



Community of Christ

Prophetic Imagination

A Reflective Guide for Groups
Continuing the Conversation from World Conference 2025

Introduction to Prophetic Imagination

*The wolf shall live with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them. . .*

*They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.*

—Isaiah 11:6, 9, NRSVue

What is prophetic imagination?

Isaiah 11:6-9 is a powerful example of prophetic imagination and an image that has been shaping the call and identity of Community of Christ for over 150 years. The prophets were deeply grounded in relationship with God as the source of imagining the world through God's vision. Sometimes what they envisioned was a critique of dominant and oppressive cultures and systems in their contexts. Sometimes they were daring to articulate new possibilities of what the world could be like *if* we lived out the fullness of our call.

The prophetic tradition urges us to **let a vision of the possible guide our actions in the actual**. We are not overly concerned with implementation, practicality, or viability as much as we are asking, "is this imaginable?"¹ Often possibilities emerge that we never would have dreamed possible when we join with God in setting our imaginations free. Consider the impossibilities you are living now that were once the dream of your ancestors.

The goal of prophetic imagination is to move into God's preferred future by imagining with God what is possible for our world, discerning our place in that larger vision, and letting our next faithful steps in the present guide us toward enacting what we've envisioned. Anything we are imagining for the future of Community of Christ is always connected to God's larger vision of justice, wholeness, and shalom for all creation.

Engaging Imagination as a Way of Knowing

There are different ways of knowing, and imagining is one of them— though it may feel too distant, ambiguous, or daunting at first. It's important to consider how imagination is already part of our daily life. Anytime we are considering the future, we are exercising our imagination. What will I have for dinner tonight? What kind of future do I want for my children or grandchildren? What will we do on family vacation? What kind of harvest might we have this year? All of these are simple imaginative questions woven into the fabric of daily life. Many of us have very active imaginations as we consider all the possible things that could go wrong or let fear of the future run rampant. We imagine the "worst case scenarios." It's interesting that fear is also part of our imaginative capabilities and is often rooted more in the possible than the actual.

¹ Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 2001.

As a prophetic people, we are invited to engage our imaginations with God as a central practice of discipleship. What would the world be like if we lived the fullness of our identity and calling as Community of Christ? How might my family, context, or community be different if everyone was living together as God intends?

We are standing at the threshold of many significant changes in the church and the world. As you embrace a spirit of prophetic imagination, consider how the following practices and reflections might be woven into your daily life.

1. Which part of your imagination do you exercise most frequently in daily life? Are you more inclined to imagine what could go wrong or what could go right?
2. Practice prophetic imagination in small doses in daily life. When walking the neighborhood, shopping, eating around the table, let yourself consider; what would be happening right now if we were living into the fullness of God's hope and vision for us? Let your actions be guided by what you envision and see what happens.
3. Consider our journey as Community of Christ as we move into the future with God. What do you imagine happening in the church that would most faithfully contribute to God's preferred future? How might we live now as though the horizon of the possible were already breaking in among us? What concrete next steps might help us live into a more hopeful, joyful, faithful vision for our future?
4. Dwell in recent prophetic guidance to the church in the Doctrine and Covenants and return to the prophetic texts of scripture. As you immerse yourself in these prophetic voices, notice what the prophetic voice in you begins to say.
5. Give yourself permission to dream with God. Sometimes our God-images can limit our sense of freedom to join with God in this creative practice. Trust that the prophetic invitation is for all of us, and that as we gather in community, we have opportunity to "test" what we discover to move forward in faithful, informed ways.

Prophetic Imagination Practices for Groups

Facilitation Notes: *The following outline could be used in several ways. The goal of this outline is to deepen our awareness of the prophetic tradition, empower our response as prophetic people, and live into God's unfolding dreams in us for the present and future!*

1. Schedule a special, dedicated time for your group to engage in prophetic imagination. This whole outline could be completed in approximately 90 minutes depending on how much time you spend in small group sharing. Record notes and send your group's reflections to fp@CofChrist.org.
2. Break up the practices over a series of weeks to go even deeper into the questions and prompts.
3. Complete the prompts individually, journaling responses to the questions.

Embracing Prophetic Imagination

Prophetic imagination is about picturing the world as God wants it to be. It involves a strong connection with God and a willingness to challenge unfair systems that oppose God's vision for creation. This is a practice of discernment— seeking first God's vision for our world and co-creating that future with God.

By using our imagination in this way, we can envision a better future where everyone lives justly in peace and then take steps to make that vision a reality.

