

KAILUA CHRISTIAN CHURCH
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2026
PASTORAL LETTER ON TRANSFIGURATION
REV. IRENE WILLIS HASSAN
SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 17:1-9

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17 After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. 3 Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

4 Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."

5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

6 When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. 7 But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." 8 When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

9 As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

Aloha Kailua Christian Church 'Ohana,

As you know, we weren't able to gather last week because of the weather. It turns out the Windward side was mostly fine, but the forecast looked serious enough that caution felt like the faithful choice. I missed you. Truly. Sundays feel strange when we're not together.

The sermon I had prepared last week (but didn't preach it, because church was canceled) has stayed with me all week. It's about "righteousness," a word that Jesus used more than 40 times in the Gospels, and always in connection with the Kingdom of Heaven. That feels like something worth slowing down for.

In the sermon, I talk about righteousness not as "being good" in some vague, self-congratulatory way, but as integrity. Steadiness. Who you are when things don't go

your way. Who you are when the scoreboard isn't in your favor. Who you are when the forecast looks threatening and you don't know how it's going to turn out.

Because we didn't gather last week, keeping that sermon means we will be skipping the Transfiguration reading in the lectionary this Sunday. For those of you who track the church year closely, that might feel like we're stepping out of rhythm.

But here's the thing: righteousness and Transfiguration actually belong together.

The Transfiguration is this dramatic, mountaintop moment where Jesus' glory is revealed. Light. Clarity. Awe. The disciples see Him as He truly is. It's a revelation. It's a transformation. It's the kind of spiritual high point we tend to wish we could live in all the time.

But those disciples didn't start on the mountain. They'd already been walking dusty roads. They'd already been confused, corrected, stretched, and challenged. They were being formed long before they were dazzled.

Righteousness—the way Jesus describes it—is that formation on the dusty roads. It's the daily integrity that holds when things are unclear. It's the salt that preserves you when disappointment tries to rot your spirit from the inside. It's the light that keeps you from stumbling when you can't see very far ahead.

And honestly? If we want a concrete example, we don't have to look further than ourselves.

This church went through a storm. After many, many years of thriving stability at the church, you entered a ten-year season without a settled pastor. Ten years is not a brief inconvenience. That is a long stretch of uncertainty. That is a valley.

And yet—you stayed.

You kept worshipping. You kept serving. You kept loving each other. You kept this place open and alive. That is righteousness. Not flashy. Not headline-making. Just steady. Integrity in the valley.

And now? We are in a different season. There is new energy. New faces. Programs growing. Partnerships forming. Laughter in the halls. Movement.

Righteousness was the steadfastness in the valley; Transformation is the gift God provides on the other side of it.

That's Transfiguration. Not just a glowing Jesus on a mountain long ago, but the moment when endurance meets revelation. When what has been forming quietly becomes visible. When you look around and realize, "Oh. God has been at work this whole time."

So while we won't read the Transfiguration story aloud together this Sunday, we are very much living inside its pattern. Revelation. Transformation. Discipleship.

If you'd like, I encourage you to read the Transfiguration passage on your own this week. As you do, think about where you've had to practice righteousness—where you've had to stay steady when things felt uncertain. And then ask yourself: Where have I seen God's light break through because of that steadiness?

Next week we enter Lent, and we'll return to the lectionary as usual. But this Sunday, we're honoring the word that waited for us.

Thank you for your flexibility. Thank you for your steadiness. Thank you for being a congregation that understands—whether you use the word or not—that righteousness isn't about being impressive. It's about being reliable in God's hands.

I'm grateful to walk that road with you.

In His Service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Irene Willis Hassan'. The signature is stylized and cursive, with a prominent vertical line on the left side.

Rev. Irene Willis Hassan