

## *A Lay Leader of Worship writes*

We are moving again into another season – Autumn – when the evenings get darker as the days shorten. The Autumnal Equinox took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> September this year. The word equinox comes from the Latin *equi* (meaning equal) and *nox* (meaning night) accounting for the equinox marking the time when day and night are of equal length.

At this time of year the harvest has been gathered in, the land is rested, and we reflect on the life cycle of the earth. It's a time of abundance and thanksgiving for the harvest. It's also a time of letting go, transition, of slowing down and balance. .

Our ancestors lived by the seasons and their rhythms. The Celts called this time of year Samhain (Gaelic for 'summer's end') and it heralded the start of a new year. Celebrations of gratitude gave thanks for all that had been, before a quieter darker period began. Samhain is recognized as a threshold when the veil between worlds is at its thinnest. The Celts regarded this as a time of regeneration and rebirth, a natural part of the cycle of life.

The energy of the seasons still underpins our daily life but whether we choose to acknowledge this is up to us. Many of us live our lives in the same way, day in day out, year in year out. We can become out of touch with the seasons and impervious to subtle changes. We can also reflect on the stages of our lives as seasons. There will be seasons of growth, of blessing, of decline, and of mourning. Life happens in seasons and God never wastes a season.

Autumn is a time of change. Unless we embrace change we will struggle and not be at peace. How is the season of autumn reflected in your life? How do you seek balance? How do you give thanks? Have you had to slow down in any way? The Bible says in Ecclesiastes chapter 3 'Everything on earth has its own time and its own season. There is a time for birth and death, planting and reaping.' In the story of creation in Genesis chapter 1, God said "I command lights to appear in the sky and to separate day from night and to show the time for seasons, special days, and years." In Genesis chapter 8, God said to Noah, "As long as the earth remains, there will be planting and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, day and night." And in the New Testament, Acts chapter 14: 'He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.'

We can give thanks to God for the changing nature of light throughout the year; for the beauty of each season; for the blessing of the harvest; and the cyclical patterns that shape our weather and climate.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for the miracle of  
day and night, summer and winter, springtime and harvest.*

*We celebrate the constant cycle of the seasons  
and give you thanks for everything you have given us.*

*Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.*

**Susan Lane**