

LENT 2025 PURVEYORS OF AWE



Serve & Enrich
Zion United Church
of Christ

The Fifty Sunday of Lent: Delight

Prelude

Theme of Devotion

Gathering

with song "Purveyors of Awe"

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."

*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*

*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.

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

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

****Gathering Song**

Gather Us In, 649

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 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. understanding.

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—The Holy delights in their creation, in our very existence. God forgives us. Jesus embraces us. The Spirit enlivens us. We are whole.

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.*

Special Music

Dream God's Dreams, Dennis Frische-Mouri

Exploring Together: How did you explore or let your curiosity run wild the last few weeks? Be on the lookout for delight this week.

We Hear God's Word

Greg Miller

Psalm 36:7-9

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.

Luke 15:32

³² ‘But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”

Meditation

Delight

Hymn

A Place at the Table, 617 (v. 1, 2, 3, 5)

We Gather at the Table

Set Your Place at the Table—For those worshipping with us at home, please use whatever you have on hand to represent the bread and the cup.

Our Invitation— All are invited to the mystery of this table. It is a place of awe as we not only *remember* Jesus here, but *encounter him anew* in the real presence of communion with God and with each other. There is delight here. Can you imagine being in the presence of Jesus, not just at the Last Supper, but at any table where he was present? His light is surely our delight.

A Prayer for Transformation—God, there are times when we wander far from your embrace, seeking after those things we think will bring delight but instead leave us feeling empty. Draw us back to you. Help us to see ourselves and our neighbors through the lens of your merciful love that we might find our true delight in you. Amen.

Assurance of Grace—Siblings in Christ, celebrate and rejoice! Because whatever is lost, God can find. No matter how far you go, God will be with you. Know God’s forgiveness and grace is yours this day.

The Words of Institution—We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, and on the eve of death, Jesus gathered the disciples for the feast of Passover. Jesus took the bread, and after giving thanks..., broke it, and give it to the disciples, saying: “This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying: “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” Therefore we proclaim the mystery of our faith.’

Blessing Our Meal—Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, so that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit, seal our connection with Christ, our connection with each other, and our connection to all the world through our ministry until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever.

We Share the Bread and the Cup

We Give Thanks—Almighty God, we give you thanks for the gift of our Savior's presence in the simplicity and splendor of this holy meal. Unite us with all who are fed by Christ's body and blood that we may faithfully proclaim the good news of your love and that your universal church may be a rainbow of hope in an uncertain world; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

We Respond to God's Word with Our Giving

Invitation—In gratitude for all that God has done for us and as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, let us share our gifts with God and God's world.~

April Benevolence—Global Ministries

****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—With glad hearts, we offer these gifts to you, O God. Transform them with the power of your Holy Spirit, that these gifts may bring forth new life. May our offering transform others' lives into the new creation you promise to all. Amen.~

Hymn

This is the Day, 652 (2x)

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 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

Elegy

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