



THE NEW VINE



UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

Blackall Range Uniting Churches
(Kenilworth, Maleny, Montville and Palmwoods)

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

Yes – Ecclesiastes 3 reminds us of the variety of SEASONS. It takes us beyond the four climatic seasons we usually think of and takes us to war and peace; love and hate; sewing and tearing and so on. It tells us “*There is a time for everything under heaven.*” Time seems to be a factor in most manifestations of a season – and between us, we’ve touched on a number of different understandings of seasons in this edition. Here, I must say a special thank-you to the three people who have felt it was the season to make their first contribution to our journal, and also to those who chose to tell a personal story.

We have references to, among other things, the climatic seasons, the seasons of life, and Scripture passages and we’ve used music, poetry, photos, illustrations, memory, reflective thinking, life events, dreaming, and some other ways of telling the stories. I sense the outcome is quite wide ranging and gives plenty of food for thought, which is, of course, one aim of the journal.

And it all keeps going on. As I sat to write this, I received a light-hearted email from a reader which raised an aspect of seasons in a way I had not thought of. It compared things of today with things of yester year. e.g.

- *My parents never drove me to school ... I had a bicycle that weighed probably 50 pounds, and only had one speed (slow).*
- *Pizzas were not delivered to our home ... But milk was.*

And other such memory shakers as:

- *Headlight dip-switches on the floor of the car.*
- *Using hand signals for cars without turn indicators.*
- *Wash-tub wringers.*

It seems the whole of life is a season one way or another.

Which, of course, brings us to think a little about our spiritual lives in a way not canvassed in our articles. There is, for all believers, a road of faith to be travelled and there are seasons along that road. They vary widely for each of us in timing, content, length, order, outcome etc. I am talking, of course, about the seasons of being an unbeliever, a seeker, an accepter, a believer, a questioner, a doubter, a learner, a disciple, a servant, a mentor, a back slider, a restorer in God’s love – the list goes on.

It is an interesting exercise to draw a line across a page that represents our life and explore our spiritual growth through the years by drawing that period, and the dates – and then also writing in the names of people who have influenced our path and our growth. This helps us to think along the lines of seasons when there were seeds planted, growth, fallow times, harvest, resting after work done ...

I am sure you get the idea and I recommend it to you, whatever season you are in now.

“There is a time for everything under heaven.”

Peace and blessings,

Graham



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WHO'S WHO IN THE BLACKALL RANGE CHURCHES

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MUNRO'S MUSINGS

To Every Thing, A Season

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1 KJV); or, as the Good News Bible translates it, "Everything that happens in this world happens at the time God chooses."

These words have been reproduced in many different ways over the centuries since they were first spoken and then written down. The writer of Ecclesiastes probably even borrowed them from an older tradition. The words and the poem that follows speak of things having a proper order and timing. They are words of comfort; and yet they are disturbing words too.

If "everything happens in this world ... at the time God chooses", why all the pain, hurt, war, conflict, suffering etc.? "Everything has a season" may be a comfort; but it sometimes all just sounds like a great big joke, a trick played on humanity by a capricious god.

And yet, those words have captured our attention down through the centuries, as surely as they captured the attention of Qoheleth, the envisaged author of Ecclesiastes.

In 1956, Peter Seeger used the words as a prayer for peace, later made famous by The Byrds:

*To everything turn, turn, turn, There is a season turn, turn, turn
And a time to every purpose under heaven*

*A time to gain, a time to lose, A time to rend, a time to sew
A time for love, a time for hate
A time for peace, I swear it's not too late*

In 1972, for the musical *Pippin*, Roger O. Hirson and Stephen Schwartz, used the words to enable their main character to ask where his rightful place in life was:

*Everything has its season. Everything has its time
Show me a reason and I'll soon show you a rhyme
Cats fit on the windowsill. Children fit in the snow
Why do I feel I don't fit in anywhere I go?*

*Rivers belong where they can ramble
Eagles belong where they can fly
I've got to be where my spirit can run free
Got to find my corner of the sky.*

Ecclesiastes provides its own commentary on this enigmatic poem in verses 9-15 (*The Message*)

But in the end, does it really make a difference what anyone does? I've had a good look at what God has given us to do—busywork, mostly. True, God made everything beautiful in itself and in its time—but he's left us in the dark, so we can never know what God is up to, whether he's coming or going. I've decided that there's nothing better to do than go ahead and have a good time and get the most we can out of life. That's it—eat, drink, and make the most of your job. It's God's gift.

