

**Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

Dear Friends

*Praise to you Sacred Spirit who ripens and brings to fruition,  
who knows the right time for things.  
You know the quivering poise between readiness and fall,  
the delicate tension between gathering and letting go.  
Give me grace to know what is my season  
in the rhythms of my flourishing and fading  
As your love ever ripens in me.*

This beautiful autumnal prayer comes from Tess Ward's book: *The Celtic Wheel of the Year* (ISBN: 9781905047956). This book has sat on my shelves for years, untouched. But this week I pulled it down following a little discovery when out walking Poppy and Dylan.

Most days will find Liz and I walking along the canal. One day this week, Liz spotted a puff ball mushroom – which we promptly took home to enjoy. It was large enough for three meals! There is such nourishment all around us in creation, just waiting for us to enjoy. And especially at this time of year. My mind turned towards creation and the seasons, and Tess's book fell into my hands.

Autumn is a wonderful season but it is full of contrast. Just as everything ripens, everything also begins to turn back in on itself to prepare for winter – or perhaps more accurately, to prepare quietly and unseen for another spring. Days can still be warm and encouraging, but at night, the fire is lit and even a hot water bottle may be called for. The seasons are changing.

We too have seasons, of course, and with every season we all get a little older, however young we are. Humility in the face of our own changing seasons is something we all have to learn.

Clergy are, by necessity, planners. We're always a little ahead of everyone else in our preparations and so this week has seen me spend a little time planning our service schedules through to Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2021. We have our worship committees meeting this week and next and I'm keen, for everyone's benefit, to be able to publish our service plans for the rest of the year by the end of September.

With such uncertainty hanging over our country at the moment, you may consider it an act of considerable optimism (or a sad waste of time!) to think about our harvest, All Souls, Remembrance, and even our Christmas services.

But plan we should for these wonderful occasions must be marked this year – even if a little differently to normal. At the time of writing, the committees haven't met as yet, but I see no reason why popular services like Harvest and Remembrance cannot be held outside and why our popular Christmas services cannot be ticketed. Remember and celebrate we shall!

At the same time, not everyone either can or will choose to come to church. So, as well as thinking about we can do, I'm also thinking about how we can improve our 'online' worship. The main problem here is sound quality. This is possible to fix but it may take a little time and a little expense. We may, or may not, be helped or hampered, by the quality of our existing sound systems. We also need to consider the quality of our internet access too.

With every blessing:  
David Ford, Rector

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