

# Mike's message .....

## Autumn Hope!

Autumn is a season of change. A season of the dying of the light. A season of decay and endings. A season of recollection and remembrance.

As the nights draw in and sunlight is less in evidence, Autumn can seem to be a gloomy time, maybe even a time that is overbearing in sense of endings and encroaching darkness.

But Autumn is also an intensely beautiful time. Leaves take on the myriad hues of red, orange and yellow. When the sun does shine there's no other season that can match the beauty of autumn for its colours and the feeling and sound of dried leaves crunching underfoot on the ground.

The seasons are closely associated with the church calendar. Christmas wouldn't be the same without snowy scenes on Christmas cards. Although the truth is we've had more 'white Easters' in the last hundred years than we've had 'white Christmases'. As the countries of western Europe spread their influence around the world they took imagery of the seasons with them. There are winter scenes on Christmas cards even in tropical countries. The same is true of Australia and New Zealand.

But in the Southern Hemisphere the seasons are reversed. Christmas is in summer and beach barbecues replace turkey and trimmings. Autumn there is the season for Easter. That may seem strange to us for whom autumn is about endings rather than new life. Death and decay rather than the lambs and bunnies of our Easter cards.

As Christians we can discern God's promise of new life and new beginnings even as the autumn hues deepen around us. As a contemporary worship poem puts it:

*Fallen leaves go back to earth, Re-absorbed to bring new birth.*

*("Autumn" - Marjorie Dobson)*

Scripture is also reflective on the themes of autumn. In his First Letter to the Corinthians, St Paul likens the Resurrection to the cycle of life and death:

*"What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. As for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or some other grain. But gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body".*

*(1 Corinthians 15 .36 - 38)*

Even in autumn, as we see endings all around us, let us give thanks to God for the new life we have received through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

