Message for Sunday, November 15, 2026
Scripture: Mark 12:38-44; Leviticus 19: 9-10, 25: 8-12
Title: Reimagine

Welcome
Announcements
Fellowship of Love
Music for Your Heart

Call to Worship
L: Can you imagine unfettered love? Free and bold, wild and true, the kind of love that changes?
Can you imagine a home-safe and bright, with impromptu dancing, meals around table, and laughter late into the night?

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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 the 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?

P: Yes, we can imagine.
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L: 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.

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

Unison Prayer
God of Grace, You invite us to dream of a better world. But instead we bury our heads in the sand. We are afraid to recognize how much we must change.

We are afraid, because if we know the truth, then don't we have a job to do?

So instead, more often than not we maintain the status quo. We passively allow things to stay the same. We don't speak out; we don't imagine a day.

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We don't dream of a world without racism, sexism, bigotry or shame. Instead we allow ourselves to believe that some things will never change.

Forgive us. Show us the way.
Teach us to dream.

Teach us to imagine again. Humbly we pray. Amen.

Offering/Song

Scripture: Mark 12:38-44; Leviticus 19:9-10; 25:8-12

38 As he taught, he said, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and to
be greeted with respect in the marketplaces
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39 and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets!
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40 They devour widows’ houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will
receive the greater condemnation.”
--
41 He sat down opposite the treasury and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury.
Many rich people put in large sums.
--
42 A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny.
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43 Then he called his disciples and said to them, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in
more than all those who are contributing to the treasury.
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44 For all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put
in everything she had, all she had to live on.”
---------- Leviticus ----------

9 “When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field or
gather the gleanings of your harvest.
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10 You shall not strip your vineyard bare or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the LORD your God.

8 "You shall count off seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the period of seven weeks of years gives forty-nine years.

9 Then you shall have the trumpet sounded loud; on the tenth day of the seventh month—on the Day of Atonement—you shall have the trumpet sounded throughout all your land.

10 And you shall hallow the fiftieth year, and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family.

11 That fiftieth year shall be a Jubilee for you: you shall not sow or reap the aftergrowth or harvest the unpruned vines.

12 For it is a Jubilee; it shall be holy to you: you shall eat only what the field itself produces.

Sermon: Re-imagine

A question I often wrestle with is "Can the church look different?" Right away some of you may be thinking, yes it can! We need fewer gray hairs here! We NEED YOUNG PEOPLE! This is certainly not what I mean. What I mean is our institutions, both nationally and locally, that are so entrenched in doing things the way they believe they must be done that they can't think of a different way to do things. Hear me out here. Sometimes we do things a certain way because that's the way it has always been done. Sometimes we do things a certain way because we can't imagine how to do it a different way. (Sometimes thinking out of the box is hard!)

Here's a great example of this. I know many of you may have heard this story told in this manner. During the space race Americans spent millions of dollars to develop a pen that would write in space. In that same time, Russia just used a pencil. (Which was way more cost effective.) Whenever I have heard that story told it has been to point out very wasteful government spending. How silly is NASA for spending all that money, when they could have just used a pencil?

The problem with that story is that it isn't true. Well, it is partially true. The truth is that the Russians did use pencils, while the American's did develop a pen. What is NOT

true is that NASA spent millions of dollars. The Fisher Space pen was developed to write in space and the Fisher company spent 1 million dollars of their own money. The other part that of the story that is missing in this example is that using a pencil in space is dangerous. When a pencil is sharpened it release particles of graphite into the cabin which damages very sensitive electrical components.

Sometimes the problems that are faced need an alternative because the solution that is used is dangerous or actively harmful. Often we in the church approach finances in a way that says, this is what we have to do, and because that is what is expected. That is all we can do. Sometimes it takes a risky alternative to be different.

Our passages today revisits the idea of the year of Jubilee. Again, it is a critical part to the mission and ministry of Jesus. Jesus declares the year of Jubilee and in our passage from Leviticus we learn more about what that looks like. In chapter 19 we get instructions about how to harvest a field. The instructions are to leave the edges of the field unharvested so that people who didn't have land could harvest and have food. Chapter 25 reminds us that in the year of Jubilee even the fields get to rest. And when they rest what you get is whatever they produce all on their own.

Obviously, our society is far from an agrarian society. Most of us don't harvest fields, nor do we own large properties that we can extend its use to others. Instead, maybe we need to reimagine and revisit this idea. Perhaps instead of "leaving the edges of the field" a simpler thing is not taking more than you need. Leave some for others because then everything shares farther. Maybe it means being willing to part with those extra couple of bucks you have in your pocket and give them to someone else. If you are like me, I end up with a few one-dollar bills in my pocket and can carry them around forever, never really looking at or having an opportunity to spend them. What if I just gave them to someone else? What if I just shared just to share?

This brings us to our New Testament passage. In this passage the poor widow brings what she has to share with the temple. She was under no religious obligation to share. Instead Old Testament law permitted her not to share, but instead she still gave. We are familiar with the fact that Jesus praises her giving, but we may not be as aware of the fact that with Jesus' praise, he is also criticizing those of us that have a lot. That we hold on instead of sharing with others and helping others.

As I said at the beginning I often wonder how can the church look differently? How can church be different? Part of that is we can be different financially. Sure we have bills to pay, but can we find creative ways to mitigate those bills? Sure we have staff to pay, but

can we find creative ways to support our staff that may not involve money (I'm not saying don't pay our staff, but instead sometimes rest is more important than money!). Some of this we have already engaged in. We've gone to a part-time pastor. Why? Because it is a more financially sound position. We have sought and continue to seek opportunities to rent our spaces out, not only to bring in income but also to support other ministries and our community better.

I do feel we are trying. We are trying to look at finances differently and live into a different way of doing church. But that difference involves many different things. Not only does it involve us finding alternative revenue and ministry ideas, but it also involves all of us giving. Not just to support our church "building" but to *build* our church. To build and grow our ministry and presence in our community.

I invite you to reflect on how different the church looks today than when you first came. (Even if this isn't the only church you can think that way about.) I invite you to think about what you can give.
Can you give of your time, your talent, or your treasures? Pray. And then let us think about how to reimagine our future together. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer/The Lord's Prayer
Song
Benediction
Song
Goodbye