

# Purveyors of Awe

Elements for Curating a Life  
of Spiritual Depth

March 5, 2025  
Ash Wednesday  
7pm



## **“Beauty”**

**GUESTS**, Welcome to our faith community. To learn more about us please visit our website at [www.unionucc.org](http://www.unionucc.org) or like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/unionneffs](http://www.facebook.com/unionneffs). Let us know you're here by completing the Welcome Card in the racks in front of you and hand it to a pastor or drop it in the offering plate.

### **Vision Statement**

UNION UCC: RELEVANT, ENGAGED, and GROWING

### **Mission Statement**

Our church is a diverse family of believers, spiritually united in Christ, rooted in a rich heritage and growing with vitality into the future.

We proclaim God's word, nurturing and inspiring dedicated Christian discipleship through worship, education, pastoral care, fellowship, and outreach within our community and the world.

***No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey,  
you are welcome here.***

***Union UCC is an Open and Affirming (ONA) Community.***

Lay Reader: Devon Kuharik  
Sound: Pat Sorg

*I, through the abundance of your steadfast love,  
will enter your house;  
I will bow down toward your holy temple  
in awe of you.*  
– Psalm 5:7

**Awe is a profound emotional response that can significantly impact our wellbeing and perception of the world. Awe often arises from experiences that transcend our usual understanding, such as viewing vast landscapes, listening to powerful music, encountering extraordinary acts of kindness, or feeling heightened devotion and a Divine Presence connecting us all. To be a “Purveyor of Awe” is to be intentional about curating a life of spiritual depth. This has implications not only for one’s own life, but also as motivation to tend to the wellbeing of others. Let us approach this Lent with awe as we explore the elements of Beauty, Wonder, Meaning, Curiosity, Delight, Connection, and Self-Giving.**

### **Prelude Music**

Jesus Paid It All Elvina M. Hall, John T. Grape  
**Blake Hoppes**

### **Welcome to Union UCC!**

### **Welcome & Announcements**

### **Over the Threshold**

*Leader:* The late modern mystic and author, John O'Donohue, said this in his book, *Beauty: The invisible Embrace*, “We live between the act of awakening and the act of surrender. Each morning we awaken to the light and the invitation to a new day in the world of time; each night we surrender to the

dark to be taken to play in the world of dreams where time is no more. At birth we are awakened and emerged to become visible in the world. At death we will surrender again to the dark to become invisible. Awakening and surrender: they frame each day and each life; between them is the journey where anything can happen, the beauty and the frailty."

**ALL Sing:**

**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!**

We begin this day on the journey of Lent. Lent is a time to pay attention. It is historically a time of heightened spiritual practices in the lives of Christians. We make more room for contemplation, more room for prayer, more room for study. This year, we will make more room for awe. We will become "purveyors of awe"—those who promote and dispense a precious good. We will discover that awe is indeed a precious good in the world, and we will seek to bring more of its elements alive in us, and in our community: Beauty, Wonder, Meaning, Curiosity, Delight, Connection, and Self-Giving.

**ALL Sing:**

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

We begin in our Ash Wednesday service by remembering the beauty of life. Beauty is complex. We call something “achingly beautiful” when it creates a *pathos* within us—a sense of something so precious that we want it to last forever—from the plump cheeks of a newborn to the wrinkled face of an elder. But alas, we are all mortal and not meant to exist in this bodily form forever. We were made from dust, and to dust we shall return. We open ourselves to the awe that is the beauty of life in between the first and last breath. Let us pray:

Awe-inspiring God,  
we come together this day because we need to be  
reminded  
to see through the lens of beauty.  
Too often, we admire a standard of beauty that leaves too  
much out of its definition,  
forgetting that life and its imperfections are inherently  
beautiful simply because it exists.  
Open us to perceive anew.  
Inspire us to receive our surroundings with awe.  
Forgive us when we move through our lives and do not  
Notice your handiwork in all things, all people.  
Be with us on this journey  
as we seek again to marvel at your works.

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

All of the cosmos was created and called good. You are a  
part of this mystery of life.

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].

**\*Please rise in body or spirit to greet each other and for the first song.**

**\*Opening Hymn** For the Beauty of the Earth  
#28 Black Hymnal/New Century Hymnal

**1. For the beauty of the earth, for the splendor of the skies,  
For the love which from our birth over and around us lies,  
God of all, to you we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.**

**2. For the wonder of each hour of the day and of the night,  
Hill and vale, and tree and flower,  
sun and moon, and stars of light  
God of all, to you we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.**

**3. For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child,  
Friends on earth, and friends above,  
for all gentle thoughts and mild,  
God of all, to you we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.**

**4. For the good that love inspires,  
for a world where none exclude,  
For a faith that never tires, and for every heart renewed,  
God of all, to you we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.**

Please be seated.