Muhammad Yunus is a Nobel Peace Prize Winner who boldly declared, “One day our grandchildren will go to museums to see what poverty was like. If you imagine, someday it will happen. If you don't imagine, it will never happen.”

Why engage the prophetic?

We engage the prophetic because it is the tradition of our faith ancestors. Jesus was formed in the biblical prophetic tradition.

Community of Christ is grounded in the principle of Continuing Revelation and a young prophet who listened to God's vision for a new movement. We are learning what it means to be a prophetic people. We engage the prophetic to faithfully partner in God's vision of justice, wholeness, and peace for all creation. This is the heart of Christ's mission, our mission.

To change unfair systems, we engage the prophetic because “energy follows attention. Wherever you [focus], that is where the energy of the system will go. [Prophetic imagination helps us] shift our attention from what we [want] to avoid to what we want to [create]” (p.21, Scharmer, adapted).

We engage the prophetic through the wisdom of leaders like Geoffrey Spencer who asked, "How can we live now as if the horizon of that future had already broken into our lives through the Spirit of Jesus Christ?"

Remembering our Ancestors: Who's "impossible" are you living *now*?

It can be hard to envision a future beyond our current realities. We feel limited by what we assume is impossible or unrealistic. Look around this room and let your imagination go back as far as your knowledge of history. What is common to us that would have been impossible to others? As Bunda Chibwe reflected at World Conference 2025:

*"Traveling to another continent? Impossible
Flying in an airplane? Impossible
Women voting? Impossible
People of all colors and nationalities together in one place? Impossible
A woman prophet? Impossible
A Black African guy serving as Counselor to the Prophet President? Impossible!"*

The powerful poem by Maya Angelou captures this spirit.

*Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.*

*Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.²*

Humbly consider that what we deem impossible today might be commonplace for future generations.

² Maya Angelou, *And Still I Rise: A Book of Poems* (1978)

Let your sense of the possible expand as we join with the Holy Spirit in prophetically dreaming God's future into reality.

Imagination has been the engine of human evolution and innovation throughout the ages. The Doctrine and Covenants reminds us, "the time for hesitation is past!" Yet, we still find ourselves hesitating from responding to God's call and following the Holy Spirit's guidance in creating God's vision for the world.

Otto Scharmer, a Senior Lecturer in the MIT Sloan School of Management, describes "the three enemies" that cause people to resist new ideas and the potential for change³.

1. First is the voice of judgement which causes analysis and conclusions that prevent people from embracing uncertainty and exploring new possibilities. This voice shuts down the open mind.
2. Second is the voice of cynicism which expresses doubt and skepticism, hindering the ability to believe in new ideas and future possibilities. This voice shuts down the open heart.
3. Third is the voice of fear which focuses on risk and potential negative outcomes, often causing individuals to be hesitant and resistant to change. This voice shuts down the open will.

Which of these voices do you hear most often in your head?

Notice if any of these voices show up for you as you engage in practices of prophetic imagination. When you hear them, ask God to help you diminish or silence these voices so you can hear with an open heart, mind, and will what the Holy Spirit is offering.

Through this resource you are invited to move through four practices of prophetic imagination.

1. Reflect on the vision shared by the Presidency at World Conference 2025 and notice what is opening and stirring as we embody our call as prophetic people.
2. Imagine how this emerging vision might come to life, and what inhibits life, in our cultural contexts.
3. Explore the 5 steps offered to help navigate uncharted territory.
4. Identify concrete actions and envision what might go right.

As you engage in prophetic imagination, we invite you to take notes about what you are discerning and discovering. Email them to fp@CofChrist.org.

³ Katrin Kauffner and Otto Scharmer, *Leading from the Emerging Future: From Ego System to Eco System Economies* (2013)

PRACTICE 1: An Emerging Vision

Watch or read the First Presidency's vision for the church, shared on Thursday Night of World Conference 2025.

Where did you feel energized?

What gave you hope?

What did you imagine happening from their proposals?

1 minute of silent reflection.

Community Practice

Turn to a neighbor near you to share your reflections.

Links

- Video: President Cramm's main remarks
<https://youtu.be/FaLnJYaSFA0?si=dNGdlyCpFNE7CrcR&t=127>
- Video: Entire Thursday evening worship service
<https://www.youtube.com/live/496DtfTAMtc?si=enxGPVbFwAxjChKt&t=1575>

PRACTICE 2: Citizens of God's New Community

In the message, we heard President Cramm share:

“... we are first called to be citizens of a new community. That identity comes before nationality, culture, politics, or local tradition. It roots us in the peace of Christ. And it calls us to a deeper way of being.”

