



Wednesday Worship: Meaning

Gathering

*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.*

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

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

with song "Purveyors of Awe"

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

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

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

Contemporary Reading— Our first reading is a contemporary one—an excerpt from Brian McLaren in his book *Life After Doom: Wisdom and Courage for a World Falling Apart*. It explains how God created our brains to make meaning of the world around us. It’s amazing how our brains work. McLaren writes, “...the neocortex of the brain...makes language possible and gives meaning to the word ‘meaning.’ It enables me to talk to myself and observe myself. It integrates current awareness with memory of past experiences and with the ability to imagine future scenarios. It organizes my experience in stories with beginnings, middles, and ends.

It helps me think critically, creatively, and independently. Without the meaning committee [in my brain], there would be no Bach or the Beatles, no Galileo or Einstein, nor Moses or Mary or Jesus or the Buddha or Mohammed. It is the most recently evolved part of me, and frankly, it still has a lot of bugs and glitches that haven’t been worked out yet.”

We Hear God’s Word

Psalm 19:1-11

The heavens herald your glory, O God,
and the skies display your handiwork.
Day after day they tell their story,

and night after night they reveal
the depth of their understanding.
Without speech, without words,
without even an audible voice,
their cry echoes through all the world,
and their message reaches the ends of the earth...
Holding you in awe, YHWH, is purifying; it endures.
Your decrees are steadfast, and all of them just.
They are more precious than gold,
than the purest of gold,
and sweeter than honey,
than honey fresh from the comb.
In them your faithful people find instruction;
there is great reward in keeping them.

Luke 9:35

³⁵ Then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!”

Prayer: Approaching an Awesome God— 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...[Name those who are on your heart in these moments].

For all these people and all your beloved,

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 butterfly, each shell, each sunset reminds us that symbols of the meaning of life are everywhere. You are making all things new all around us. Help us to care for the nature around us. ...[Name the parts of creation on your heart in these moments].

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 a more meaningful existence. Help us to know that our existence itself already has meaning and we are not required to earn it or deserve it, simply open to it. 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. [Name your intentions for your spiritual practice this week.]

For all these intentions,

Hear our prayer, Awesome God.

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.

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.*

Visio Divina—For online worship, we'll be engaging in the spiritual practice of Visio Divina. "Visio Divina is translated as 'divine seeing' and is related to Lectio Divina 'divine reading'. While Lectio Divina is a form of prayer focused on scripture, Visio Divina focuses on images."¹ If you worship at home with our mailing, find an image you have at home (a work of art, a photograph, an image in a book or on your phone) to contemplate. See what the Spirit reveals through it.

"The human gaze is not the closed, fixed view of a camera but is creative and constructive...So much depends then on how we see things...Each of us is responsible for *how* we see, and how we see determines what we see. Seeing is not merely a physical act: the heart of vision is shaped by the state of soul." -- from John O'Donohue's *Beauty*, 2004.

Hymn

I Need Thee Every Hour, 476

Benediction—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

¹ “What Is Visio Divina?” at “St. John’s Bible – Truett Course Guide.” *Baylor University*, libguides.baylor.edu.

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

Service adapted from worshipdesignstudio.com/awe.