## Contemporary Reading

*Reader:* During this Lent, we will be hearing from biblical poets, mystics, and also modern researchers who are helping us know more about the phenomenon of awe and its effect on our lives—especially our spiritual lives. Our first readings each week are contemporary ones—today an excerpt from the Greater Good podcast about the work of psychologist Rene Proyer:

*“On the way to work... look out of the window. Is there a tree that you haven't noticed before that blooms beautifully at this time? When we naturally notice and appreciate the beauty around us, it can lead to all kinds of different benefits. Studies show it can make us feel more satisfied in life, have a stronger sense of meaning, and act with more kindness towards others and the environment.”*

Keltner, D. (Host). (2024, January 18). Why we should see beauty in the everyday life [Audio podcast episode]. In *The Science of Happiness Podcast*. UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center and PRX. <https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/podcasts/item/9-beautiful-things-Darnell-Washington>

## Ancient Reading

*Excerpts from Job 33 and Psalm 27*

*Reader:* Biblical poets wrote eloquently about the pain and joy of life. So much of the poetry exudes an awe with regard to life and their Maker and the deep desire for a closer rela-

tionship with God. Hear now excerpts from Job 33 and Psalm 27.

*Now I will open my mouth;  
my tongue and lips will form words.  
And those words will come from an upright heart,  
and my lips will speak about what I know to be true.  
The Spirit of God is what made me;  
the breath of Shaddai gives me life.*

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*One thing I ask of you, YHWH,  
one thing I seek:  
that I may dwell in your house all the days of my life,  
to gaze on your beauty  
and to meditate in your Temple.*

## **In Awe of the Word Pastor Kris**

### **Approaching an Awesome God Our Prayers and Imposition of Ashes**

Visio Divina Video: Visio Divina is translated as “divine seeing”. It is related to the prayer form Lectio Divina (divine reading), but instead of Scripture, this form of prayer uses visual elements to help set your mind on prayer. It allows God to speak into your heart through the image.

Holy and Living God, we approach this moment with  
awe at the beauty of life.

The passage of time is etched on every face.  
The beauty of infancy, so fresh from your creative hand,  
pulls at our hearts and we feel the hope of the future.  
The wrinkled corners of eyes that have witnessed so many  
years

proclaim the beauty of lived experience.  
And all the beauty of every age, no matter what age,  
makes us pause in awe of the story of being alive.  
Each moment is precious.

God of all life, of our ancestors and of those  
yet to come after us,  
hear our prayers this day.

We come to receive the reminder upon our foreheads  
of the dust from which we came and the dust  
to which we shall return.

Help us to come with humble hearts, for this is  
beautiful in your sight.

We do not always act in ways that align with beauty.

We squander opportunities to bring more  
beauty and awe into this world,  
and instead we choose fear and destruction of love.

We sometimes choose complacency over action,  
comfort over self-giving, privilege over justice.

Turn us around into the journey of discipleship in Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

## **Ashes and Holy Communion**

**We invite you to come forward to the railing to receive  
ashes and communion.**

**The ushers will direct you when to come forward.**

**The pastors will let you know when to leave the railing.**

**Please place your empty cup in the trays as you return to  
your seat.**

**If you want to be served in your seats, let the ushers know  
and the pastors will come to you.**

**Everyone is welcome to this meal of love and grace.**

**If you are at home, we invite you to find something to eat  
and drink that represents the elements for you.**



**A non-gluten option with juice is available in a  
prepackaged container on the bread tray.  
Both red wine and white grape juice are on the tray of  
cups.  
Please choose either.**

### **Music Offering**

We Remember You    Joel Raney

### **Adult Choir**

Let us pray the prayer Jesus taught us...

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**ALL: 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.**

### **Setting Our Awe Intentions**

You are invited to practices of awe this season. The first could be the "Nine Beautiful Things" practice. Take 15 minutes at the end of each day (or as many days as you can), and write about nine things you saw in the day that were beautiful: three about people, three about nature, and three beautiful things in general. We have handouts that describe this practice

Let us pray over our Lent journey intentions:

Give us lenses of awe, God, with which to  
perceive and love *others*  
as you perceive and love us.

Give us lenses of awe, God, with which to  
perceive and love *your creation*  
as you perceive and love it.

Give us lenses of awe, God, with which to  
perceive and love *life*  
as you perceive and love the life you have given us.

Slow us down in this season of Lent so that we  
might savor anew this gift of life.

We pause in this silence, setting intentions of  
awe for this season of Lent.

We pray in your holy names, Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer.  
**Amen.**

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## NEWS ABOUT THE MINISTRY AND MISSION OF GOD'S CHURCH AT UNION



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
Neffs, Pennsylvania

### OFFERING

**Thank you for your faithful generosity and for all that you do  
to help our church be  
*Relevant - Engaged - Growing***

• **ELECTRONIC GIVING** <https://secure.myvanco.com/L->

**Z51X/home** or use the QR code with your cell phone. Choose an ongoing regular donation or a single donation with your credit or debit card. (Help us with fees if you can.)



Electronic Giving

• **FREE Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement app**

Look for our church Union United Church of Christ, Neffs, PA and register your information to contribute.



Vanco Mobile

• **Venmo @unionuccneffs** Make a donation or pay for a fundraiser or event. Complete "What's this for?" See QR code.

