Dear friend
I enclose this week's virtual service.

Today's hymn to sing is, 'How great thou art', a Songs of Praise presentation from Winchester Cathedral:

https://youtu.be/PdE_NKyY_o0

Or you may prefer Whitney Houston's version:

https://youtu.be/fazy_kzuziQ

The melodrama of Elijah being transported to heaven in a 'fiery chariot' is captured by Mendelssohn in his oratorio:

https://youtu.be/mXkaxTfUY40

This is an early Mexican Carol based on Quicumque Christe Quaeritis, a text celebrating the transfiguration, performed by an early music ensemble in Nashville:

https://youtu.be/xaJa3-T-qYE

Finally, here's a gospel rendition of, 'Go tell it on the mountain':

https://youtu.be/qq_IC6eEmGo

Just a reminder to let me or Sally know if you'd like to take part in our short Thursday night zoom sessions during Lent.

All the best and keep warm!
Chris

VIRTUAL SERVICE 14.02.21
THE SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE LENT

It is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness", who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. *(2 Cor.4.6).*

CONFESSION O Holy God, whose mercy and pity made thee descend from the high throne down into this world for our salvation; mercifully forgive us all the sins that we have done and thought and said. Send us cleanness of heart and purity of soul; restore us with thy Holy Spirit, that we may henceforth live virtuously and love thee with all our hearts; through Jesus Christ thy Son. *(Richard Rolle). May the Father forgive us by the death of his Son and strengthen us to live in the power of the Spirit all our days. (Common Worship).*

COLLECT Almighty Father, whose Son was revealed in majesty before he suffered death on the cross: give us grace to perceive his glory, that we may be strengthened to suffer with him and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

READINGS 2Kings 2.1-12, Psalm 50.1-6, 2Corinthians 4.3-6, Mark 9.2-9.

REFLECTION The view from the top of a mountain amply justifies the puffing and panting to reach it (unless the mists roll in). Mountains give us a glimpse of the grandeur of this created world – they can also be terrifying, dangerous places if not treated with respect. They are the setting for many close encounters with God; examples include Moses staggering up Mount Sinai with tablets of stone and Elijah hearing God's "still small voice" after the storms on Mount Horeb.
In today's gospel reading, Peter, James and John witness a transformation in Rabbi Jesus, whose clothes become "whiter than white"; he is seen talking to Moses and Elijah. Peter, terrified, blurts out an offer to erect booths (tabernacles) for them. Perhaps he wants to preserve that glorious moment, perhaps he wants to recreate the Jewish Festival of Booths, commemorating Israel's deliverance from Egypt and anticipating the last judgement at the end of time. The moment passes and they return downhill.
The Transfiguration marks a turning point in Jesus' life; from then onwards he turns to Jerusalem, to his trial and crucifixion, and it is appropriate that we shortly enter the period of Lent. This vision of the divine Jesus would also have changed the lives of the disciples, just as Elisha's life was changed by seeing Elijah transported to heaven. In our own lives, it is tempting to want to freeze-frame our own miniature mountain top experiences, a spectacular view, a sublime work of art or music, an unexpected display of affection. These glimpses of God's glory are transitory, but they can support us in our faith journey, even if, like Peter, we often get things wrong.

PRAYERS Glorious God, we praise you for the glimpses of heaven in our earthly lives, for the beauty of creation and the joy of human love, and above all for the gift of your Son, Jesus.
We pray for the troubled nations of this world, for all who have been blinded by the god of this world. We pray for the oppressed and refugees, for those who are forbidden to practise their faith or protest about injustice.
We pray for your church here on earth, as we begin our Lent journey with you; we thank you for the support and prayers of others who came before us and are with us now.
Comfort and heal those who suffer through sickness, bereavement, financial or other distress, especially remembering……. Help us to be always sensitive to the needs of others, to be generous with our time and money.

We say the **LORD'S PRAYER**
We share **THE GRACE**

FINAL PRAYER One unforgettable day, dear God, you reached down to where I was and lifted me up to where you are, and we have been inseparable from that moment to this. *(Ruth Harms Calkin).*