

LENT 2025 PURVEYORS OF AWE



Serve & Enrich
Zion United Church
of Christ

Wednesday Worship: Delight

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 Dacher Keltner’s research called, *Awe: The New Science of Everyday Wonder and How It Can Transform Your Life*. He describes the way delight is literally embodied in us as we respond to the awe we encounter. A researcher of emotional response, he writes: “Our tears register our awareness of vast things that unite us with others. Our goose bumps accompany notions of joining with others and facing mysteries and unknowns together. Today we may sense these laws of bodily awe when moved by a favorite musical group, or in calling out in protest with others in the streets, or in bowing our heads together in contemplation. And in such rushes of tears and chills... we may glean a sense of what our souls might be.”

We Hear God’s Word

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.’”

Prayer: Approaching an Awesome God— Holy and Living God, we approach this time of prayer with delight 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 resplendent rainbow, each stunning snowflake, each chirping squirrel reminds us that delight can be found 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. Fill us with delight in your presence and your work in our lives. 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

Sweet Hour of Prayer, 478

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

Service adapted from worshipdesignstudio.com/awe.

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