**Small Group Ministry Awe and Wonder First Unitarian Church of San Jose, CA**

**Opening Words:**

To love life is to notice the wonders that abound
And
To notice the wonders that abound
Is to be grounded here and now
And
To be grounded here and now
Is the beginning of finding love for this life today. *~ Daniel Kanter, UUA Worship Web*

**Quotes:**

Awe and wonder is not just what happens to us. We can make it happen in our lives by our love in a thousand different ways. *~ FUCSJ congregant*

The insignificance that is sometimes felt when in awe of something is a profound reminder of how we are such a tiny, tiny part of something much greater. *~ FUCSJ congregant*

Wonder isn't about finding answers; it's about becoming more comfortable with questions. ~ Leigh Ann Henion,Phenomenal: A Hesitant Adventurer’s Search for Wonder in the Natural World

**Questions to consider: *Awe:*** *a feeling of reverential respect mixed with fear or wonder.* ***Wonder:*** *a feeling of surprise mingled with admiration, caused by something beautiful, unexpected, unfamiliar, or inexplicable.*

1. Above are online dictionary definitions of “awe” and “wonder.” How would *you* define these words? Are they interchangeable for you?
2. Tell about an experience that filled you with awe and/or wonder.
3. Tell about a time you recaptured or rekindled your childhood sense of awe and wonder. How did you do it?
4. What role do awe and wonder play in your everyday life?
5. What happens to awe and wonder in your life when you are experiencing hard times?
6. How are your feelings of awe and wonder affected by science?

**Closing Words:**

What I want in my life is to be willing to be dazzled— to cast aside the weight of facts … I want to believe I am looking into the white fire of a great mystery. I want to believe that the imperfections are nothing— That the light is everything—that it is more than the sum Of each flawed blossom rising and fading. And I do. ~ Mary Oliver

**A Surprise-Free World** From the book *Living on Paradox Drive*by Richard S. Gilbert

Let me not live in a surprise-free world.

Grant me childish glee as if I saw the

world for the first time.

Allow me the joy of seeing old things in new light,

 Be it the tree at my window,

The every Monday task at hand,

 My companion for a generation.

Fling off the blinders of habit

That turn my gaze

And limit my view,

That restrict my world

Simply because I have seen it before.

Help me shed the fetters of routine

That threaten to make one day like another,

That reduce all persons to lowest common denominators,

That measure time by the hands of a clock,

Simply because I have been here before.

Furnish me with new words to celebrate the fresh surprise of every day,

Or if not,

Let me hear the old words with new ears.

Let me sing the old songs as if for the first time,

Strengthen me that I refuse to succumb to the lures of a flat universe

That has no room for surprise.