*And “We are **learning to go deeper in creating God’s kingdom on earth as it is in heaven as we live God’s will.**”*

The hymn text of #385 in *Community of Christ Sings* dares to ask, “What is the world like when God’s will is done?” (Adam M. L. Tice)

Take a few moments to ask this question of your own context. Close your eyes if helpful and try to imagine what might be different *where you live* when “God’s will is done.” Don’t worry about what is possible. What can you imagine?

Pause for silent reflection. Write down any responses.

Consider these examples of prophetic imagining...

I imagine everyone laying down their weapons and turning to each other again.

I imagine a world where it doesn’t matter what caste, race, or nationality you were born into. All barriers and distinctions disappear, and we value everyone’s worth.

I imagine that in my neighborhood, every child is safe and housed, fed and loved.

I imagine that the church is known in my community as a place of peace and renewal, where conflicts are mediated, and lives and relationships are restored.

Every culture offers gifts and has limitations. Seeing ourselves as citizens of heaven shakes us free of common worldviews, assumptions, and customs that limit the gospel’s transformative power in our lives and communities.

How might you live differently in your context if you fully embrace your identity as a citizen of this new community? What keeps you from living in this way? Let’s listen to a few examples of a new community confronting cultural norms.

A Citizen of God's New Community in Context

Reflect on the following examples of disciples prophetically and creatively engaging their deeper citizenship in God's new community.

In South India, the first-ever team of three women mission centre presidents is courageously confronting both patriarchal and caste-based systems. Through their leadership, they embody the Enduring Principles of Worth of All Persons and All Are Called—not only in their preaching and teaching, but in who they are. Their witness proclaims a gospel of justice, dignity, and shared calling in a context that has long silenced such voices.

—Art Smith, Council of Twelve Apostles

When refugees from Congo arrived in Independence, East 39th Street Congregation responded not with caution, but with Christ-like welcome. Prophetic imagination looks like rearranged worship schedules, translation headsets, shared meals, and a space where Swahili, French, and English echo as one and a new congregation – Light of Hope – was born. This is the gospel: disruptive, inclusive, and full of fire. When many see refugees as a burden, this congregation sees a blessing. In the Spirit's economy, hospitality isn't charity—it's sacred community. Refugee families from Congo found not only coats and coffee, but communion and community.

—Joey Williams, Council of Twelve Apostles

At World Conference 2019, some American and Canadian friends met to share our deep concern about climate change and explore our sense of call to create resources for members, friends, and congregations. Out of this grew the North American Climate Justice Team, an ad-hoc group sponsored by the GPNW Mission Center. We've provided monthly webinars for the past 5 years, all archived on our website, cofchristclimatejustice.org. We've hosted experts from multiple fields, church leaders, faith-based action groups, and local activists. We've done worship services, reunion classes, and creation meditations. We're excited for wherever the Spirit leads us next!

—Joan Thompson, North American Climate Justice Team

Reflection and Small Group Discussion

- How might you live differently in your context if you saw your primary identity as a citizen of God's new community?
- How do you see Community of Christ in your context living this vision?

PRACTICE 3: Pioneers of Uncharted Territory

In her message during World Conference 2025, President Cramm shared the following:

“Let’s step out trusting that God is already working among us. From the discernment work of the leadership council, we offer these 5 steps to guide us—not as a map but as principles for pioneers of uncharted territory living as citizens of heaven on earth”:

- *First, discern continuously what matters most.*
- *Second, focus our resources on mission, leadership, and faithful stewardship by*
 - *Developing spiritually grounded, prophetically bold leaders, and*
 - *Responding with courage rooted in hope to global challenges such as the ones we are considering this week.*
- *Third, nurture local expressions of a global movement through Spirit-led, organic networks.*
- *Fourth, Expand the sacred ministries of the Temple as a beacon of peace for all.*
- *Fifth, hold ourselves accountable to faithfully reflect, evaluate, and respond as God leads.*

Consider this amazing image for the church: pioneers of uncharted territory! Doesn’t that sound exactly like who we have always been? When we are imagining God’s vision for our world, there is no map to take us there. It might seem impossible, but we know that with God all things are possible as we listen and follow the Holy Spirit. The five principles shared by Stassi serve as navigational tools that help us chart a new future and usher in new realities.

As you reflect on these five navigating principles, what resonates with you? What would you add? What would help your community or congregation live into the full potential of our calling and identity as Community of Christ as we move into the future?

Pause for silent reflection. Write down any responses.

Small Groups

Reflect on the questions above and share what came out of your time personal reflection.

