



*"Prayer"* painting by Mike Moyers, 2014.

**Christ Church** **UNITED CHURCH**  
**OF CHRIST**

Rev. Dan Stark, Pastor  
Matthew Lawrenz, Musician  
[www.uccmke.org](http://www.uccmke.org)

November 15th, 2020

Everybody has a story about money and possessions. These are sacred stories that deal with how we understand God's provenance and activity in the world. This week as we continue our stewardship sermon series, *OUR MONEY STORY*, we focus on the theme of reimagining. Today we are invited to reimagine the meaning of the word "abundant." In this story of the Rich Fool from Luke 12:13-31, 48, life's abundance does not consist in possessions. Real security is found and the true richness of life experienced is not guarding what we have but in giving what we can. Abundance is not a private possession to be hoarded, but an experience to share. This stewardship season, you are invited to remember, release, *reimagine*, and restore your stories so we can write the one God is begging us to live into.

**Prelude**

*Echoes of Joy*

Hans-Andre Stamm

**Words of Welcome**

**Opening Song**

*Trumpet Tune in C Major*

Gabrieli arr. Wolff

**Opening Litany**

**WEEK THREE: REIMAGINE**

Sarah Are

One: Can you imagine unfettered love? Free and bold, wild and true, the kind of love that changes you? Can you imagine a home – safe and bright, with impromptu dancing, meals around table, and laughter late into the night? Can you imagine faith like a compass, that guides the way you shop and vote, the way you love and hope; that asks questions and yet still believes, even despite uncertainty? Can you imagine a world where trees, bees, and all living things grow wild and free? Where peace is the narrative and hope the currency? A world where news stories are testimonies and funerals are far between? Can you imagine?

**All: Yes, we can imagine.**

One: Today in worship, dare to dream. Dare to imagine what could be. And pay attention, for God is here, in wandering thoughts, hopes, and prayers.

**All: Let us worship holy God, that great unfettered love.**

*Written by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org*

**Opening Prayer**

Holy God,

We want to see what you see.

But we stumble through roadblocks of bias and narrow perspective,

Fear and limited information.

We are too small to imagine the type of love and beauty you can sow.

So in this moment, we ask that you would clear the roadblocks that keep us from you.  
Blow the dust out of our ears.  
Thaw out the frozen parts of our hearts.  
Tell the logical arguments we form about what will and will not work to take a  
backseat.  
And as you do,  
Breathe fresh air into our lungs and fill our minds with endless possibilities.  
We want to see what you see.  
We want to reimagine this life we're living.  
Clear away the roadblocks.  
Amen.

### The Gloria

*Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me, and to the  
Son, whose grace has pardoned me, and to the Spirit,  
whose love has set me free, as it was in the beginning,  
is now and ever shall be. Amen. World without end,  
without end. Amen. World with-out end, without- end Amen. World with-out end,  
with-out end. Amen. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.*  
*Music and Words: Paul Vasile, ©2008, Paul Vasile. Permission granted by the composer for use in worship.*

### Prayer of Confession

Sarah Are

**We believe in God the Creator,  
who, like a painter with a canvas,  
imagined creation and breathed it into being.  
We believe in Jesus,  
who many years later,  
walked this hurting world and showed us a new way to love.  
We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
who prods us and pulls us,  
leads us and guides us,  
carries us and loves us into new life, day after day.  
And we believe in the power of imagination,  
a gift from God that allows us to dream dreams,  
create anew, start over, try again, and live lives of hope.  
So in response, together, as God's church,  
We dare to dream.  
We strive to love.  
We try to imagine a new day.**

**And we walk together,  
All with God's help.  
Amen. Amen.**

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## **Old Testament**

## **Malachi 3:6-10**

Malachi is the thirty-ninth and last book of the Old Testament. It details the period of reconstruction after the exiles returned from Babylon. Although Jerusalem and the temple were rebuilt, the people grew increasingly diminished in their regard for God's law. The priests and religious leaders even reflect this lethargy in their corrupt practices. The prophet Malachi urges a return to covenant obedience, faithful sacrifices, and tithes. The temple was the place from which the produce, the abundance, of the land was redistributed. From a stewardship perspective, the main point about giving, its motivation and outcome, is that generosity comes from an experience of "abundance." The blessing of abundance is literally lost unless it is shared with others and is impossible to gain alone.