I've also concluded that whatever God does, that's the way it's going to be, always. No addition, no subtraction. God's done it and that's it. That's so we'll quit asking questions and simply worship in holy fear.

*Whatever was, is. Whatever will be, is.
That's how it always is with God.*

The commentary seems almost as enigmatic as the poem; for in it, too, we receive both words of comfort and disturbance. And yet, despite all the puzzling, there is quite a simple message at the heart of the whole passage: Honour God! And how do we do that? By living our lives through the changing seasons, whatever comes our way, in the best way we can. That is enough for God!

Blessings

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THE TEXT THE TEXT THE TEXT

We all know the text which, in part, suggested the theme 'seasons' for this edition –

Ecclesiastes 3: 1 – 13

We have a broad understanding of what it is about. Where might we go as we strive for deeper understanding?

One way is to examine the passage in a number of translations to see if there are nuances that have changed over time – has more recent scholarship seen different meanings in some places? Does it speak in language we relate to? Is it more a commentary than a translation? What is the basic essence/common theme of what the Word is saying in all versions referred to?

The three translations that follow might help us to focus on these, and our own, questions.

King James Version (KJV)

¹ To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

² A time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

³ A time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;

⁴ A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

⁵ A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

⁶ A time to get, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

⁷ A time to rend, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

⁸ A time to love, and a time to hate;
a time of war, and a time of peace.

⁹ What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth?

¹⁰ I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.

¹¹ He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.

¹² I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life.

¹³ And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.

New International Version (NIV)

A Time for Everything

- ¹ There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:
- ² a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
- ³ a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
- ⁴ a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
- ⁵ a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
- ⁶ a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
- ⁷ a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
- ⁸ a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.
- ⁹ What do workers gain from their toil? ¹⁰ I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. ¹¹ He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. ¹² I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. ¹³ That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God.

The Message (MSG)

There's a Right Time for Everything

- ¹ There's an opportune time to do things, a right time for everything on the earth:
- ²⁻⁸ A right time for birth and another for death,
A right time to plant and another to reap,
A right time to kill and another to heal,
A right time to destroy and another to construct,
A right time to cry and another to laugh,
A right time to lament and another to cheer,
A right time to make love and another to abstain,
A right time to embrace and another to part,
A right time to search and another to count your losses,
A right time to hold on and another to let go,
A right time to rip out and another to mend,
A right time to shut up and another to speak up,
A right time to love and another to hate,
A right time to wage war and another to make peace.
- ⁹⁻¹³ But in the end, does it really make a difference what anyone does? I've had a good look at what God has given us to do—busywork, mostly. True, God made everything beautiful in itself and in its time—but he's left us in the dark, so we can never know what God is up to, whether he's coming or going. I've decided that there's nothing better to do than go ahead and have a good time and get the most we can out of life. That's it—eat, drink, and make the most of your job. It's God's gift.

Hopefully, that is a start. Did it help?



LESSONS FROM THE SEASONS

To Autumn



Born on a dairy farm in the south Gippsland area of Victoria, I was well aware of the four seasons of my British forebears.

Winter in June began the seasons for us. Seasonal calving was the term we used for having all cows calve in June. (There was plenty of green grass because it was usually wet.) A miserable time to milk cows!

Spring came with production in full swing and plentiful cow manure to hose away, lots of calves to feed and nurture as the precursors of future herds.

Summer came with all able people bending their backs to cut the hay in the paddocks that had been closed earlier to allow the pasture to fully develop. It was a time for us children to help by delivering billy tea and home-made goodies to the workers. Hay was stacked loosely until hay bailers were brought on to the property. Later, in university vacation, I returned to earn money, hay carting. (That paid for my degree.)

