... At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;  
Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,  
But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,  
Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor towards,  
Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point,  
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance...

T.S. Eliot, *Burnt Norton*

Peace on each one who comes in need;  
**Peace on each one who comes in joy.**  
Peace on each one who offers prayers;  
**Peace on each one who offers song.**  
Peace of the Maker, Peace of the Son,  
**Peace of the Spirit, the Triune One.**

**Opening Prayer**

Praise to you, God, for all your work among us.  
Yours is the vigor in creation,  
yours is the impulse in our new discoveries.  
Make us adventurous, yet reverent and hopeful  
in all we do.  
*Amen.*

**The Gospel**  
*Matthew 13:24-30,36-43*

Jesus put before the crowd another parable: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?’ He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The slaves said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ But he replied, ‘No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”
Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!”

Poem: Morning Glories by Mary Oliver

Blue and dark-blue  
rose and deepest rose  
white and pink they

are everywhere in the diligent  
cornfield rising and swaying  
in their reliable

finery in the little  
fling of their bodies their  
gear and tackle

all caught up in the cornstalks.  
The reaper’s story is the story of endless work of

work careful and heavy but the  
reaper cannot  
separate them out there they

are in the story of his life  
bright random useless  
year after year

taken with the serious tons  
weeds without value  
humorous beautiful weeds.
Reflection:
We refer to a plant growing where it is not wanted as a weed. As humans designated areas for crops, they had to fight the invasion of other, undesired plants. Over time, some of the "undesirables" were cultivated for their own virtues, and sometimes were even removed from the category of weeds. So the term "weeds" is relative... and always changing!

In the poem by Mary Oliver, the morning glories are weeds in the context of growing corn. The morning glories grow together with the corn stalks, intertwined in such a way that the reaper has to do the hard work of separating them out at harvest time. The poet suggests the morning glories, though they are not "useful" like corn is, have a different kind of value in their colorful variety, in their visual beauty and brightness. They are useless and random from one perspective, but have an exceptional value when viewed through different eyes.

Does the poem introduce anything new that may enter into our reading of a familiar parable?

Meditation:
Entering into a period of silent reflection, here are a few possible focus points:

- Let the weeds and wheat grow together
- The image of morning glories "rising and swaying in their reliable finery"
- What do we value most? Has that changed due to the pandemic?

Prayers

We bring before God someone whom we have met or remembered today

We bring to God someone who is hurting tonight and needs our prayer

We bring to God a troubled situation in our world

We bring to God, silently, someone whom we find hard to forgive or trust

We bring ourselves to God that we might grow in generosity of spirit, clarity of mind, and warmth of affection

We offer our thanks to God for the blessings in our lives

We name before God those who have died.

Gracious God, you hear all our prayers: those we speak aloud, those we hold in our hearts, and those prayers for which we have no words. Hear the prayers of your people, and grant them as may be best for us, for the sake of your holy name. Amen.

Accept our thanks for all you have done, O God. Our hands were empty, and you filled them.
May Christ’s holy, healing, enabling Spirit be with us every step of the way, and be our guide as our road changes and turns, and the blessing of God our Creator, Redeemer and Giver of life be among us now and remain with us forever. 

Amen.