

Asbury United Methodist Church

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Worship Leader: Alice Pace

Chancel: Donna Rowe

*Please rise in body or spirit

“Curiosity”

Lent Three

Prelude “Morning Has Broken” Hanna Noh

Welcome and Announcements

Over the Threshold

Leader: The 13th century Christian mystic, Meister Eckhart, said this: Be willing to be a beginner every single morning.”

[sung slowly]

**Open my eyes that I may see
glimpses of truth thou hast for me.
Place in my hands the wonderful key
that shall unclasp and set me free.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my eyes, illumine me,
Spirit divine!**

As we continue our worship series this Lent and consider what it means to be a “purveyor of awe,” we focus on one of the most important elements for curating a life of spiritual depth: curiosity. The ancient poets of our faith and the mystics of old wrote prolifically about “seeking” as a spiritual attribute. Faith is not about certainties; instead, it is about taking the stance of humility that we cannot know everything and that the spiritual quest is what it means to be faithful: to be on a quest to discover more and to experience more of the holy in our lives. In a time when so much emphasis is on what we *know*, we remember in our Lent journey that it is what we *don’t know* that is most valuable, for discovery and staying curious is a condition for awe.

**Open the eyes of my heart, Lord
Open the eyes of my heart,
I want to see you
I want to see you**

The element of curiosity is linked to wellbeing of all kinds—spiritually, mentally, creatively. Awe-filled experiences are curiosity-boosters. Play, imagination, experimentation, and even simply slowing down to “linger longer” as we engage with the sights and sounds and smells of our ordinary surroundings can add to the amount of awe in our lives. Curiosity resists easy labeling and classifying; rather, it invites us to deeper discovery about life, faith, and each other. Let us rise in body and/or spirit and pray:

Awe-inspiring God,
we come together this day because we need to be reminded
to see through the lens of curiosity.
Too often we focus on being right instead of being curious,
and this closes the door to deeper relationship and understanding.
Open us to perceive anew.
Inspire us to receive our surroundings with awe.
Forgive us when we allow fear to curb our quest for greater understanding.
Be with us on this journey
as we seek again to marvel at your works.

sung slowly

**Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my eyes, illumine me,
Spirit divine!**

The path is ever unfolding before us.
We are invited into the seeker’s journey at any moment.
God forgives us. Jesus embraces us. The Spirit enlivens us.
We are whole.
With awe, we accept this belovedness.
And all God’s people say, “**Amen.**”

The Peace

The peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

I invite you to share the peace of Christ with those around you, [remembering to greet those online with a wave to the camera].

Opening Hymn

“Seek Ye First” UMH 405

Contemporary Reading

Reader: Our first reading is a contemporary one—an excerpt from Scott Shigeoka, author of *Seek: How Curiosity Can Transform Your Life and Change the World:*

“We need to embrace what I call ‘deep curiosity.’ This is the kind of curiosity that invites us to use it as a force for meaningful connection and transformation. This is what strengthens our relationships to ourselves and each other.”

Ancient Reading

Excerpt from Proverbs 2

Reader: The Book of Proverbs is part of an ancient “wisdom tradition” of writing. In this biblical book, the poet personifies Wisdom and invites us to seek her out—in essence, to let our curiosity be a motivator for searching the awe of God. Hear now an excerpt from Proverbs 2.

*Incline your ear to Wisdom,
and take her truth into your heart.
For if you yearn for insight
and cry out for understanding,
if you search for it as you would for silver,
and dig for it as you would for buried treasure,
you will understand what [awe] of YHWH is,
and discover how to truly know God.*

In Awe of Music (Choir) “God Is Here”

In Awe of the Word
“Curiosity” Rev. Yohan Go

Approaching an Awesome God

During this Lenten season, we will take a brief moment each week to practice *Visio Divina* before sharing our joys and concerns. I invite you to embrace this practice as a way to recognize God's presence in every moment of our lives. As we reflect on God's nearness in our own journeys, let us also listen with care and sincerity to the joys and concerns of others, mindful that God is present in their stories as well.