And back to **Autumn** with Keats' poetry. Autumn was a time to stop and view the parade of colours developing on the trees, preserve the ripe fruit and gather the hay so that we and the cows had something to live on in the winter months.



Gulf of Carpentaria in the Wet Season

Time as a patrol padre in Queensland worked a change in all that. An example of this change was leading a religious instruction class in a school at Karumba on the Gulf of Carpentaria. The season of Christmas was just around the corner, so to open my lesson, I had asked the pupils to tell me what was soon to come. A forest of hands shot up and I asked a hopeful looking young man for his answer, expecting Christmas. "Please sir, the wet!" was his reply and was what the remainder of the class

expected. In the Gulf area, the seasons were divided into two. The dry and the wet. The children in Karumba expected in early December to be heading to relatives in other parts of Queensland, to have a break and ride out the wet.

Patrol work in Broome was to bring to the fore another view of seasons. Paddy Roe, an aboriginal elder and close friend, was observing the almost feverish activity with which we celebrated the Christmas season. In conversation with him, he remarked that they had a year of six seasons, mostly given from the way nature behaved. These were seasons that marked special times when plants were flowering, and fish of different species were running. Flowering of the eucalypts meant that the hives of native bees were flowing with honey, to produce what was known as sugarbag. Certain tubers were harvested when the season dictated they would be ready and worth the effort to dig.

In summary, seasons mean different things to people at different times of their lives. My story may lead others to tell their stories for the enlightenment of us all.

Bob Philpot



WHAT'S IN A NAME? [or definition]

The theme for this edition was announced as "SEASONS". It seemed pretty simple at the time as it was obvious what a season was – but an exploration of definitions of 'season', to see what sort of articles might emerge, opened the door much wider.

The National Geographic Society says: *A season is a period of the year that is distinguished by special climate conditions. The four seasons—spring, summer, autumn, and winter—follow one another regularly. Each has its own light, temperature, and weather patterns that repeat yearly.*

The Oxford Dictionary says: *A natural division of the year, defined by the equinoxes and solstices (the four seasons: winter, spring, summer and autumn/fall) or by atmospheric conditions (for example, the monsoon season).*

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary says: *[a] A period of the year associated with something in particular that happens every year – the baseball season. [b] a period marked by special activity especially in some field - the tourist season.*

All slightly different perspectives.

Then things expanded rapidly as different sources reflected their particular interests:

- a set or sequence of related television programmes; a series. e.g. "the first two seasons of the show"
- add salt, herbs, pepper, or other spices to (food). e.g. "season the soup to taste with salt and pepper"
- make (wood) suitable for use as timber by adjusting its moisture content to that of the environment in which it will be used .e.g. "I collect and season most of my wood"
- a period of the year characterized by particular conditions of weather, temperature, e.g. the rainy season.
- a period of the year when something is best available: e.g. the strawberry season.
- a period of the year immediately before and after a special holiday or occasion: e.g. the Christmas season.
- any period of time: e.g. in the season of my youth.
- a suitable, proper, fitting, or right time: *This is not the season for frivolity.*

As always, there was one comment that did not fit easily into the mainstream, but which was, nevertheless, pertinent. Here is the one that jumped out at me:

*It's when I really stop and take stock of my life that I have come to understand that there are seasons in life. Now I'm not talking about seasons brought on by age and different life stages. I'm talking about seasons of life that are brought about by life circumstances and situations. I'm talking about experiences that either lead us into the summer of contentment or the winter of disappointment. I'm talking about experiences that lead us into either the fall of hard times or the spring of renewal. Whatever the case, there is one thing I've come to know full well, and that is: **The change of seasons in life always brings new life.***

Rev Eric Lenhart, North Main Street Church of God, Butler, Pennsylvania

Going one step further, Rev Gary Khan, Executive Director of Operations for Marketplace Chaplains [an organisation that has over 2000 chaplains in various workplaces across USA] talks about seasons in this way:

Spring is about potential, promise, planning, and possibilities. It's a time of opportunities and beginnings.

Summer is a time of growth and maturation. The seeds we planted during spring mature into full-sized plants. Summer is a season of work, when we invest the time and effort required to become good at what we do.

