

## Surely, This Must Be It

Everyone has a job. I wash the potatoes, filling the sink with slivers of potato peel. You brine the turkey, hovering by the oven all afternoon. Someone sets the table, taking care to fill a vase with asters and marigolds, sprigs of holly and shoots of evergreen. We play music while we prepare. “*What The World Needs Now is Love*”<sup>11</sup> comes on. We can’t get it out of our heads. We whistle along to Dionne all afternoon. And eventually, the doorbell rings.

You’ve invited the neighbors, the grad student who sits on the second row at church, the widower in the choir. We add seats to the table. We go around the room and share one thing we’re grateful for. Eyes well as we create a laundry list of beauty. The kids get squirmy, but we’re grateful for that too.

And then we eat! We scoop whipped potatoes and crisp green beans with fresh garlic. We pass the bread basket, leaving crumbs all over the table. They are tiny reminders of communion in our midst. And at the end of the night, when we walk our guests to the car and carry sleeping children to their car seats, our neighbors say, *What a holy moment it all was*. Surely this must be what heaven feels like. Surely we *can* create it together.

Poem by  
 Rev. Sarah Speed

<sup>11</sup> “What the World Needs Now is Love,” lyrics by Hal David, music by Burt Bacharach (Imperial Records, 1965). Dionne Warwick recorded the song in 1966 on her album, *Here Where There Is Love*.

## Human Minds Just Can't Imagine

AUSTRIAN HYMN (“*God Whose Giving Knows No Ending*”)



Scan to hear  
 the tune!

Words: Anna Strickland (2025)

Music: Joseph Haydn (1797)



Hu - man minds just can't i - ma - gine all that God can bring  
 God, ex - pand our dreams and vi - sion when we think our gifts  
 Like the grains of wheat are ga - thered from the vast and roll -



to bear Through our small and sep - arate be - ings, e - ven  
 too small Help us trust your great pro - vis - ion and to  
 - ing fields Like the grapes from vi - ny bran - ches whose small



when we join to share Still we fol - low where Christ leads us,  
 an - swer when you call You who gave us time and ta - lents  
 fruit the wine will yield We re - mem - ber as one bo - dy,



ma - ny pie - ces of one whole That we might al - low  
 will up - hold and see us through As we join to - geth -  
 each of us a cru - cial part In the glo - bal church



our dream - ing to trans - form our bro - ken world  
 - er in the work you've gi - ven us to do  
 pro - fess - ing: we be - long to God's own heart

Read Mark 6:32-44; Ephesians 3:20-21

Commentary | Rev. Lizzie McManus-Dail

### **God Doesn't Start with the Problem**

The early days of planting my church, Jubilee,<sup>12</sup> and the early days of motherhood were one and the same for me. They were days when my dreams were coming true—but I wasn't sleeping much.

My call was clear: start a new faith community. In my living room. With the expectation that we would grow to need a bigger space, soon. (*Where would said bigger space be?* Yeah, that was the million-dollars-we-didn't-have question). Every little thing felt so impossible because it was so new. I cannot tell you how many late nights I spent fretting, not just about the liturgy, but how I could make a bulletin for the first time. . . ever. . . and and how we'd get it printed, and how to know how many we would need, and where I could get affordable altar linens. We were growing too fast for me to keep up—a wonder! A gift! And! It was all so depleting, this dream-come-true business.

I wonder if that's how the disciples felt. The dreams were coming true! And, a God who makes all things new means. . . *a lot* of new. I picture their eyes popping when Jesus tells them to feed the crowd. I feel my stomach curdle on their behalf as they do the mental math for that much food.

### **But God does not start with the problem: *How do we feed all these people?*<sup>13</sup>**

God starts with what God has—which is everything, held in her hands. And God also starts with what God has given us—**five loaves, two fish**. With God, all things are possible because God knows that God is always. . . God. It's us who break faith, it's us who listen to scarcity, it's us who fear our own hunger. **Our God is a God of abundance.** However loud the scarcity of the world grates, God delights in feeding the hungry, in accomplishing what we dare not imagine.

