

"I didn't sign up for this." I've heard a couple of different people say this in the last week. One is a hairdresser who is dismayed at having to wear so much protective gear in order to do her job. Another was the twin pro tennis brothers, Bob and Mike Bryan who were hoping that 2020 would be the year that they could play successfully around the world ending with the US Open, and then retire at the ripe old age of 42. They have said that they aren't really interested in playing tournaments with no fans in the stadium. "We didn't sign up for this," says Bob.

When a person enters the workplace there are certain expectations in normal times. You have a job description, or you have a contract that spells out what your duties are going to be for this job. There's an understanding that if you were hired as a custodian you aren't going to be expected to teach kids to read. If you went into the law profession you weren't going to have to sew up a wound. And if you were hired to be a carpenter for a new house construction, you would not have to also be the roofer.

But many people in these new days are indeed finding themselves having to do, or not do, things that they thought they could expect. Parents didn't expect to have to teach their children at home full time while trying to work as well. Teachers didn't sign up to teach in classrooms where there are afraid they might get sick. Our own Christine Gevert was hired to be our organist and choir director. Nowhere in her contract does it say that she will need to be a video editor and film producer for Trinity Church.

And so it is now also for people in all sorts of jobs and professions who find themselves in uncomfortable or *dangerous* situations because of the coronavirus. Store clerks have to worry about customers who might be infected. Hospital workers, even though they signed up to be around sick people, didn't think that they'd have to work under such dire conditions, and some without enough protective gear.

We humans can all feel the frustration along with those in essential and unessential jobs, "We didn't sign up for this!!"

Well, applying the parable we heard this morning about the weeds and the wheat to our situation, I don't think the wheat expected to be surrounded by weeds either. The farmer may have hoped that she wouldn't have weeds in her field of wheat, but then that's probably wishful thinking. There are always weeds. Life in the field or in our home or in our place of work is never perfect, never weed free.

This parable shows a theme that we will also see more of in the Gospel of Matthew; the theme of judgement. Matthew wants us to know that the judgement of what is good and what is evil is not for us. We leave the judgement of the weeds apart from the wheat to God. But I can't imagine that God will judge this pandemic to be anything other than an evil weed. that has come into our world.

And because of this pandemic we have not been able to come back as a congregation to this holy space. This is where we used to come Sunday by Sunday to encounter God, to pray for those things which we hope God will change or heal. We thank God for all our blessings, and we know that through the sacrament we are joined to God through Jesus our Lord.

And instead, we're in the weeds.

We can learn something from our passage from Genesis this morning, and from Jacob who was travelling far away from his family. As he lay down to sleep in a strange place he had a dream that there was a ladder set up on the earth going up to heaven. God said to Jacob, "know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go."

And so it is for us who are on a strange journey through difficult times. God is with us in this wherever we go and wherever we are. So, I have a question for you this week, and a homework assignment for you too. If God is found everywhere we go, even in these times, where do you find God? Where have you encountered a sort of ladder to heaven?

Do you have an intentional place that you go to pray or meditate? Have you found yourself surprised by God's presence in a place, and awed by God's handiwork in the world around us?

I'd like you to send pictures to me this week of those places. I've already asked the Bible Study group and a few others to do this as well. And so, my sermon today concludes with a few pictures of places where God is, God is prayed to, and God's Spirit comes to us. We know that God is with us always; in here, out there, and the faces we see in our daily rounds...even if we only see the eyes of people we come across.

I expect to see your pictures in my inbox. You may not have signed up for the life we have today. You may have hoped that weeds wouldn't invade your life, our lives. But here we all are. And God is here with us. God searches us out and finds us – knows us. Let us show each other and the world where we have found , and been found by God.