

SERMON ON THE MOUNT: ENCORE

February 15, 2026

Preaching: Michael Swartzentruber, Senior Minister



MATTHEW 17:1-9

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. ²And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁵While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well

pleased; listen to him!" ⁶When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. ⁷But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." ⁸And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone. ⁹As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

REFLECT & DISCUSS

1. Read the passage slowly. Then take a deep breath and read it again. What word, phrase, or image stands out to you?
2. What kind of "mountaintop" spiritual experiences have you had? When have you felt and experienced the presence of God in such a way that you wanted to just dwell in the moment forever?
3. Do you think the transfiguration of Jesus tells us anything about our own possibilities for transformation? Why or why not?
4. Why do you think Jesus isn't transformed alone, but in the community of Moses and Elijah?
5. What do you make of one pastor's summary interpretation of this story from Peter's perspective: "Jesus, let's just pitch some tents

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and hang out on this mountain. It's so pretty up here, and down there, things are getting heavy. It's too political. You might get hurt. Nobody wants to see you get mixed up in all that." And Jesus said, "LOL, Peter. Get your hind end back to work."

6. Reflect on the hard and messy work of transformation. How might the season of Lent inspire and direct this process? Check out the Lent resources below for ideas and opportunities.

RESOURCES FOR LENT

South Elkhorn's Lent Guide provides a brief overview of Lent and Ash Wednesday, and provides ideas on how you might practice and experience Lent. A printed version is available in the foyer, or you can view and download online using the QR code or the link below:



southelkhorncc.org/Lent

On the webpage above can also find a **Digital Fast** along with worship services, fellowship opportunities, and special gatherings during the Lenten Season.



Lenten Devotional

Weekly Devotional with scripture, poetry, images, and reflections.

Walk through these weekly readings and prompts at your own pace throughout the season of Lent. May the art, reflections, poetry, and journaling allow you to wander and wonder your way through the wilderness, which is always where Lent begins.

Ash Wednesday begins Lent

*February 18, 2026, 6:30 PM, Christian Ministry Center
Nursery available for children 6 weeks to 2 years of age*

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent and prepares our hearts for the celebration of new life at Easter. During the Ash Wednesday service, ashes are spread on foreheads or on hands in the shape of a cross. The ashes signify a time of self-examination, repentance, and return to the God who made us in all our fragile wonder: "from dust you were made and to dust you shall return."

The service for this day is contemplative and intimate, inviting deep personal reflection through prayer, scripture, song, and coming forward to receive ashes.

Listen Online

Sermon audio available at southelkhorncc.org/sermons