I remember one of the first abundance interruptions that salvaged my scarcity-frantic brain in those early motherhood-and-church-planter days. My in-laws were moving to town (grace upon grace) and my mother-in-law was a lifelong church pianist. Thus far, as much as I wanted music—music, after all, was what nourished *me* most in prayer—we had just done some simple, a cappella, Taizé songs for worship. *It would be so wonderful to have her play*, I thought. *If only I had a keyboard.*

I kid you not. The *moment* I said this half-prayer, half-hope, my neighbor posted on our local “Buy Nothing” group that he was getting rid of a keyboard and needed it gone ASAP.

God doesn't start with the problem. God starts with what we *all* have. That Sunday, we sang “Amazing Grace” while the rafters shook. Turns out, nothing really is impossible with or for God.

### Reflect

When has God interrupted your life with abundance?

<sup>12</sup> Jubilee Episcopal Church in Austin, Texas, founded in 2022. [jubileeatx.org](http://jubileeatx.org)

<sup>13</sup> With gratitude for the stewardship work of the Rev. Dr. Steven Tomlinson for this idea.

Third Sunday in Lent  
the good news is... together, the impossible is possible

Read Mark 6:32-44

Artist Statement | Hannah Garrity

In this account from Mark, Jesus had compassion.<sup>14</sup> This word, *splagchnizomai* in Greek, comes from the root *splagchnon* (meaning “bowels”) which has a sense of a visceral, gut-level form of compassion. It intrigues me that this deep, embodied compassion prompted Jesus to teach.

Leading up to this moment, Jesus is trying to get away, to rest. His disciples row him toward the people; however, he is compelled by compassion to teach. As he is teaching, I imagine the crowd turning to one another—*What did he say?*—repeating his words, passing them along.

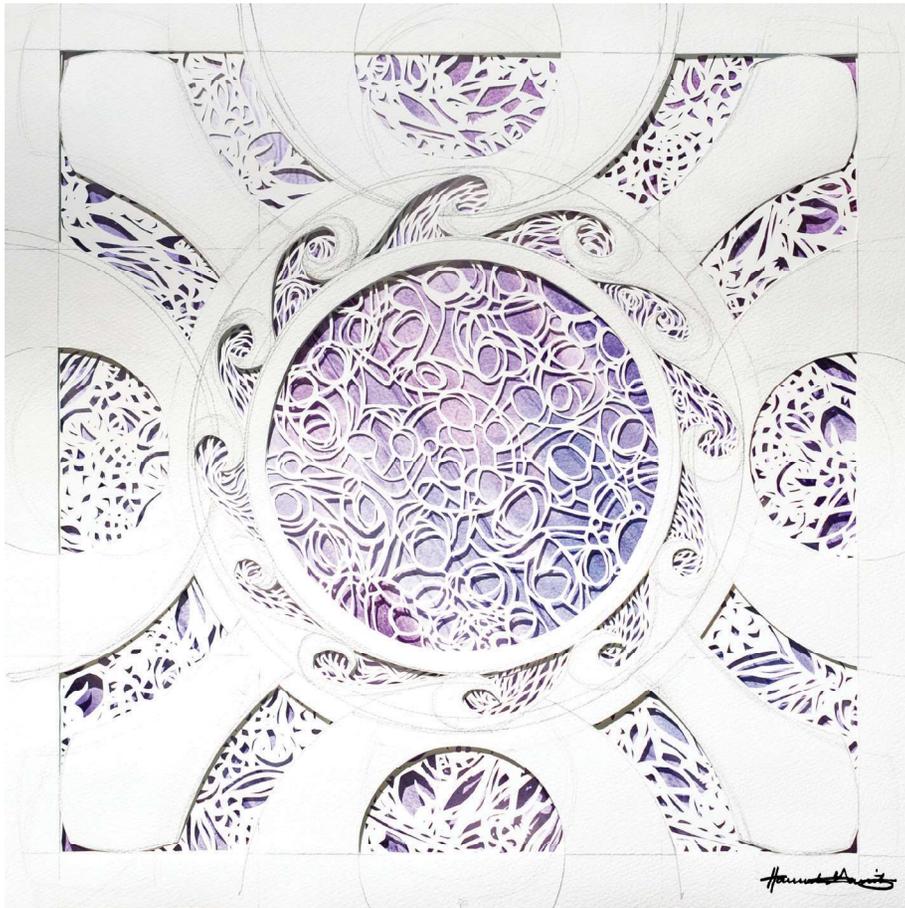
In this artwork, the elements of the story are framed in a stained glass window design. Centered, the people gather in circles, passing the scarcely abundant food to one another. Waves encircle the crowd, representing the twelve disciples. The outer architectural elements portray the twelve baskets full of pieces of bread and fish—a representation of abundance from scarcity, powered by collective belief.

