

# *Asbury United Methodist Church*

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Worship Leader: Jan Jones

Chancel: Barbara Bishop

\*Please rise in body or spirit

## **“Wonder”**

Lent One

**Prelude “As the Deer”** Hanna Noh

## **Welcome and Announcements**

### **Over the Threshold**

*UMH 454 “Open My Eyes That I May See”*

*Leader:* Professor of Jewish Mysticism and beloved author, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, said this: Our goal should be to live life in radical amazement... Get up in the morning and look at the world in a way that takes nothing for granted. Everything is phenomenal; everything is incredible; never treat life casually. To be spiritual is to be amazed.”

*[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!**

This Lent, we are invited to consider that one of the most important gifts we can give is to be “purveyors of awe.” A purveyor is someone who spreads or promotes a particular idea or who deals in a particular good. Our quest in this season is to promote a state of awe about the lives we’ve been given and revel in the sheer miracles of life that surround us. This is a spiritual journey in the tradition of biblical poets and of mystics. In our modern day, researchers who study wellbeing know that when we cultivate elements that deepen our awe of life, our appreciation for others, our dedication to the good, we live longer, more purposeful and more joyful lives. In a time when we are exposed to the weight of the world by the messages around us, we will spend time on a journey of being exposed to the wonder of the world.

**Open the eyes of my heart, Lord**

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

The “wide eye of wonder” creates optimal conditions for awe. When we open our senses to the “extraordinariness of the everyday ordinary,” we have begun the journey to a deeper existence than what resides at surface-level. Wonder can be an antidote to anxiety and depression, pulling us instead toward the awe-filled knowledge that there is more than meets the eye, there are solutions in the midst of problems, possibilities where we sense only dead-ends. 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 wonder.

Too often, we relegate what is always amazing to what is ever familiar,  
forgetting that there are mysteries and miracles in the ordinariness of our lives.

Open us to perceive anew.

Inspire us to receive our surroundings with awe.

Forgive us when we focus only on what’s wrong  
rather than allowing the right and good to show us the way forward.

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!**

Be still and know that God is God. Wonders never cease.  
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 UMH 384** “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” vs. 1,3

### **Contemporary Reading**

*Reader:* Our first reading is a contemporary one—an excerpt from Monica C. Parker, author of *The Power of Wonder*:

*“Gently peeking its head around mental corners or bombastically announcing its arrival into our trembling psyche, wonder changes our perspective, our bodies, our souls, and our lives. Art, music, religion, politics, science, nature, love, fear, birth, death; each of the myriad experiences that compress to form the bedrock of human life has a golden vein of wonder running through it.”*

### **Ancient Reading**

*Excerpts from Psalm 107 and 139*

*Reader:* Ancient poets in our faith tradition saw the world of wonder as an ongoing expression of creation and care of God. Hear now from the psalmists in chapters 107 and 139.

*They called to YHWH in their trouble,  
and God rescued them from their sufferings,  
guiding them by a direct route to an inhabited town.  
Let them thank YHWH for this great love,  
for the marvels done for all people—  
for God has satisfied the thirsty  
and filled the hungry with good things.*

—  
*For all these mysteries I thank you—  
for the wonder of myself,  
for the wonder of your works—  
my soul knows it well.*

### **In Awe of Music (Choir Anthem) “God is So Good”**

**In Awe of the Word**  
“Wonder” 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.

## Video

### ***Joys and Concerns***

#### **Pastoral Prayer**

Holy and Living God, we approach this time of prayer with wonder 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... [Pastoral prayer]

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 blossom, each sunrise, each unfurling fern reminds us that new life is possible. 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 wonders around us—the art-fullness of each encounter, each moment, as a possibility for amazement waiting to happen. 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*

*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.**

### **Closing Hymn UMH 77 "How Great Thou Art" vs. 1,4**

#### **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 wonder-filled world, 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 Rabbi Heschel's words:

"Get up in the morning and look at the world  
in a way that takes nothing for granted.  
Everything is phenomenal;  
everything is incredible;  
never treat life casually.  
To be spiritual is to be amazed."

Be a purveyor of awe this week.

Be amazed as you gaze with the lens of wonder at the world around you,  
as you wonder with hope about what will unfold,  
as you invite wonder 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 “We’ve a Story to Tell to the Nations” Hanna Noh

### Announcements

1. The worship leader for Sunday, March 16<sup>th</sup> is Joan White.
2. May Tea Party Planning meeting coming very soon.
3. **Six-Week Lenten Book Study** – *The Message of Jesus by Adam Hamilton*. Tuesday group meets in the Pastor’s Office, beginning March 11<sup>th</sup> at 10 am. Wednesday Group: meets in the library, beginning March 12<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m. Please sign up if you are interested in participating in the book study.
4. 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.
5. **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.

### Birthdays

9<sup>th</sup> Cheryl Anderson & Bob Cameron

10<sup>th</sup> Brooke Arnold

12<sup>th</sup> Christian James Iavarone

### Flowers

*The flowers on the altar this week are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Diana and Watson Mills, from Lee, Christina, Leslee and Tyler.*