Autumn is the season of harvest. We see the production/reward of our labours. Our hard work begins to pay off.

Winter is the season of winding down, withdrawal, retreat, and closure. Activities, responsibilities, and relationships draw to a close. This is the time of ending. It also represents a period of rest, restoration, and reflection.

After going through all this, I tried to come up with a definition that covered all contingencies – and failed. The best I could do was:

A time of change when particular things that impact our lives, and shape them, happen.

Is anyone able to come up with a definition that we could publish for discussion in the next Journal? Contributions please.



THE SEASONS OF OUR LIFE

The four cyclical seasons remind us of the transitions our lives go through - allowing us to learn and evolve, and eventually die.

From birth to your mid-twenties, you're in the SPRING of your life – nourished by education and experiences. This is the season of learning and growth. SUMMER is a time in your life for purpose and becoming a professional in your career, getting married and starting a family. AUTUMN sums up your life. It is a season for survival, reflection and dealing with the past, and a time to be open to inevitable changes in family, health, and life. When life turns to WINTER, we leave friends and seek refuge with family and caretakers.

Our activity in this world is meaningful as we rely on God's wisdom, His timing, and His goodness.

We are challenged with our life experiences to overcome obstacles in our path and with God's help, reap the rewards of a well-lived Christian life.

Jan Craig

A SEASON FOR PATIENCE AND EXPLORATION OF IDENTITY

When we are full steam ahead in a particular season of our lives, we seldom have the perspective that this season will transition into the next, yet it does. Always.

This change of season may occur gradually, like the transition from summer to autumn, when firstly there may be a cooler crispness to the early morning which gives the first indication of a pending change. However, at other times, the change comes upon us with a raging suddenness, more like a furious destructive storm, which decimates our world as we know it, bringing with it a radically changed landscape which is unrecognisable from the soothing familiarity of the previous season and it's pleasing and well tended landscape.

Such a sudden unprecedented change came upon me with the onset of chronic health issues in the middle of last year. When I reflect on this transition, it strikes me that this change in season from health to ill health; from capacity to incapacity has been a combination of both processes described above ... a sudden furious crisis followed by a very slow process of adjustment as each month passes to the next without answer or marked improvement. One constant through this change of seasons for me has been what author Brennan Manning so elegantly expresses as Christ's "nail scarred hand clutching mine" in the midst of my struggle.

The change in my being as I have sought to weather this seasonal transition, clutching Christ's nail scarred hand, has been profound. For now, I'll pick two insights to explore.

Patience and persistence

Five months in, with little of my desired level of recovery in evidence, the learnings were around patience. Verses like Colossians 1:23; Romans 5:3,4; Romans 12:12 and Psalm 27:14 resulted in the following notes in my journal...

