

Follow the light of Christ!
Mark 9:2-9

Before he was a NASA astronaut and commanded the ill-fated Apollo 13 flight, the one that never landed on the moon but miraculously made it back to earth, Jim Lovell had already experienced being “lost in space.” As a Navy pilot out on a routine nighttime flight, his aircraft suddenly lost all its navigational systems. Miles away from his ship with nothing to guide him back to the aircraft carrier USS Shangri-La, Lovell decided to go completely dark. He turned off all his cockpit lights and peered out in the utter blackness of the sea.

Soon he spotted a wrinkle of glowing water. The “glow” was created by the churning of the sea in the wake of the huge carrier. Tiny bioluminescent sea creatures -- jelly fish, crustaceans, shrimp, even worms -- that had been frothed to the surface of the sea glowed and gleamed a clear path through the dark waters directly towards the ship Shangri-La. Lovell, like Hansel and Gretel following breadcrumbs, simply followed that radiant glow until he found his ship and a safe landing.

If you grew up east of the Rockies, there is a good chance you have some sweet summer memories of catching fireflies. Cupping those little critters in your hand and then cracking your fingers open to catch them going “on” and “off” – how forever wondrous! Fireflies are yet another “bioluminescent” creature, organisms which can emit a chemically activated glow in the midst of darkness.

Before electric lights were available, early miners often used “lamps” powered by either fireflies or fish-skins. Both possessed enough bioluminescence to provide a safe, non-combustible light-source for workers where gases and fumes made any hot burning fuel a combustible potential for disaster.

On “Transfiguration Sunday” — the day we celebrate that moment when Jesus ascended to a mountaintop and the radiance of his divine nature was first revealed to his three closest disciples, Peter, James, and John.

When Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him to the top of the mountain and was transfigured before their eyes, they had a communal experience that would ultimately help them grow into full faithful discipleship. What happened on top of that mountain could not, cannot, be “explained.” But that doesn’t make it meaningless. Most of our formative, transformative, life-changing experiences are not “explainable” in the worldly scientific sense.

Scripture tells us that we were created to be in relationship. We were created to be in relationship with God and with one another, and it is only in relationship that we grow and prosper, that we grow up and become the people God intends us to be.

Let us seek the light of Christ to show us the way in all our seasons of life. Amen.

God bless,
Pastor Barbara

