

# *Asbury United Methodist Church*

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Worship Leader: Carl Bishop Jr.

Chancel: Deb Bush

\*Please rise in body or spirit

## **“Delight”**

Lent Four

**Prelude** “You Are My All in All” Hanna Noh

### **Welcome and Announcements**

#### **Over the Threshold**

*Leader:* We might not think of Albert Einstein as a mystic, but his quotes about life and spirituality have lived as long as his scientific theories. He said this: We are slowed down sound and light waves, a walking bundle of frequencies tuned into the cosmos. We are souls dressed up in sacred biochemical garments and our bodies are the instruments through which our souls play their music.”

*[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!**

Lent is a time of spiritual journeys and spiritual practices. We have visited several elements of spiritual depth thus far, including Beauty, Wonder, Meaning, and Curiosity. When we incorporate these as spiritual practices, research shows that there are all kinds of benefits to our lives and our involvement with the world around us. Biblical authors often used these words to describe our response to the Holy, and this week’s word is no different. ‘Delight’ is a word that winds itself through scripture—we are invited to delight in the presence of the Holy, to delight in God’s creation. In a time when our delight is often depleted by the forces that threaten destruction or simply what feels like the tediousness of everyday life, we hear the call to co-create experiences of delight.

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

## **I want to see you**

We humans love repetition... up to a point. But sometimes, we just need a good “Wow!” and some goosebumps to help us feel fully alive. Our physical response to awe-filled moments come from a very ancient part of our evolution—even before language. And those goosebumps? They helped us forge connections with others as we faced the vast mysteries of life together. Delight still plays an important role in our spiritual needs and in our sense of a deeply relational life. 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 delight.  
Too often, we forget that we are made  
to delight in the diversity and abundance of your gifts.  
Open us to perceive anew.  
Inspire us to receive our surroundings with awe.  
Forgive us when we get complacent, when we choose routine  
over opportunities for new experiences.  
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!**

*[fade into silence... after a time, the leader speaks softly into the silence]*

The Holy delights in their creation, in our very existence.  
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** “How Great Thou Art” UMH 77 vs 1,3

## **Contemporary Reading**

*Reader:* Our first reading is a contemporary one—an excerpt from Dacher Keltner’s research called, *Awe: The New Science of Everyday Wonder and How It Can Transform Your Life*:

*“Our tears register our awareness of vast things that unite us with others. Our goose bumps accompany notions of joining with others and facing mysteries and unknowns together. Today we may sense these laws of bodily awe when moved by a favorite musical group, or in calling out in protest with others in the streets, or in bowing our heads together in contemplation. And in such rushes of tears and chills... we may glean a sense of what our souls might be.”*

### **Ancient Reading**

*Excerpt from Psalm 36*

*Reader:* The ancient poet of Psalm 36 wrote a love letter about the streams of delight that flow from God. Hear these words now:

*How precious is your love!  
Whether creatures of heaven or children of earth,  
we all find refuge in the shadow of your wings.  
We feast on the bounty of your estate,  
and drink from the stream of your delights.  
In you is the wellspring of Life,  
and in your light we become enlightened.*

### **In Awe of Music(Choir Anthem) “Amazing Grace”**

#### **In Awe of the Word**

“Delight” 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**

Holy and Living God, we approach this time of prayer with delight at 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 resplendent rainbow, each stunning snowflake, each chirping squirrel reminds us that delight can be found everywhere. 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. Fill us with delight in your presence and your work in our lives. 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**

*("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**

*Offering/Offertory “Just a Closer Walk with Thee”*

*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 “Blessed Assurance” UMH 369 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 of the delight of this life, 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 “Mystic” Einstein’s words:

“We are souls dressed up in sacred biochemical garments and our bodies are the instruments through which our souls play their music.”

Be a purveyor of awe this week.  
Be an instrument of awe through the music of your soul,  
as you play and imagine and dream a better world into being,  
as you invite delight 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 “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms” Hanna Noh

### Announcements

1. The worship leader for Sunday, April 6<sup>th</sup> is Joan White.
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. Don’t forget...Just one week left to order your Easter Flowers!

### Birthdays

2<sup>nd</sup> Linda Anton

4<sup>th</sup> Nicole Minor Jones

### Flowers

*The flowers on the altar this week are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Alice Whipple Spear, Wife of Asbury’s first Pastor, and her granddaughter, Muriel Stoltey and Marilyn McNab by Becky & Lee Arnold.*