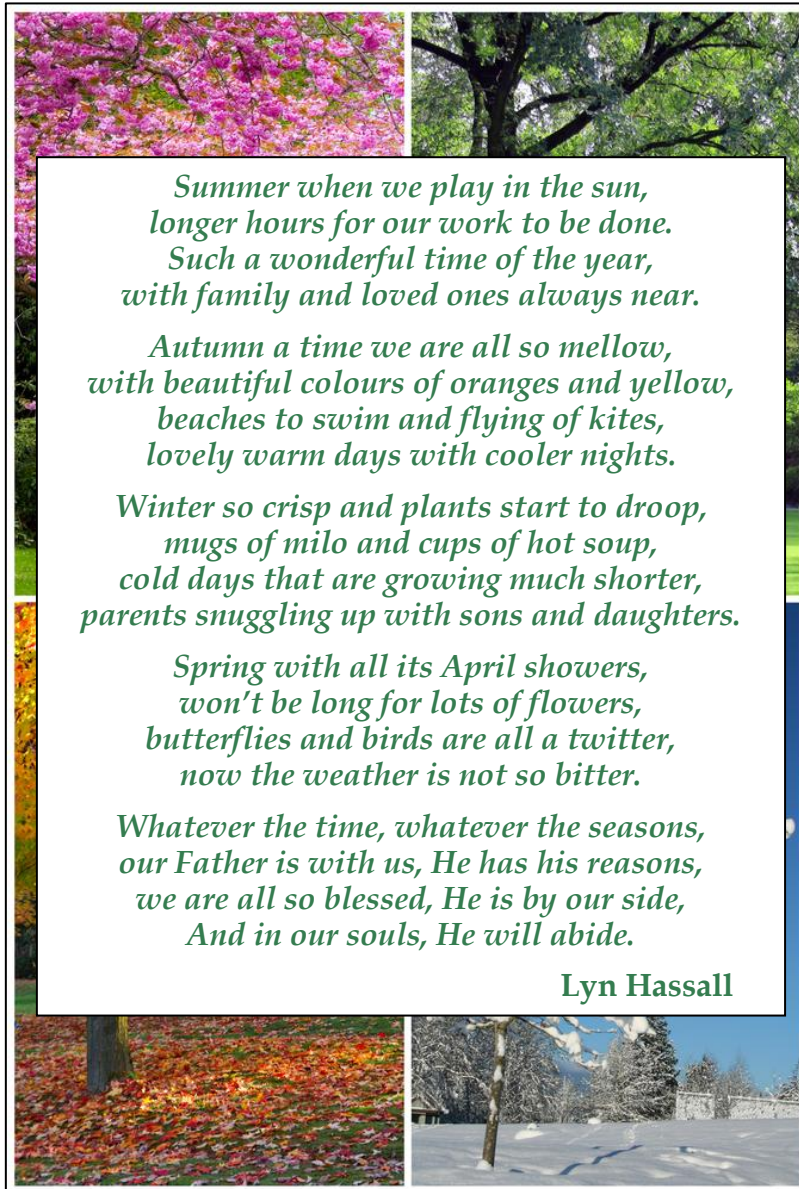
- Being patient in moments of hardship and monotony is a form of faith and trust in God. This trust consists in knowing that God knows the end of the story.
- Sunrise follows night always. All of God's creation is imbued with patience. Nature, rivers, trees and seasons are patient. Being in nature reminds me to accept the flow of life as it happens.
- Thinking about the word perseverance, the following synonyms come to mind ... tenacity, determination, resolve, resoluteness, endurance, grit, persistence, spunk, constancy, steadfastness and pluck. Reflecting on each of these words in turn provides a focus for the mind and some instruction on how to manage myself in this challenging season.

Identity

There's nothing like having all of your familiar roles, activities and capabilities suddenly taken away to see shockingly clearly where your sense of identity truly lies. Did I formerly see myself as a beloved child of God? Yes, absolutely. Was this my primary identity? Sadly, no, as it turned out. It became apparent as the months rolled on and I floundered in my new normal of dependency and loss of capacity that my primary and most treasured identity had been one of strength, independence, capability and contribution, with a full helping of pride attractively topping it off. This trumped my identity in Christ. Thankfully, as I've come to terms with the stripping away of those things, God's Spirit has brought me to a place of seeing that my truest identity is that of a beloved child of His; an eternal, unchanging and unchangeable identity. So, as I'm laid aside and in a season of withdrawal from active service, "busyness" and contribution, that's OK. Exploring what this new season is about is an adventure which I'm living, all the while trying to remember to not lose my grip on that nail scarred hand.

Helen Uhlmann

SEASONS IN LIFE



*Summer when we play in the sun,
longer hours for our work to be done.
Such a wonderful time of the year,
with family and loved ones always near.*

*Autumn a time we are all so mellow,
with beautiful colours of oranges and yellow,
beaches to swim and flying of kites,
lovely warm days with cooler nights.*

*Winter so crisp and plants start to droop,
mugs of milo and cups of hot soup,
cold days that are growing much shorter,
parents snuggling up with sons and daughters.*

*Spring with all its April showers,
won't be long for lots of flowers,
butterflies and birds are all a twitter,
now the weather is not so bitter.*

*Whatever the time, whatever the seasons,
our Father is with us, He has his reasons,
we are all so blessed, He is by our side,
And in our souls, He will abide.*

Lyn Hassall

CELEBRATE THE SEASONS

**We enjoy the change of the coming of the seasons and we prepare for them.
And so it should be in our lives too.**

Discard ways that are no longer relevant in bringing us closer to God.

