**Reflection – transfiguration, the turn of life’s seasons and the fall of leaves**

Our lives like the seasons have turning points; moments when one season draws to a close and another begins. The story about Jesus we have just heard describes what is known as “the transfiguration”. It is such a moment.

It is a high point, a “mountain top experience”, in which Jesus’ true identity and glory is revealed. It comes in the church’s year in August, as summer moves to its close and the harvest signals the start of autumn.

We may wish we could stay in summer for ever, but the seasons turn. And so, like Peter, we cannot cling to a moment in time, we cannot build a safe place to capture the moment of glory for ever. The harvest will come. Jesus must turn from the mountain top and head back down into the valley, where he will walk the road to Jerusalem ….. the road of the Son’s dying …….. and ultimately rising.

It’s a midpoint and a turning point in his story, and the autumn equinox marks a midpoint and turning point in nature, light and dark are in balance and we are about to enter the dark half of the year. The full ripening of summer gives way to the falling away of the year. The fall of the autumn leaves resonates with shifts in our own lives; often a falling away of the certainties of youth and the beginning of a darker and more uncertain path.

The changing seasons invite us to explore each year the full cycle of life’s seasons. They offer us points of connection and fruitful times of reflection on our own lives. We do not have to be in midlife itself to learn the secrets and wisdom that midpoint reflections can bring us.

There will be various “autumns” in our lives. So we invite you to enter now into your own reflection on the autumn of life from within your own experience - at whatever stage in life you are. To aid our reflection, you are invited you to pick up a fallen leaf from the ground. *(Allow space for people to do this)*

Let these fallen leaves be to us symbols of our own autumns. They may remind us of, or represent to us, a number of things:

Things that we know we need to shed or things that life is forcing us to shed

Things we need to let go of so that we can move forward, even though the path may be unclear

They may be regrets,……painful experiences,……broken relationships, …..dreams of youth which we may need to accept will not now be fulfilled …. things to which we cling but know we need to let go.

Look at the leaf in your hand. What does it represent to you in this season of your life? What do you need to shed?

*(space to reflect)*

In autumn we often gather up the leaves that cover our gardens and they are burnt on Autumn bonfires. In trust you are invited to offer your leaf and all it represents to the God of the seasons and the God of your life, by placing your leaves on the purging, cleansing fire.

God takes from us what we do no longer need, what we need to leave behind, then takes our empty hand and leads us forward.