

“RISING STRONG”
VERNESSA WILSON, GUEST PREACHER
OPEN DOOR MCC

Gleanings from the Liturgy

April 8, 2018

Opening Words: (Clarissa Pinkola Estes)

Refuse to fall down. If you cannot refuse to fall down,
refuse to stay down.

**If you cannot refuse to stay down, lift your heart toward heaven
and like a hungry beggar, ask that it be filled,
and it will be filled.**

You may be pushed down.

You may be kept from rising.

**But no one can keep you from lifting your heart
toward heaven — only you.**

It is in the midst of misery that so much becomes clear.

The one who says nothing good came of this, is not yet listening.

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 sixth and last Sunday of Lent – Palm Sunday!

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.

Thanks to Drew and Richard from the Transition Team. They have handled the development of a proposal for our Provisional Pastor, and met with them this week. The Board is meeting today after service to discuss the results – but we expect to announce our Candidate NEXT WEEK!

Opening Prayer – St. Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace;

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,

grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

to be understood, as to understand;

to be loved, as to love;

for it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. **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: Acts 4:32-35 (NRSV, NCCC trans., inclusified)

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

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

Responsive Reading: Psalm 133 (NRSV, NCCC trans., inclusified)

How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!

**It is like the precious oil on the head, running down upon the beard,
on the beard of Aaron, running down over the collar of his robes.**

It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion.

For there God ordained God's blessing, life forevermore.

Second Reading: John 20:19-31 (NRSV, NCCC trans., inclusified)

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." But Thomas (who was called the Twin^[a]), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

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

The Great Thanksgiving

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!

Bless this meal, God, 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.

Closing Blessing (The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.)

Now I say to you in conclusion, life is hard,

at times as hard as crucible steel. *(Mmm)*

It has its bleak and difficult moments.

Like the ever-flowing waters of the river,

life has its moments of drought and its moments of flood. *(Yeah)*

Like the ever-changing cycle of the seasons,

life has the soothing warmth of its summers

and the piercing chill of its winters. *(Yeah)*

But if one will hold on,

he will discover that God walks with him, *(Yeah. Well)*

and that God is able *(Yeah)* to lift you from the fatigue of despair
to the buoyancy of hope

and transform dark and desolate valleys

into sunlit paths of inner peace. *(Mmm)*

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@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.

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 emergencies 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?>