

“SEASON OF EPIPHANY”
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OPEN DOOR MCC

Gleanings from the Liturgy

February 4, 2018

Opening Words: (Langston Hughes)

I dream a world where man
No other man will scorn,
Where love will bless the earth
And peace its paths adorn

**I dream a world where all
Will know sweet freedom’s way,
Where greed no longer saps the soul
Nor avarice blights our day.**

A world I dream where black or white,
Whatever race you be,
Will share the bounties of the earth
And every man is free,

Where wretchedness will hang its head

And joy, like a pearl,

Attends the needs of all mankind-

Of such I dream, my world!

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 first Sunday of Black History Month.

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

We have gathered in this place this morning,
allow your spirit to fill our very being.

Most gracious and loving God,
we remember the struggles of our people, black people,
people of African descent,
your people and thank you for your grace,
your love, and your mercy.

We thank you for leaders that you continue to place in high places and ordinary places.

Inspire each of us to work more faithfully for justice and dignity of life everywhere.

Lord God, we remember the hurts of exclusion and prejudice,

but we know that you can raise our vision above all barriers and give us wisdom and courage to make this a better world.

As you give us yourself in the Bread of Hope and the Cup of Mercy - show us how to give ourselves to those who are without hope and to those who cry for mercy.

Lord God, rule over our spirit in this hour that we will go from this worship with the freedom of those who trust in you.

Amen

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: Isaiah 40:21-31 (NRSV, NCCC trans., inclusified)

Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is God who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; God who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live in; God who brings princes to naught, and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing. Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when God blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these? God, who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name; because God is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing. Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, “My way is hidden from God, and my right is disregarded by my God”? Have you not known? Have you not heard? God is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. God does not faint or grow weary; God’s understanding is unsearchable. God gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for God shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

This is the word of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsive Reading: Psalm 147:1-11, 20c (NRSV, NCCC trans., inclusified)

Praise God!

How good it is to sing praises to our God; for God is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting. God builds up Jerusalem; God gathers the outcasts of Israel.

God heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds.

God determines the number of the stars; God gives to all of them their names.

Great is God, and abundant in power; God’s understanding is beyond measure.

God lifts up the downtrodden; God casts the wicked to the ground.

Sing to God with thanksgiving; make melody to our God on the lyre.

God covers the heavens with clouds, prepares rain for the earth, makes grass grow on the hills.

God gives to the animals their food, and to the young ravens when they cry.

God’s delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor God’s pleasure in the speed of a runner; But God takes pleasure in those who fear God, in those who hope in God’s steadfast love.

God has not dealt thus with any other nation; they do not know God’s ordinances.

Praise God!

Second Reading: Mark 1:29-39 (NRSV, NCCC trans., inclusified)

As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at

once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered around the door. And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. And Simon and his companions hunted for him. When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons. This is the word of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Meister Eckard said, if the only prayer you ever say is "thank you", it is enough.
Thank you!

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!

We come to church hungry, Lord!

We are hungry for comfort,

hungry for love,

hungry for a new way of living,

hungry for your word.

Thank you for giving us this place

and this time to worship,

and we are eager to taste your goodness

in community, with our brothers and sisters.

Bless us as we feast on the Bread of Life today.

Amen.

Closing Blessing (Mary Oliver)

One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began,

though the voices around you
kept shouting

their bad advice—

though the whole house

began to tremble

and you felt the old tug

at your ankles.

"Mend my life!"

Each voice cried.

But you didn't stop

you knew what you had to do,

though the wind pried

with it's stiff fingers

at the very foundations,

though their melancholy

was terrible.

It was already late

enough, and a wild night,
and the road full of fallen
branches and stones.
But little by little,
as you left their voices behind
the stars began to burn
through the sheets of clouds,
and there was a new voice
which you slowly
recognized as your own
that kept you company
as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world,
determined to do
the only thing you could do—
determined to save
the only life you could save.
Go in peace

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

Please join us online!

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/welcome.opendoormcc>

Prayer Chain: ODMCCprayerchain@yahoo.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.

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

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!

If you are so moved, you might donate additional monies to the “Do Unto Others” fund, which allows Open Door to help folks who need emergency monies for necessities. Just mark your gift DUO or “Do Unto Others” in the memo line. Bless you! If you need emergency assistance, please speak to Rev. Miller or any Board Member.

Open Door needs you! There are lots of ways to get involved. Where does your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet?

Frederick's LGBTQ Community Center is scheduling community and small-group get-togethers and activities. Find out more on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/TheFrederickCenter?>