

A teal-colored door with two black door knobs. The text 'Open the door for us' is overlaid in white, serif font. The word 'Open' is at the top, 'the' is in the middle, 'door' is below it, 'for' is below that, and 'us' is at the bottom right. The door is set in a white frame.

Open

the

door

for

us



West Richmond Church of the Brethren

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July 21, 2024

9th Sunday after Pentecost

“People will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down at the feast in the Kingdom of God. Then those who are now last will be first, and those who are now first will be last.

(Luke 13:29-30)

Welcome

Prelude

When Morning Gilds the Skies

arr. David Smither

GIVE PRAISE TO GOD

* Invitation to Worship

#851 ^{VT}

One: To worship is to stand in awe under a sky of stars, before a flower, a leaf in sunlight, or a grain of sand.

All: To worship is to be silent, receptive, before a tree astir with the wind, or a passing shadow of a cloud.

One: To worship is to work with dedication and with skill; it is to pause from work and listen to a strain of music.

All: To worship is to sing with the singing beauty of the earth; it is to listen through a storm to the still small voice of wonder and openness.

One: Worship is the mystery within us

All: Reaching out to the mystery beyond us.

* **Prayer of Gathering**

#863 ^{VT}

Source of all hope and holiness, we gather today to be church. Bless those who are absent, but not from our hearts. Bless those who are distant, but not from our love. Bless each of us here, that we may choose justice by your Spirit, draw kindness from the well of your mercy, and walk humbly in your path, O God. Amen.

* **Hymn**

O Worship Our God

#129 ^{VT}

Verse 1:

O worship our God in the beauty of holiness,
in the beauty of holiness, in the beauty of holiness.
Maker of the starlight beyond us, within us,
from silence, holy wonder, you birth creation's chorus,

Refrain:

*oh, glory hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah,
with joy we come before you and glorify your name.*

Verse 2:

O worship our God in the beauty of holiness,
in the beauty of holiness, in the beauty of holiness.
Jesus, born of Mary, before us, beside us,
your humble love victorious has brought a great salvation,

Refrain

Verse 3:

O worship our God in the beauty of holiness,
in the beauty of holiness, in the beauty of holiness.
Spirit, ever moving, around us, among us,
breathe mercy, flame with justice, making new your whole creation,

Refrain

CELEBRATE GOD'S FAMILY

Children's Time

Spirit of Life, come unto me.

Sing in my heart all the stirrings of compassion.

Blow in the wind, rise in the sea;

move in the hand, giving life the shape of justice.

Roots hold me close; wings set me free;

Spirit of Life, come to me, come to me.

Congregational Prayer

(adapted from John Killinger,

Enter Every Trembling Heart, and Laura Jean Truman)

Spirit of life, sing in our hearts your stirrings of compassion. Root us close and set our wings free, as we thank you for the love that cradles us all the days of our lives, for the quietness of our times alone, and the enthusiasm of our times together, for the things we can see with our eyes, and the things we can see with our minds, for the seasons of life, each with its challenges and each with its gifts, for the witness of poets and artists, who show us the beauty and the music of the world, and the witness of visionaries, who see not only the world, but your Spirit within it, touching it, shaping it, renewing it. Let us love the world in the highest sense, so that we care for its beauties and treasures, and pass them on to future generations, and let us love through your holy kindness, that our inner beings are daily moved to outwardly love others in an embracing kinship that overcomes all partisanship. Keep our anger from becoming meanness. Keep our sorrow from collapsing into self-pity. Keep our hearts soft enough to keep on breaking. Keep our indignation turned toward justice, not cruelty. Remind us that all of life, every bit it, is for love. Keep us fiercely kind. Teach us the humility that finds your wholeness amid success, pain, illness, loss, and brokenness. Let your presence break upon us like a gentle morning with birds singing, that our spirits may soar to you in simple wonder. In Jesus spirit of love, we pray. Amen.

* Hymn

In Christ There Is No East or West

#390 ^{VT}

Verse 1:

In Christ there is no east or west,
in him no south or north,
but one great fellowship of love
throughout the whole wide earth.

Verse 2:

In Christ shall true hearts ev'rywhere
their high communion find.
His service is the golden cord
close binding humankind.

Verse 3:

Join hands, then, people of the faith,
whate'er your race may be.
All children of the living God
are surely kin to me.

Verse 4:

In Christ now meet both east and west,
in him meet south and north.
All Christly souls are joined as one
throughout the whole wide earth.

WORSHIP IN GIVING

Thoughts on Giving

adapted from #1002 ^{VT}

As we consider how we might support the ministries of West Richmond Church of the Brethren, let us center ourselves in God, one we can image as a divine gardener, one who plants and protects us by a merciful hand. May this one send us the sap of grace, from Christ the true Vine, and make us blossom that we might bear the fruit of love as a sign of divine life in us. And may the fragrance of the shoots sweeten the world around and within us.

Special Music

Somebody Bigger Than You And I

Lange/Heath/Burke

LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD PROCLAIMED

Scripture Lesson

Luke 13:22-30 GNT

²² Jesus went through towns and villages, teaching the people and making his way to Jerusalem. ²³ Someone asked him, "Sir, will just a few people be saved?"

Jesus answered them, ²⁴ "Do your best to go in through the narrow door; because many people will surely try to go in but will not be able. ²⁵ The master of the house will get up and close the door; then when you stand outside and begin to knock on the door and say, 'Open the door for us sir!' he will answer you, 'I don't know where you came from!' ²⁶ Then you will answer, 'We ate and drank with you; and you taught us in our town!' ²⁷ But he will say again, 'Get away from me, all you wicked people!' ²⁸ How you will cry and gnash your teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God, while you are thrown out! ²⁹ People will come from the east and west, from the north and the south, and sit down at the feast in the Kingdom of God. ³⁰ Then those who are now last will be first, and those who are now first will be last."

Words of Response (in unison)

May the written word, through the spoken word,
become the living word in our hearts.

Sermon

"Opening the Narrow Door"

GO IN GOD'S NAME

* Hymn

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

#156 ^{VT}

Verse 1:

There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea.
There's a kindness in God's justice, which is more than liberty.

Verse 2:

There is welcome for the sinner, and more graces for the good.
There is mercy with the Savior, there is healing in his blood.

Verse 3:

But we make God’s love too narrow by false limits of our own,
and we magnify its strictness with a zeal God will not own.

Verse 4:

For the love of God is broader than the measures of the mind,
and the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.

Verse 5:

If our love were but more simple, we should rest upon God’s word,
and our lives would be illumined by the presence of our Lord.

* **Prayer of Blessing and Sending**

adapted from #1059 ^{VT}

Go forth in peace, and be of good courage; hold fast to what is good, rejoicing in the openness of the Holy Spirit. And may God who fills the hungry with good things, fill us all the love of Jesus and with a consuming hunger for justice in our land and in the world. Amen

Postlude

Sweet, Sweet Spirit

Doris Akers

Sweet, Sweet Spirit by Doris Akers

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** Please stand as able and led*



Ministers	All Members
Pastor	David Whitten
Guest Speaker	David Brunk
Worship Leader	Barbara Beers
Minister of Music.....	Vanessa Morton
Special Music.....	Barbara Beers
Media & Tech Dir.	Kevin Beers