

Asbury United Methodist Church

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Worship Leader: Joan White

Chancel: Becky Arnold

*Please rise in body or spirit

“Connection”

Lent Five

Prelude “Spirit Song” Hanna Noh

Welcome and Announcements

Over the Threshold

Leader: Persian mystic Rumi is one of the most often quoted mystics in our day, transcending religious lines. He said this: Do not feel lonely, the entire universe is inside you. Stop acting so small. You are the universe in ecstatic motion. Set your life on fire. Seek those who fan your flames.”

[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 often considered a solitary journey as we traditionally use it as a time to examine ourselves and engage in practices that bring us closer to God. While this is a part of the spiritual journey, we also know that human beings were made for relationship. This is why it is so vitally important that we experience collective awe. As we continue to explore what it means to be “purveyors of awe,” we learn of the powerful benefits of togetherness. In a time when we have been through one of the most isolating times in human history, we remember and are grateful for a renewed ability to seek connection.

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

Awe is a gateway to connection. As we have experiences that give us a sense of being part of something larger than just us,” our penchant for self-preservation and obsession with the competitive default-self gives way to a renewed commitment to the greater whole. We need moments of “collective effervescence” that increase hope and joy at being part of the human family. 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 connection.
It is too easy to have everything we need without seeking out
relationship or connection to another human being.
Open us to perceive anew.
Inspire us to receive our surroundings with awe.
Forgive us when we hold back unnecessarily from wholehearted participation
and dedication to eradicating loneliness.
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!**

God does not sever connection. Ever.
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 TFWS 2088 – “*Lord, I Lift Your Name on High*” (x2)

Contemporary Reading

Reader: Our first reading is a contemporary one—an excerpt from an article by researcher Brené Brown entitled, “Why Experiencing Joy and Pain in a Group Is So Powerful:”

“Experiences [of collective effervescence] contribute to a life filled with less loneliness and greater meaning, positive emotions, and social connection... Collective assembly

meets the primal human yearnings for shared social experiences. A collective assembly can start to heal the wounds of a traumatized community. When we come together to share authentic joy, hope, and pain, we melt the pervasive cynicism that often cloaks our better human nature.”

Ancient Reading

Excerpt from Psalm 149

Reader: As long as we’ve been humans, we have been coming together to experience the collective sensations of togetherness. The ancient poet describes the traditional practices of worship of God in the days of the Psalms.

Alleluia!

Sing to YHWH a new song!

Sing praise in the assembly of the faithful.

Let Israel be glad in its Maker;

let the children of Zion rejoice in their God.

Let them praise God’s Name with festive dance;

let them sing praise with timbrel and harp.

For YHWH loves the people,

and crowns the lowly with salvation.

In Awe of Music(Choir) “The Gift of Love”

In Awe of the Word

“Connection” Rev. Yohan Go

[See the Sermon Folder document in your downloads]

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 a desire to connect with 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... *[continue with prayers of thanksgiving and care for people]*.

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 thawing path under the warmth of the sun reminds us that all things are interconnected. You are making all things new all around us. Help us to care for the nature around us. This week, we name... *[continue with prayers about specific entities of nature in your area]*.

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 the awe of sharing our joy and our pain with others. 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.**

HOLY COMMUNION

Text: Beth Quick (Colleague from Upper New York), 2019

A Sung Communion Liturgy (Tune by Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing: UMH 400)

Pastor:

Come, dear friends, now to the table
Lift your hearts up to the Lord.
Let us gather, kneel together
Raise our voices! Praise God!

Now we gather at the table
Now we come to sing our praise
At the table of forgiveness
Oh, God's goodness: see and taste.

Congregation:

**Come, thou Fount of every blessing,
Tune our hearts to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing,
call for songs of loudest praise.**

**Teach us some melodious sonnet,
sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount! We're fixed upon it,
mount of thy redeeming love.**

Pastor:

Out of love we were created,
From God's breath we drew our life.
But God's goodness we rejected,
Bound for pain and grief and strife
So God sought us through the ages,
Called to us to turn from sin.
Yet we would not heed God's pleading,
Lost and suffering, broken

Congregation:

**So God sent to us Christ Jesus,
God-made-flesh to walk with us.**

**By his wounds: we found redemption.
In his life: abiding love.**

**Jesus sought us when still strangers,
wandering from the fold of God;
he, to rescue us from danger,
interposed his precious blood.**

Pastor:

On the night of that last supper
Jesus broke and shared the bread.
“This my body, take and eat it;
Broken so the world might mend.”

Jesus took the wine and poured it,
Offering with it his own life.
Telling us: “You are forgiven,”
Telling us we’d gained new life.

Congregation:

**O to grace how great a debtor
daily we’re constrained to be!
Let thy goodness, like a fetter,
bind our wandering hearts to thee.**

**Prone to wander, Lord, we feel it,
prone to leave the God we love;
take our hearts, O take and seal them,
seal them for thy courts above.**

Pastor:

Holy, Holy, God Almighty,
Holy Spirit, fall on us.
Make these gifts of bread and cup now
Jesus’ body, Jesus’ blood

Though this gift we are Christ’s body
In this meal, we are made one
Here we raise our Ebenezer
At this table, we are home.

BREAKING BREAD AND SHARING THE CUP

Responding with Awe

Offering Am Gonna Live So God Can Use Me” (Amanda Wyllly, Alice Pace)

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

UMH 733 – “*We’re Marching to Zion*” (verses 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 gift of community all around you, 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 Rumi’s words:

“Set your life on fire. Seek those who fan your flames.”

Be a purveyor of awe this week.
Seek out connection with others whose life and love
can be multiplied because you are together to help light up the world.
Invite renewed connections 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 “*Sent Forth by God’s Blessing*” Hanna Noh

Announcements

1. The worship leader for Sunday, April 13th is Alice Pace.
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. **Annual Easter Egg Hunt:** The Christian Education Committee seeks donations of small bite-size wrapped candy and small toys that will fit in plastic Easter eggs for our annual Easter Egg Hunt. The hunt will take place **directly after Easter Worship Service on Sunday, April 20th**. We will have at least 5 children. **We do NOT need any plastic eggs as we have loads already**. Donations should be left in the Dahlquist Coffee Hour Room by Tuesday, April 8th. Thank you in advance, Diane Newman-Goins and Billy McGovern Christian Education Co-Chairs

Birthdays

- 7th Samantha Dorsey & Greg Jacobson
8th Ryan Arnold & Donna Rowe
9th Linda Ruscio
10th Don Biron
11th Scarlett Williams

Flowers *The flowers on the altar this week are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Joan Dickinson, beloved sister on her Birthday, by Lee Williams and Dianne Pratt.*