Jesus did not have a microphone. It was the people in the front who passed the still, small voice of God back to those behind them. It was the people in the front who passed more than enough food back to those who were hungry. In our propaganda-filled global information system, we must remember: God is not holding the mic. God is present in the still, small voice and in the smallest offerings, multiplying one by one. The message, the compassion, the corners of bread, and the pieces of fish all return in abundance.

### Look

*In the artwork, waves represent the twelve disciples. Why do you think the artist rendered the disciples this way?*

<sup>14</sup> Mark 6:34



Scarce Abundance | Hannah Garrity  
18"x18" Paper lace and watercolor



Far More Abundantly | Lauren Wright Pittman  
11"x14" Hand-carved block printed with oil-based ink on paper with gold leaf detail

Third Sunday in Lent  
the good news is... together, the impossible is possible

Read Ephesians 3:20-21

Artist Statement | Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman

I read this Ephesians text alongside the feeding of the five thousand. I placed Jesus at the center of the image,<sup>15</sup> but he did not feed the crowds alone. He asked his disciples to offer what they had. They responded with meager resources, yet those small gifts were enough.

Through the lens of Ephesians, if Jesus were to ask us today what we have to give, our answer would be:

*We have the power you have given us to do the impossible.* The same power that turned five loaves and two fish into a feast for thousands—*with leftovers*—empowers us “to accomplish far more abundantly than all we can ask or imagine.” Do we allow this truth to settle into our bones and animate our actions?

I’ll admit, I tried to avoid this passage because it felt overly optimistic in light of today’s world. People still go hungry. Wars rage. The earth groans under our misuse. Yet if we reimagine the systems we created, studies show it is possible for every human being to have what they need.<sup>16</sup> That would require massive restructuring, international cooperation, and the reallocation of resources—but not more than we already possess. We don’t need a miracle of multiplication. We simply need to use what we’ve been given.

In a world convinced of scarcity, this is astonishingly good news. We already have enough. And as my mentor used to say, “*Enough is abundance.*” What will we do with this abundance? Is it too lofty to dream of a world that sustains all of life? Perhaps. Yet I believe it is God’s own desire that all may have life, and have it abundantly.<sup>17</sup> This is the work before us, accomplished through the power at work within us, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Look

Consider the archway and what it could symbolize. Do you see a table, a tablet, a boat, a door, a tomb—or all of these things or something else?

<sup>15</sup> In the center of the image, Jesus raises his arms and breaks bread. Above Jesus’ hands is a mustard seed. Surrounding the baskets are thin line carvings of mustard flowers. Like the seed, we may be small, but we hold so much potential inside of us. Surrounding the archway are twelve baskets of seven loaves or fish which take on the shape of flowers. The number twelve represents community, and seven represents wholeness. When everyone has what they need, the community is whole.

<sup>16</sup> [globalcommonsalliance.org/news/new-research-reveals-path-to-prosperity-for-planet-and-people-if-earths-critical-resources-are-better-shared/](https://globalcommonsalliance.org/news/new-research-reveals-path-to-prosperity-for-planet-and-people-if-earths-critical-resources-are-better-shared/)

<sup>17</sup> John 10:9-11