

## The Door

*I stand here in the threshold of the door. The one that I had passed through a long time ago. Peeking into the inside to the sunlight and hope that resides there. Is this where peace is? I am hesitant to throw open the door. I left with such conviction when I passed through before. What was my plan? Why did I run in such anger? No plan, only pain and hurt. Now I am back... almost. Is it okay? Can I come back inside where maybe I can find it? The love of God for me. I have searched for a while now and realized that it has been in vain. I cannot do this from here, alone. Please let me back inside where it is warm and safe. I won't be a bother; and for now you won't even know I am here. I just need to heal. Be patient as it may take a little time. I know what I need and it is through that door.*

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For the month of April, this special poem reminds me of what is so basic to the United Church of Christ. "Jesus didn't turn people away, neither do we." When you are gutsy enough to make such a claim, it's not always easy to make good on it. Following Jesus' lead the United Church of Christ strives to keep doors open and do what needs to be done to be bold people of God's welcome.

The first disciples, both men and women, were very anxious about what had happened to their teacher and companion Jesus. He predicted his arrest, trial and crucifixion. Jesus also predicted his resurrection. All predictions aside, Jesus coming out of the dark tomb through the open door to become the Risen One of Creation was startling and unbelievable. Then and now, can we believe it? The heavy rock that sealed the tomb had been rolled away and that door remains one symbol of the resurrection.

God's intention had been fulfilled as a new community of the faithful began. We are not Christians because of the humble birth though many of us love Christmas. A new monotheistic world religion was born around his teachings and miracles but especially the belief in the resurrection. He overcame death and stood against evil. We are Christians because of what Jesus did in his final days. The Palm Sunday parade through the small door in the Jerusalem wall, led him to be arrested, endure a trial and stand convicted as an innocent person. He was sentenced and murdered using the capital punishment of the day. That was not the end of the story. Even the resurrection is not the end of the story.

Our story as followers has no ending. Generation to generation it is always about being open to God's lead even with pain or estrangement. Even when difficult decisions need to be made and new life needs to take root. The door awaits us as the resurrection story continues. We are the gospel that is still being lived and written in our lives. Some would say we are a bunch of strangers knit together by God's grace and in that truth there is hope for all of us. There will always be tough and touchy times as we follow Jesus where he leads. May we be bold and brave seeking peace in the time we have left to live. All of us can make choices to pass under the threshold and to greet a new day as Easter people of resurrected faith. May it be so for all of us in our congregation. Let us embody extravagant welcome.