"For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, have not perished. Ever since the days of your ancestors you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts. But you say, "How shall we return?" Will anyone rob God? Yet you are robbing me! But you say, "How are we robbing you?" In your tithes and offerings! You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me – the whole nation of you! Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing."

## **REIMAGINE: LOVE, BY ANOTHER WAY**

I used to think that love was simple.  
You would know when you know,  
What was meant, would be.  
But I fell in love  
And it's not that easy.  
It's compromise and identity,  
Mountains and valleys,  
Apologies and memories,  
Imbalance, re-centering.  
It turns out,  
Love took reimagining.

I used to think that Church was simple.  
Church was community, not the walls,  
Faith and hope mixed with call.  
But then the world grew violently sick  
And the way to be Church  
Was to keep distance.  
So doors were closed,  
And people sent home.  
It was all love, by another way.  
And yet it was not how we imagined  
Sunday.

I used to think that justice was simple,  
That I could make a difference, all by  
myself.  
There was a clear right and wrong,  
a way I could help.  
But then I learned of privilege and bias,  
Of white savior complex and our  
Church's silence.  
And all at once, it wasn't so easy.  
I needed to learn. I needed to listen.  
I needed to reframe my original vision.  
I guess what I'm trying to say is  
Life will throw first drafts our way.  
The chance to dream,  
To lead, to sing,  
To love, and give,  
To pray, and be.  
But in order to grow,  
To follow God's lead,  
We have to do the work—  
Reimagining.  
And despite our best efforts,  
Love will fail.  
Churches will close.  
Justice will leave the vulnerable  
exposed.  
Love, by another way.

*Written by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org*

And when that happens,  
We must own our part,  
Say we're sorry  
And try to restart.  
So write it all down.  
And write it again.  
A first draft,  
A second,  
An epilogue, and then  
Share it with me  
And we will pray.  
And the spirit will move,  
And maybe one day,  
We can write this world  
inside heaven's gate.  
For I am  
Starting to believe  
That what matters in life  
Will never be easy.  
So we must imagine and imagine again.  
We must dream and try, die and rise.  
And in our rising, may we see  
The next right reimagined thing  
Until step by step we are home.

## **New Testament**

## **Luke 12:13-21**

In this passage, Jesus is asked to be an arbiter in a dispute between two family members about inheritance. In response, Jesus tells the story of the rich fool. The parable tells the story about greed, possessions, abundance, and life. There once was a rich man whose land produced so abundantly, he had nowhere to store his crops. Rather than sharing his abundance with others, he kept hoarding his possessions in hopes for a future payout where he would live the good life without any concern. From a stewardship perspective, the parable tells us that life's abundance does not consist of possessions. Those who store up possessions for themselves always wonder if they have enough. Abundance is a shared experience rather than a private possession to be stored in a barn.

**Prayers of the People**

*Hear Our Prayers, O God, for...*

- ~Our country during these divided and uncertain times.
- ~Nancy Charles' work facility, as it has been struck with a COVID outbreak.
- ~Pam and Dean Kothrade as they navigate Pam's health journey.
- ~Matt, brother of Doris Mayeshiba who is seeing his surgeon to schedule another neck spinal surgery.
- ~Melissa, wife of Doris and Paul Mayeshiba's nephew who is recovering from lumbar fusion back surgery. Prayers for a healthy recovery.
- ~Continued prayers for Ernestine Faja, who is having medical issues.
- ~Continued prayers for Emily, daughter of Paul and Doris Mayeshiba as she has completed radiation treatment and gains her strength back and deals with its' side effects.
- ~Maureen, friend of Sue Klockow, who has breast cancer.
- ~Jerry and Michelle who have been displaced from their home after a fire. They have now found temporary living arrangements in St. Francis for the next 6 months.
- ~Jean, sister of Doris Piacentine and her niece who is recovering from COVID.
- ~Kathy, Ken Klockow's sister who is hospitalized with a serious infection.
- ~Dan, friend of Molly Pufall Brown, who is very sick with an undiagnosed illness. Prayers also for his wife and 2 young children.
- ~Kelley, friend of Nancy Charles as she navigates through her breast cancer diagnosis.
- ~Bernee, friend of Nancy Kaye who has end-stage lung cancer.
- ~Joe and Laurie, son in law and daughter of Jackie Struck. Prayers for continued healing.
- ~Linda, daughter of Jackie Struck, as she receives wound care. Prayers for continued healing.
- ~Dawn, daughter in-law of Laurel and wife of Brad Dayton, as she has health issues from complications of diabetes. Continued prayers are requested.
- ~Tracy, daughter of Nancy Kaye, who is at home with Nancy awaiting liver and kidney transplants. She is doing well.
- ~Nick, Brad and Nancy Charles nephew, who is struggling with addiction and transitions. Prayers for his family.
- ~Family of Ken and Sue who live in California close to the wildfires.
- ~Julene Flanagan's nephew, who is struggling with mental health issues.

