

## Reflection by Julie Simonton

Proper 27 | Matthew 25:1-13  
 November 12, 2017



**Julie Simonton** is the diocesan Director of Congregational Development and Stewardship.

She especially delights in church parking lot conversations when the Holy Spirit begins to bubble and folks authentically engage with where Jesus is calling us to use the gifts God gives us to do the work God call us to do.

She and her family attend St. Stephen's in Richmond.

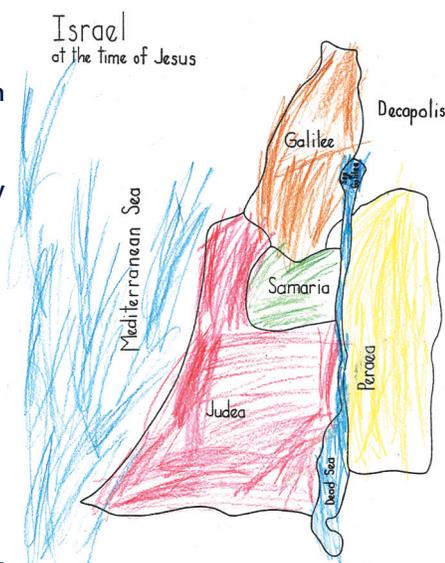
As an Episcopal lay minister and mother of two young children, you can imagine that our home is often at a tipping point for Sunday school and VBS treasures. Periodically (and admittedly when my girls aren't looking), I make a sweep through our household of creative riches. Macaroni necklaces find their way to the dress-up bin. The "desert of Egypt" sand art in the repurposed water bottle becomes a new percussion shaker in the music box. And the infinite pile of crayon drawings invariably heads ...yes it's true ... to the recycling.

One week this summer, the recycling pile did not make it to the outdoor bin in time, and five-year-old Mia uncovered my well-orchestrated strategy to keep our household above the crayon fray. She opened the door to our pantry, saw her rainbow map of Israel -at-the-time-of-Jesus on top of the pile, turned sharply toward me, and declared, "Mommy, you threw away God!"

**Mia caught me entirely off guard. But more than that, God caught me entirely off guard.**

Jesus' message in today's Gospel reading is to stay alert, not be caught off guard, and never assume we have enough (oil, love, hope, faith, money, or rainbow drawings of Israel) in our lamps. Every moment we wait in anticipation is a moment we spend alert in God's Kingdom. Every moment we wait in anticipation is a moment we can experience the sacred — and the sacred in others.

Especially when the sacred is a child who knows God is, indeed, present.



## Reflection Questions

When has God caught you off guard when you were waiting for something else to show up?

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