**Just as we prune in winter to make way for more flowers and growth,
So it should be in our lives to make way for learning more about our Lord
And make way for new friends and remember the old.
Maybe to change our ways of thinking to be closer to God.**

So let us celebrate the seasons and give thanks.

Margaret Pow



A REFLECTION ON THE SEASONS OF LIFE

As I started to think about life's seasons, it seemed quite straight-forward:
Birth – growth – maturity – reproduction – senescence – death.

But then I realised that that simple linear picture is only suitable for very simple life forms, or perhaps some plants! Life for us is more complex and nuanced. So, starting again: Birth – nurture through dependency – learning – pushing boundaries in developing independence – independence – finding work/ career/ contribution to society – seeking a mate – committing to partnership – desire to reproduce and nurture another life – achieving goals – following dreams – retiring – caring for one's mate – ageing – dependency – death.

That begins to look much more cyclical than linear.

But even then, life is more complex – seasons don't always follow consecutively. For some people whole seasons are missed or turned upside-down or cut short. Child-bearing, finding a partner, single-parenting come to mind.

For others, life demands that several seasons run simultaneously/ in parallel. So, career building, parenting, caring for aged parents may all occur at once. That becomes a juggling act, and the colour and shape of the season are influenced by those concurrent responsibilities.

And what about my own experiences?

I am humbled by the amazing richness of my life through all its seasons to date. My childhood in the fresh country air of a farm on the Darling Downs, with loving though not demonstrative parents, and siblings to compete with, share adventures and learn from. And a precious brother, mentally disabled at about three to care for, ask the big questions of life about, and learn from, how our parents dealt with this terrible blow, in faith and grace.

Education for me has been an adventure from start to finish (though I won't say it has ended even now!) Riding behind my sister, Nancy, on a horse to our one-teacher school was just the beginning. Learning the lessons of classroom and also the neighbourhood taught me English, Latin roots, Social Studies, and trust, friendship and acceptance of different ways of life. Moving to a big school brought its own challenges and accolades. University was yet another example of the privilege of my era. It was free for the whole six years of Medicine, and as my parents were 'poor' I also received a 'living away from home' allowance. Those years were crammed with learning about life as well as anatomy and physiology, medicine and surgery.

While most women were creating homes, and babies, I was caring for other people's children, tending sick and injured. Trying to help disadvantaged people lead healthier lives, to overcome their chronic ailments was difficult and at times frustrating work. It led me to a period of 'sabbatical' from medicine, when I lived and worked in a Christian community in West End, offering crisis accommodation to homeless youth and running a drop-in centre for local and lonely people. My journey returned to medicine with a short stint in a Cambodian refugee camp, where I saw daily the value of basic health care in saving lives and giving hope to desperate people. That renewed impetus/vision took me to new adventures, opportunities, challenges and huge rewards in medical work in Bangladesh, aboriginal women's health and general practice in Brisbane, Nambour and Maleny.

Love and partnership came 'late' for me (at 56), but has been another season of my life of learning to love and be loved, to have family (already made) to care for, worry about and enjoy. Sharing life's journey with another person is a privilege and one I give thanks for.

As I look at my life and others around me, I can only reflect on the fact that some of our treasured seasons are in fact a product of our privileged lives.

Where else in the world does life offer so many years of education opportunities? The ability to follow our dreams? A leisurely retirement in beautiful surrounds? Even the opportunity to care for our planet, planting and tending trees?

And where is God in all of this?

For me, I see God in it all! Jesus came and lived our messy human life. He also moved through seasons – birth, growth, learning, making life choices, loving and caring for others, death..... a life cut short, with several seasons apparently missing! But a life that helps us make sense of some of the difficult seasons of our lives.

I see him sharing the joys of our life seasons as well.

Fran Guard



KARL'S KORNER

Seasons – or “Turn, turn, turn ...”