• **Cash or checks (to "Union UCC")** Place in the offering plate with a member offering envelope or guest envelope (in the seat racks) or drop in the mail if you're not in person.



Venmo

Contact John Harting (610-799-2508) or Don Penrod (610-972-8719) or Pastor Kris if you have questions or if you'd like to learn more about other giving options or legacy gifts to Union.

### **Easter Mission Offering**

Please share your financial support by using the Easter Mission Offering envelope in your envelope packet, or blank envelope or a check marked "Easter Mission", or donate online at <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z51X/campaign/C-12H63>

**The Chemo Bag** Their Mission Statement - The CHEMO Bag, Inc, in partnership with the generosity of our community, corporate sponsors and volunteers is committed to providing care bags filled with items to provide comfort to men and women in the Lehigh Valley and surround areas undergoing chemotherapy treatments. CHEMO - Caring, Helping, Encouraging, Motivating, Others. Union UCC held a successful packing session for The Chemo Bag and plans

to hold another one soon.

## **World Central Kitchen**

In 2010, Chef Jose Andres, founded World Central Kitchen to feed people around the world after a disaster.

Quote - 'When you need medical service, you bring doctors and nurses. When you need the rebuilding of infrastructure, you bring in engineers and architects. And if you have to feed large groups of people, you need professional chefs'.

WCK is first to the front lines, providing fresh meals in response to humanitarian, climate, and community crises.

In 2024, WCK provided help to families in 20 countries, providing over 109 million meals. Recently they served meals to families and first responders of the California fires.

**Be an ambassador for Union UCC and tell your friends and neighbors about our church!**

**Thank you for your prayers, participation, and financial support which helps us be a church that is relevant, engaged, and growing!**

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## **Music Offering**

Make Me a Channel of Your Peace

Sebastian Temple Arr. Mark Hayes

**Blake Hoppes**

**\*Please stand in body or spirit.**

## **\*Offering Response**

Lord, Prepare Me to Be a Sanctuary

#187 Sing! Prayer and Praise

## **All Sing:**

**Lord prepare me to be a sanctuary  
pure and holy, Tried and true:**

**With thanksgiving I'll be a living sanctuary for you.**

**God empower me to be a witness for you,  
Acting boldly, in your name:  
Seeking justice, where there is hurting  
offering hope where there is pain.**

## **We Go Forth With Awe**

### **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 until we meet again, when you need to be reminded of the beauty 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 John O'Donohue's words:

“Awakening and surrender:  
they frame each day and each life;  
between them is the journey where anything can happen,  
the beauty and the frailty.”

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.

**\*Closing Hymn** Beautiful Things Gungor, Gungor

Solo: All this pain  
I wonder if I'll ever find my way  
I wonder if my life could really change at all  
All this earth  
Could all that is lost ever be found  
Could a garden come up from this ground at all

**ALL Sing:**

**You make beautiful things  
You make beautiful things out of the dust  
You make beautiful things  
You make beautiful things out of us**

Solo: All around  
Hope is springing up from this old ground  
Out of chaos life is being found in You

**ALL Sing:**

**You make beautiful things  
You make beautiful things out of the dust  
You make beautiful things  
You make beautiful things out of us**

Solo:  
You make me new, You are making me new  
You make me new, You are making me new

**All Sing:**

**You make beautiful things  
You make beautiful things out of the dust  
You make beautiful things  
You make beautiful things out of us**

**Postlude Music**

I Surrender All    Judson Van DeVenter & Winfield Weeden  
**Blake Hoppes**

**Worship Theme:** c. Worship Design Studio

# EVIDENCE OF STEWARDSHIP LAST SUNDAY

Offering (e-giving, envelopes, and plate)		Attendance Last Week	
Last Week	\$8,872.00	8 AM	45
Calendar Year 2025 (January)	\$ 31,482.00	10:30 AM	121
Calendar Year 2024 (January)	\$ 37,004.00	Online Views	219
Change from Last Year	-14.9%	Sunday School	7
Budget FY 2024-25 (July-Jan.)	\$ 243,040.00	God First	25
Actual Fiscal Year-to-Date (July-Jan.)	\$ 255,913.67	Faith on Tap	30
Difference in Giving vs. Budget	5.3%	Breathe	15
<i>Additional financial information available in Consistory Minutes</i>		<b>2024 Donations to the Northern Lehigh Food Bank:</b>	
		Last Week:	\$, lbs
		Total YTD:	\$100, 61200lbs

  

<b>Blanket Sunday</b> \$2,026.00	<b>Souper Bowl</b> \$994.00
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## Presentations to the Glory of God

**Good News Sponsor**– for \$20 help us cover the costs of advertising on social media, mailings, and local papers.

**Children’s Bulletin Sponsor**– for \$8 cover the cost of bulletins for children.

*Send to Union UCC through your offering envelope or online marked Spread the Good News or Children’s Bulletin. Contact Marissa to sign up for a certain date or to sponsor in honor or memory of someone.*

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