

**“GREETINGS, FAVORED ONE”  
AMY MORRISON, GUEST PREACHER  
OPEN DOOR MCC**

**GLEANINGS FROM THE LITURGY**

**CHRISTMAS EVE 10AM, 2017**

---

**Opening Words:** (Richard S. Gilbert)

We bid you welcome, who come  
with weary spirit seeking rest.

**Who come with troubles that  
are too much with you,  
Who come hurt and afraid.**

We bid you welcome, who come  
with hope in your heart.

**Who come with anticipation in your step,  
Who come proud and joyous.**

We bid you welcome, who are  
seekers of a new faith.

**Who come to probe and explore.**

**Who come to learn.**

We bid you welcome, who enter  
this hall as a homecoming,  
Who have found here room for your spirit.  
Who find in this people a family,  
*if that language works for you.*

**Whoever you are, whatever you are,  
Wherever you are on your journey,  
We bid you welcome.**

**Welcome**

Bless each one who is here safely, and blessings on all who are away this week. Thank you for coming to Open Door MCC on the fourth Sunday of Advent!

MCC and Open Door have a special outreach to vulnerable communities and those in solidarity: Love is our greatest moral value and resisting exclusion is a primary focus of our ministry. We are and want to be community where everyone is the family of God, and where all parts of our being are welcomed at God's table. This morning I'm grateful for each one of you.

**Opening Prayer** (Jan Richardson)

Not just in my heart  
but in the secret space  
it holds.

In the heart of my heart.

In the place where I am myself.

In the space that I protect the most  
and share the least.

In the hidden chamber  
that I sometimes close off  
even from myself.

In the realm  
where you wait  
and watch,  
where you see each thing  
that lies in shadow,  
where you know the names  
of all that makes its home  
in me.  
Here  
in my secret heart;  
here  
teach me to move  
with your wisdom,  
to open the doors  
that will draw me deeper still,  
to live in the truth  
that you desire;  
here  
let me open  
the windows wide  
so that those who pass by  
will see you  
looking out.

### **Passing the Peace**

*Weave, weave, weave us together.*

*Weave us together in unity and love.*

*Weave, weave, weave us together.*

*Weave us together, together in love.*

### **First Reading:** 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 (NRSV, NCCC trans., inclusified)

Now when King David was settled in his house, and God had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for God is with you." But that same night the word of God came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says God: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the God of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to rule over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover God declares to you that God will make you a house...Your house and your reign shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

Here ends the lesson. **Thanks be to God.**

**Responsive Reading:** Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

(Norman Fischer, trans., inclusified)

I will forever sing of your kindness  
Throughout the generations with my words I'll make it known  
For I have pledged. Endless is your kindness confirmed  
Even in the heavens is your faithfulness patterned:  
I have made a covenant with the one I have chosen  
Have sworn to David, my servant, that I will confirm him forever  
Will hold up his throne throughout the generations...  
Then you spoke to me in a vision and said:  
I have aligned myself with a worthy one  
Have raised up a youth from out of the heart of the people  
I have found David my servant there  
And I have consecrated him, pouring over his head my holy oil  
With whom my hand will be firmly established  
And my arm will give him strength  
The enemy won't gouge him like a crooked dealer  
Nor will the unjust ones overpower him  
For I will push aside from him his assailants  
And those that block his way I'll plague  
He will always know my steadfast kindness  
And through my namelessness will his horn be exalted  
And I will place his hand upon the sea  
His upright hand upon the rivers  
And he will call out to me as his parent, his rock, his deliverer...

**Second Reading:** Luke 1:26-38 (NRSV, NCCC trans., inclusified)

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! God is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a child, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Child of the Most High, and God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his reign there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Child of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of God; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Here ends the lesson. **Thanks be to God.**

**The Great Thanksgiving**

When the song of angels is stilled,/ When the star in the sky is gone,/ When the kings and princes  
are home,/ When the shepherds are back with their flock,/ The work of Christmas begins:/ to find  
the lost,/ to heal the broken,/ to feed the hungry,/ to release the prisoner,/ to rebuild the nations,/  
to bring peace among the family,/ to make music in the heart. (Howard Thurman)

God is with you!  
**And also with you!**

Let us open our hearts!  
**We open them to God.**  
Let us give God thanks and praise!  
**It is a good and joyful thing to do!**

This blessing  
is for the moment  
after clarity has come,  
after inspiration,  
after you have agreed  
to what seemed  
impossible. Amen.

Joseph no doubt worked his hands  
To make a Table for Mary  
With visions of family  
Gathered around  
Fresh bread, warm in children's hands

Simple table wine that brought out the spices  
Of the meat.  
Jesus and his siblings and neighbors and those  
Who weren't allowed into other people's homes  
Sat around this Table, no doubt  
Where Jesus was taught  
By his parents who had taken great risks  
So that he could take risks himself  
Simply by sitting  
At  
Table.

It was at Table side that our Christ learned  
The power of feeding one another.

It was at Table side that our Christ witnessed  
The telling of truth.

And so Christ invites us to Table Side.  
The Table that has been passed down through the generations  
From family  
To family  
To us.

This is faith's [Christ's] Table.  
All of us are encouraged to gather at this Table  
All of us who have memories at our own tables  
Of laughter  
Of new ideas  
Of pain  
Of confusion.

All of us are encouraged to eat at this Table  
All of us who

Spend the week hungry  
Have been given too much  
Have been given too little

This is the Table where  
No favorites are played  
All are fed  
Grace is made visible.

Bless this meal, and make it become truly in us, with us, and through us your life-giving, life-changing, life-sustaining presence and your abiding love. Amen.

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear  
O Little Town of Bethlehem  
Angels, from the Realms of Glory  
I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day  
O Come All Ye Faithful (#249)

**Closing Blessing** (Marge Piercy)

...It goes one at a time.  
It starts when you care to act.  
It starts when you do it again  
after they say no.  
It starts when you say we  
and know who you mean;  
and each day you mean  
one more.  
Go in peace

+ + + + + + + + + + +

CALENDAR OF EVENTS ([click here](#))

**Please join us online!**

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/welcome.opendoormcc>  
Prayer Chain: [ODMCCprayerchain@yahoogroups.com](mailto:ODMCCprayerchain@yahoogroups.com) (subject: JOIN PRAYER)  
Newsletter Listserve: <mailto:rev-3-8@opendoormcc.org?subject=JOIN NEWS>

Sermons' text and audio, prayers, and readings are available [here](#) on our Website each week.

**Donate by doing your regular shopping! Do your online shopping with Amazon at [smile.amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and choose Open Door MCC to receive a portion of the proceeds.**

Open Door is now able to accept company matching funds. Please look into whether you work for a company that offers matching funds and let us know how to help you double your offering to the church! You can also donate to Open Door through the United Way. Ask us how!

Montgomery County SURJ is learning, teaching, and witnessing against racial injustice. Join them on FaceBook at <https://www.facebook.com/surjmocomd/>