~Julene Flanagan's family member who is struggling with health issues related to kidney disease.

**Prayer Song**

*Spirit of the Living God*

**Prayer of Dedication**

Jesus of Nazareth,  
In scripture we hear of a woman who gave her last coin away.  
You pointed her out, but you did not say, "Go and do likewise."  
So we cannot help but wonder – did you point her out to ask,  
"Why does this one have so little when others have so much?"  
Did you point her out to help us see the injustice that led to her suffering?  
Maybe.  
So today, for her, and for you, and for every person who cannot afford to give to God  
And put food on the table, we offer our gifts.  
We pray that you would use them for your good.  
Right what is wrong.  
Balance the systems of injustice.  
Use these gifts to build the world that we can only imagine  
But you can bring forth.  
In hope we pray,  
Amen.



*"Money for Nothing" by Sahand Hoseini  
unsplash.com @ Sahand\_Hoseini*

**Doxology**

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise God all creatures here below  
Praise God above ye heavenly host, Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.  
A-men.*

**Closing Song**

*Festive Scherzo*

Archer

**Sending Blessing**

**Postlude**

*Fanfare*

Purcell

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## **Happy Birthday to these wonderful people!**

Robert Blackwood November 15

Mike Thomae November 17

Hannah Buell November 18

Alyssa Mayeshiba November 19

Milton Reese November 19

Gabriel Wick Moreira November 19

## **THANKS**

Thank you, all my wonderful Christ Church family for all your well wishes! I am still having tests done and seeing specialists. Your love and prayers mean so much to me. Thank you. -Pam Kothrade.

## **CHRISTMAS GIFTS/ COOKIE DONATIONS/ HAT AND MITTEN TREE**

We will once again be buying Christmas gifts for children and adults through the Bay View Community Center. They are now available.

**Please see instructions below as we are not currently meeting in person until November 29th.**

\*Contact the church office to pick a person(s) 414-481-3530 [office@uccmke.org](mailto:office@uccmke.org)

\*Your gift tag(s) and instruction sheet will be mailed to you.

\*Assemble your gift(s) in a bag unwrapped with the gift tag **taped** to the outside.

\*Return your gifts to church no later than Sunday December 6<sup>th</sup>. Gifts should be placed on table near the glass case by name tags.

\*The church is open for gift drop off Tuesday-Thursday 8am-2pm & Friday 8:00am-12pm or possibly Sunday November 29<sup>th</sup> & December 6<sup>th</sup> during worship time.

The BVCC is requesting this year that **cookies** be wrapped by the dozen in a plastic bag or container. This is so that there is minimal handling of the baked goods. Can you please bring them in by December 6<sup>th</sup>? They can be placed on the table by the glass case by the name tags.

THANKS to everyone in advance for participating! We are truly making the holidays brighter for those in our community! If you have any questions feel free to contact the Social Concerns Committee.

*Debbie Hansen, Mary Ann Mowery, Sara Rogers and Randene Wick*

If you should need to contact Pastor Stark, please email [pastor@uccmke.org](mailto:pastor@uccmke.org).  
Christ Church UCC, 915 East Oklahoma Ave, Milwaukee, WI, 53207.

We are currently gathering in person for worship with safety and sanitation protocols in place. Learn more here. <https://www.uccmke.org/covid-19>

You can make your offering to Christ Church through [PayPal](#) or by mailing a check to Christ Church, 915 East Oklahoma Ave, Milwaukee, WI, 53207.