Visio Divina

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

Holy and Living God, we approach this time of prayer with curiosity about your world. With all our senses, we open to you.

Give us lenses of awe with which to perceive and love others as you perceive and love us. We imagine in our mind's eye now the people in our lives, the people of our communities, and the people of our world. Each of them is beloved by you, and this alone creates awe in us. We especially lift up those who need our prayers in this moment...

For all these people and those we name in our hearts,
Hear our prayer, Awesome God.

Give us lenses of awe with which to perceive and love your creation as you perceive and love it. Each strange and new species, each surprising wild flower, each ant carrying a load ten times its weight reminds us that our curiosity is fed in so many ways. You are making all things new all around us. Help us to care for the nature around us. This week, we name...

For all these places, creatures, and lifeforms, and those we name in our hearts,
Hear our prayer, Awesome God.

Give us lenses of awe with which to perceive and love life as you perceive and love the life you have given us. Open us to greet each new day as if there is something new to learn and experience so that we might stay curious and love discovery along this journey. Slow us down in this season of Lent so that we might savor anew the gift of life. We pause in this silence, setting intentions of awe for the week ahead.

[pause in silence]

For all these intentions,
Hear our prayer, Awesome God.

Let us pray the prayer Jesus taught us...

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Sung Prayer Response

(Tune: "This is My Father's World")

**You are a great and awesome God,
your wonders we proclaim.
You are our Rock, our Strength, our Shield,
from age to age the same.
You forgive us all our sins,
you transform us with your love.**

**In joyful, grateful, hearts we sing
you are a great and awesome God.**

Responding with Awe

Offertory "As the Deer"

Doxology
[Tune: Old 100th]

**Praise God, Creator of us all,
Praise Christ, by whom we hear our call,
Praise Spirit, that which sets us free,
Our awe is yours, the One-in-Three.**

Offering Prayer Rev. Yohan Go

Closing Hymn
"Be Thou My Vision" UMH 451 vs. 1,3

We Go Forth with Awe

Benedictions are blessings. And blessings are all around us. So for this season, instead of bowing your head as I offer a Benediction blessing, I invite you to open your palms in a position of receiving, and hold your head high, imagining a radiant stream of light from above shining upon you and everything else around you. And this week when you need to be reminded to be curious and open to discovery, take this stance again. Open your palms to receive, look around to perceive, and notice one small thing that can light up your heart for a moment.

And now may you go forth
remembering Meister Eckhart's words:

Be willing to be a beginner
every single morning."

Be a purveyor of awe this week.
Inspire others with your insatiable desire to know them beyond the surface.
Know that the reward of awe is yours
as you invite curiosity to live and breathe new life in you.

Be a "purveyor of awe,"
curating a life of spiritual depth
that inspires others to join you on the journey.

May the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of Awe,

the Holy One-in-Three,
be with you now and throughout these days,
Amen.

Postlude “Standing on the Promises” Hanna Noh

Announcements

1. The worship leader for Sunday, March 30th is Carl Bishop Jr.
2. Please take a Lenten spiritual practice booklet along with a sand timer. Follow the instructions for Visio Divina and engage in this practice throughout the Lenten season.
3. **Join Us in Building the Cross!** In the **Coffee Room**, you’ll find a special cross—a space to lay down your burdens and receive Christ’s grace. Each week, take a moment to **reflect, repent, and release**. Write your silent prayer in your heart, take a wooden slice, and **place it on the cross** as a sign of surrender and trust. Together, we are building more than a cross—we are building a community of grace. Join us in this sacred journey.
4. The deadline for submitting newsletter articles is Tuesday, March 25th.

Birthdays

24th Beth Bradbury, Sarah Gibbs, & Carolyn Whitney
26th Jan Jones

Flowers

The flowers on the altar this week are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Marion A. Fitzgerald by her daughters Carolyn and Marion.