

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- “In 2 Kings 2:1-12, how many times did Elisha deny Elijah’s request to stay where they were? What do you think is the reason for Elisha’s not wanting to stay?”
- In the Gospel reading today, who appeared with Jesus on the mountain in front of Peter, James, and John? The Preaching Notes say, “*The Transfiguration of Jesus also brings him together in the cloud with the only Hebrew prophets who ever had the luxury of appointing their successors: Moses chose Joshua, and Elijah chose Elisha.*” What is the importance of passing on leadership roles within a faith community?
- Peter said to Jesus, “*Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah*” (Mark 9:5). Why do you think he said that? Humans tend to resist change and hold on to what they know, even when God is leading them into new and transformative experiences. Have you resisted change although you felt God was leading you?
- *God said, “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!”* (Mark 9:7b) How might this declaration guide us in our journey of faith?
 - In what ways do you feel God is calling you to “cross-over” in your spiritual journey or service within the church community?
 - Are there obstacles or challenges that you feel are preventing you from embracing the call to “cross-over”? How might you overcome them?

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, end by praying the following or a similar prayer:

Gracious and Loving God, as we gather in Your presence, we seek the wisdom to embrace the theme of “crossing over.” Just as Elijah passed his mantle and the Transfiguration revealed Your divine glory, may we recognize the moments of transformation in our lives. Grant us courage for transitions and openness to Your guidance. As a faith community, may we support one another, finding strength in our spiritual journeys. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord’s Prayer....

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.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.