In 1965 the band, 'The Byrds', released a song entitled “Turn, Turn, Turn” with a subtitle “To everything there is a season”. The lyrics are based on some verses from Ecclesiastes Ch. 3. This is a book that seems to take a cynical, yet rational, view of life in which the writer reflects on how one should live and what one should expect. At times I got the feeling it was a sort of letter to the writer's descendants seeking to prepare them for life as it really is. One might say he speaks about life much as we would speak of seasons – childhood, youth, increasing maturity, and eventually old age. It is a book well worth reading for reflecting on our modern life too as it speaks of the futility of temporal achievements in the absence of a loving God.

We, too, can reflect on our lives in perhaps similar ways. I have heard it said that the purpose of life is to live, to love, and to leave a legacy. But what legacy are we leaving? The focus today seems to be on leaving an estate to help our offspring get a good start in life, or, alternatively, engage in what has been called “skiing” – i.e. spending kids inheritance.

Are we teaching our children and grandchildren to prepare them for life or do we just hope the education system will do that?

What do you think?

Karl Tietze



HERE FOR A SEASON

The theme of “seasons” took me first to “Four seasons in One Day” the ballad made popular by Crowded House in 1991, and still getting plenty of air space. Then on to the global franchise grocery chain with many retail outlets with stores of that name across Australia. I could not go past Jesus is the Reason for the Season. An oldie but goodie.



I went next to Ecclesiastes Chapter 3: “to everything there is a season.” With its timeless appeal, it brings to mind two seasons in my life.

In the 1950’s and 1960’s we were members of the Christian Endeavour movement. Some of our readers may have also been members.



The movement grew during the post-war baby boom. These were the days of Sunday Schools with 200 members. Christian Endeavour or C.E. was the era for pledges, badges, bible reading, mottos, chain prayer, bible quizzes and networking (not a word we used in those days) at Conventions – Easter, National and World. At one of these National

Conventions our society (another word not in wide use now) was called upon to form a voice speaking choir and deliver Ecclesiastes Chapter 2. It was an exhilarating experience to perform in front of an appreciative crowd in the Brisbane City Hall.

Christian Endeavour has all but died out now. In its heyday it had a significant impact on members but also on the Church, with its motto – For Christ and the Church.

Then in 2023 Ecclesiastes Ch 3 popped up at the Service of Closure of the Kilcoy Uniting Church where we had been members for many years. At the service, two of the guest speakers referred to the scripture, relating how a season of Kilcoy UC was over. It was a day of mixed feelings, from sadness to thanksgiving. Recognizing the impact of the church there for over 100 years.



February 2021

Maleny trivia The CE verse speaking choir was trained by Mr Glen Pomroy, living then with his young family in suburban Brisbane. Before that, he and wife Bernice were dairy farmers in Reeseville, and were active members of the then Maleny Methodist Church. Just another season.

Murray Robertson



A short poem from the anthology *Whatever the Sea – Scottish poems for growing older*, edited by Lizzie MacGregor:

*That is a strange day
That is a strange day
when you wake to discover
age has drifted down
imperceptibly, like dust,
and your totally covered.*
[Alan Hill]

This is exactly how I feel about my ageing but could never have expressed it so eloquently.

CONNECT FOR ALL SEASONS

No matter what the season, Maleny Connect Groups will be found

Memories of how and when this all started are becoming a bit blurred but present memory says that at the beginning of 2017, Rev Catherine had this vision of the congregation launching boats full of parishioners getting together to change the world – our faith; our expressions of that faith; our mission goals and activities; and in so doing, to get to know each other better and more deeply. So, she encouraged us to make crews to ‘man/woman’ the boats. Which we did during Lent.

Seven years on, and there are still four crews battling the elements – though some have changed personnel and focus – they are all persevering and thriving. And, although they did not like calloused hands from rowing, they opted to become Connect Groups when Rev Catherine and Church Council set out to establish it as a more permanent small group ministry.

Each is now a group of between six and eight people who gather together, on a semi-regular basis, at different times and in different ways. Initially, all groups examined the same study material, whereas now each chooses its own direction and method. All are fairly laid back and flexible where all members are actively engaged in discussing matters of our faith and all act as a pastoral support group for members.

Each group has a co-ordinator rather than a leader as all members’ views and opinions are treated with respect and all have an equal say in how things work – but somebody needs to be there to ensure that happens. The current four co-ordinators are Marilyn Milton, Murray Robertson, Stuart Craig and Peter Uhlmann.