PRACTICE 4: The Next Faithful Step

In her message and the Prophetic Imagination session at World Conference 2025, President Cramm shared these words:

*“Friends, we are pioneers in uncharted territory.
We’re living in a world that looks and feels different than it did even two years ago. And yes, that can feel unsettling.
But who doesn’t love a good adventure?
This is not a time for fear—it’s a time for faith.
A time to take the next faithful step—together—even when the path is unclear.
The Psalmist reminds us that, God’s word is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path (Psalm 119:105, paraphrased).
Not a spotlight on the whole journey—just a sacred light to guide our next faithful step.”*

As I’ve been praying about the church’s future and trying to silence the voices that would distract me, I keep recalling these prophetic words from 1982 found in section 155 of the Doctrine and Covenants in paragraph 7:

[Sec 155:7] Know, O my people, the time for hesitation is past. The earth, my creation, groans for the liberating truths of my gospel which have been given for the salvation of the world. Test my words. Trust in my promises for they have been given for your assurance and will bear you up in times of doubt.

Practice

Take a few moments now to imagine yourself in the context of where you live and serve. What is the next faithful step you feel called to take? Let one concrete possibility emerge for you. It doesn’t have to be huge. It can be a conversation, a commitment, a question, an action, a reframing, an invitation.

Once you have envisioned that next faithful step, spend a few moments letting your imagination run free. What is the best thing that could happen if you take this step? Engage your senses. Get as vivid as you can. Imagine yourself living in a different future because of the faithful step you risked taking.

As fear bubbles up and you worry about what if you get it wrong. Ask God to help you move through that fear and imagine what if you get it right. Then risk even further by dreaming about a

future that turns out better than you could ever have hoped. Rest into the images that come for a few minutes in the silence, dreaming with God.

Reflection and Group Discussion

- What occurred during your time of prophetic imagining?
- What did you see coming from the next faithful step you identified?
- Where did you sense energy and hope in the Holy Spirit as we prophetically imagine the future?

Closing

Ponder these closing words from President Stassi Cramm that were offered to the 2025 World Conference.

Our time together at this conference is rapidly coming to a close—but this is not an end. This is just the beginning.

What has stirred within us here must now find expression in the world where we live and serve. The Spirit has moved among us, opening hearts and minds to new possibilities. Now, we are called to continue prophetically imagining God’s deepest desires for creation—visions of justice, healing, peace, and hope—and then courageously and faithfully take the next step to make that vision a reality.

With God, all things are possible. As the prophet Isaiah declares, “I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”

*Let these words echo in our hearts as we go. **The time for hesitation is past.** God needs our unrestrained courage. The Spirit needs our sacred yes. Jesus needs our hands, feet, voice, and whole self to faithfully live his mission. Not for the sake of the church but for the sake of the world.*

Carry these dreams within you. Dare to believe what is still possible with God as we live as citizens of heaven of earth. And have hope that we might just get it right...Onward!

Deep Listening with the World Church Leadership Council

WCLC members left the stage at World Conference 2025 to practice deep listening with delegates during the prophetic imagination session. Below you can read summaries of what they heard in small groups.

May Jesus' reign come soon.

An end to domestic violence.

A more intentional approach to seeking the presence of the Holy Spirit in our activities.

The need of the church to model the "Early Christian Church" in the book of Acts (emphasis on love, compassion, sharing material things and the Word of God, encouraging the church to begin from the family, small groups.)

The Spirit leading people to talk about the need to empower youth ministry for the continuity of the church tomorrow.

We must start talking with those who hold different perspectives. We need help doing this.

We have to take actions now that reflect our vision for a just and peaceful world.

Our future inspired actions will give others hope to join in.

A renewed Spirit is being sensed and felt.

We can see the rebirth of the whole church.

Emphasis and excitement about peace and justice.

It could be that we stumble and that is the next best thing because it means we are trying. Discontent in the process is ok; it is part of moving forward.

A balance between discerning and action. . . Salvation is communal and in the here and now.

A world where borders are a thing of the past.

The peaceful kingdom of our Lord Jesus will soon be established.

An end to the persecution of immigrants in different parts of the world.

What will happen when imagination makes people uncomfortable because what emerges can't be controlled?

A renewed sense of hope for more presence in community and that Acts 2:42-47 is an invitation for us to be neighbors in communities where we have presence.

Lives will be blessed, people on the fringes included, children included, people encouraged, learn how to organize, vibrancy, peace and justice retreat, just try it, be bold.

People who grow in faith and in love for one another.

We would move beyond our fears.