

LENT 2025 PURVEYORS OF AWE



Serve & Enrich
Zion United Church
of Christ

The First Sunday of Lent: Wonder

Prelude

Lamb of God

Gathering

with song "Purveyors of Awe"

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."

*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*

*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.

*Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.*

*Open my eyes, illumine me,
Spirit divine!*

****Gathering Song**

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling, 358

Prayer of Transformation

Our focused time of prayer together this Lenten season will be a bit different. Rather than a more pastoral prayer of joys and concerns, our prayers will be more confessional. We'll seek forgiveness and we'll find grace.

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.

The Lord's Prayer (unison)—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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Declaration of Grace—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. Amen.

Sung Prayer Response

*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.*

Choir

My Prayer

Exploring Together: Where did you see beauty last week? Be on the lookout for wonder this week.

We Hear God's Word

Psalm 107:6-9 (Inclusive Bible)

*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.*

Psalm 139:13 (Inclusive Bible)

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

Meditation

Wonder

Hymn

How Great Thou Art, 51

We Respond to God's Word with Our Giving

Invitation—Recognizing that all that we have comes from God, let us offer back to God, not our leftovers, but the first and best of what we have received.+

March Benevolence—One Great Hour of Sharing & Our Church's Wider Mission

**Doxology

*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. Amen.*

We Give Thanks—Dear God, use these gifts, and our lives, to feed and nourish, spreading your love where it is most needed.+ May they open eyes and hearts to the wonder of your majesty and grace. Amen.

Hymn

Wonderful Words of Life, 668

Benediction—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

Trumpet Air

Service adapted from worshipdesignstudio.com/awe. +UCC Worship Ways.