



# DIACONAL SUNDAY

February 26, 2017

## SERMON

By Deacon Gretchen Peterson

**Please join me in prayer:**

*Holy, gracious God. Be with us as we dwell in your word together. Send your Holy Spirit so that our eyes may be opened, our ears may hear, our hearts may be strengthened to serve in the call to diakonia in your church and in your world. Amen.*

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Grace and peace to you, beloved children of God.

In our scripture today we hear about Jesus' transfiguration before three of his disciples—Peter, James and John. Transfiguration is defined as: a complete change of form or appearance into a more beautiful or spiritual state. As one pastor puts it: "in this light the junk undergoes a transfiguration; it shines."

Isn't that a beautiful image? The transfiguration light of Christ shines on junk and causes it to shine. Perhaps the junk doesn't actually transfigure into a new state or a new form, but the light of Christ casts a different perspective on it and causes it to shine.

I believe there are many examples of this in our world. Times when people take junk and instead of focussing on the "junkiness," they look at the junk in a new light and see possibility...hope...a change.

Like Oscar Mendez. He lives in Colombia and started an organization called Concept Plastics.

Oscar saw two problems in his native Colombia—two areas of junk in his country. A high level of homelessness and a high level of litter. And he took those two junky things and created something wonderful out of them—he figured out a way to melt down the plastic waste and create bricks out of it, which were turned into houses for homeless people.

Lots of waste—turned into high quality homes for people who need them. Imagine a large scale version of Lego!

Instead of being weighed down or immobilized by the reality of litter and homelessness, Oscar was able to rise above it and search out a solution to both problems. Instead of focussing on the negative, he acted out of hope and therefore, passed hope along to those around him.





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What is the junk in our lives that we wish could experience a transfiguration? What is the junk that we want the light of Christ to shine on, in order for that light to spread?

As I write this sermon, it is December. Getting close to the shortest day of the year. The mornings are dark; the evenings are dark. And we are in the midst of the season of waiting.

At a time when we as Christians come together to wait, to hope, to dream, to dare to do those things in the bleak winter—do we also dare to look at the darkness in ourselves and in our lives and dare to shine some light on it? Do we dare to be vulnerable and open to change—to transfiguration for ourselves in order to shine a bit brighter, a bit longer in our dark world?

Perhaps it is fitting that I am stuck in the middle of Advent as I write this sermon. Is there not a more pressing time as a Canadian to wish for a transfiguration of the weather?

As the days shorten and the nights lengthen...as the temperatures drop and the sun grows weaker...I cannot help but think longingly back to the joys of a June evening when the light is present for so much longer.

In the season of winter, it is easy to get trapped by darkness. But as we hear in 2nd Peter: “you will do well to be attentive to this, [the prophetic message,] as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.” A lamp can cast a light into the darkness in our lives. A lamp can show us that not all is without hope.

I love the line from the first chapter of 2nd Peter:

“We had been eyewitnesses of Jesus Christ’s majesty.”

In what ways have we been eyewitnesses of Christ’s majesty during this past year? What are the ways in which we behold God in our world?

Hearing the story of Oscar Mendez and his creative way to reuse litter and create something basic and needed is one way I see God at work in our world.

Trusting that God will be present with us during the long months of winter and will be with us as the days lengthen and we receive more light—I see God’s presence at work in the changing of the seasons.

Hearing God say to Jesus and the 3 disciples on the top of that mountain, “This is my Son,





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the Beloved; with him I am well pleased,” and knowing that I am also one of God’s Beloveds and you are also one of God’s Beloveds, this is truly a transfiguration moment. God shines a light on us—our goodness and our junkiness—and causes us to shine. This is a glorious reminder of God’s power and love.

When we find ourselves in the dark places, may we be reminded of the transfiguring power of Christ in our lives. May we be reminded that darkness will never overcome the light. May we remember that the dark nights of winter will turn into the long days of summer. May we remember that junk can be transformed into useful, hope-filled things given the opportunity.

And above all, may we be reminded that Christ dwells within and around us, no matter what. Amen.

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*For more on Oscar Mendez, check out this article:*

<http://tribunist.com/videos/this-guy-is-building-houses-for-the-homeless-out-of-recycled-plastic-video/>

*Also consider showing the YouTube video as part of the sermon time.*

