

HARVEST FESTIVAL

This morning we celebrate in worship, Harvest festival. It is a time during which we reflect on the many gifts God has given us, especially the harvest from our labours, apples, vegetables and the means by which we can buy food.

As I look out the study window I see the season is changing and much of the harvest has finished. The leaves are changing and we are being treated with a brilliant burst of colour, yellows, oranges, reds and many other shades make up a visual symphony.

This symphony reminds us there is a time for everything. We have watched the cycle of the trees as they budded and sprouted new leaves, as the fruit developed and is harvested. Now as the leaves change colour and fall we know the season is at a close.

Speaking with a younger member of the congregation who has a cousin dying they remarked how fragile life is. How we don't know how long our life will last and the need for us to cherish the gift of life we have.

The writer of Ecclesiastics reflects about the seasons; that there is time for everything. For everything there is a season, & a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, & a time to die; a time to plant, & a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, & a time to heal; a time to break down, & a time to build up; a time to weep, & a time to laugh; a time to mourn, & a time to dance; a time to throw away stones, & a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, & a time to refrain from embracing; a time to seek, & a time to lose; a time to keep, & a time to throw away; a time to tear, & a time to sew; a time to keep silence, & a time to speak; a time to love, & a time to hate; a time for war, & a time for peace. (Ecc 3:1-8 NRSV) After much pondering he concludes, life is meaningless unless we know God. After all this the end of the matter is: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for that is the whole duty of everyone. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil. (Ecc 12:13-14 NRSV)

Let us this morning not only celebrate the gift of things that sustain life but also the very meaning of life and the means by which we can know God, the gift of salvation.