Should anyone like to try joining a group you might start by speaking to one, or more, of these people to see ‘what is what’ with their group, until you find one that suits you as they are different. Or talk to Rev Anita who can point you in the right direction. Given current numbers in existing groups, it will be necessary, sooner or later, to start a new group. Wouldn’t that be grand!



A graphic image from 2017 of a ‘crew’ – [OHMS Mc BENSON] – that turned into a connect group.



BEEN THERE, DONE THAT?

Ray Ellemor sent us this poem from his friend Harry Donnelly and I thought it worth repeating as it reminds us of some 'different' seasons.

Child's Play



Parenting usually comes to us
as raw as raw can be,
pregnancy — the birth,
the bub — the responsibility.

And most will know so little
because it's not been done before,
by us that is...the parent,
whole new pastures to explore.

So we hit the pavement running...
excited to the hilt,
unaware of all the double-checks,
the doubts and milk left spilt.

The fear of those decisions
made to steer a young heart straight,
to have the best chance onward,
so much to contemplate.

Each stage moves to another
and another as it goes,
a flower blooming magically...
so mystically it grows.

Caution fills our every move,
better sure than sorry mode,
first day at school, the heartache
and we're down a different road.

School flashes by with energy,
turmoil, multi-skilling tasks,
this sharing, caring, bearing,
scary parenting just lasts.

Teen year monsters soon evolve
to nightmares from the sleep,
parenting seeks resources
because we know we're in too deep.

Teen turns to early twenties
and another page unfolds,
parenting should be ending
and finds it hard to break the mould.

This baby-child-teen-adult
needs to walk dear Mother Earth,
as the parent stands as helpless
as was felt back at the birth.

And the letting go is compromised
by doubt and shades of guilt,
what could have been done better
across that milk we somehow spilt.

Just know the crossroad where you are,
has been occupied before,
and that person you helped to grow may know,
that same crossroad — and more.

Harry Donnelly 23-5-24

SEASONS AND REASONS

The Bible never claims to be what it is not. It is not a science text book and many will become frustrated trying to locate answers to scientific questions by using the Bible.

The Bible is the authoritative book about God. In a nutshell, The Bible is the story of God, the people He loves, and the world He never gives up on.

The four climatic seasons are clearly the result of the way the Earth is tilted 23.5° on its axis and rotates around the sun. This was not understood when the Bible was written. In fact, the general belief that the Earth was central and motionless and everything revolved around it (including the sun) was put forward by Aristotle in the 4th Century BC and it held sway for centuries. It was not until 1543 that there was some change in acceptance (with Copernicus, who was questioned intensely) and Galileo in 1632 who went against the unbending attitudes of the Church to prove that it was the Earth that moved. Galileo was far from being an atheist. He held that the laws of nature are written by the hand of God and that the human mind is a most excellent work of God.

The development of these ideas is an interesting study in itself, illustrating that the Bible and Science need not be regarded in direct opposition to each other (though some would have us believe so). While the Bible does not go into the precise scientific details, there are references in the text to the seasons and the placement of the Earth, some of which are poetical, and some relate to God's power and design. Such statements you might call allusions to the rhythm of nature. Take a look:

1. Genesis 8:22 (NIV)

"While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease."

2. Ecclesiastes 3:1-2 (NIV)

"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot."

3. Psalm 74:17 (NIV)

"It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth; you made both summer and winter."

4. Jeremiah 8:7 (NIV)

"Even the stork in the sky knows her appointed seasons, and the dove, the swift and the thrush observe the time of their migration. But my people do not know the requirements of the Lord."

5. Psalm 104:19 (NIV)

"He made the moon to mark the seasons, and the sun knows when to go down."

In the above passages, we see reminders of the enduring nature of God's creation and His design which gives order and stability to the physical world. The laws of physics are constant. The question is: how did they get that way? Was it through lengthy time spans and chance or through a shorter period of conscious (intelligent) design?

Here is one of many "naturalistic" (I don't use the word "scientific" through respect for that discipline) assertions or suggestions, which I paraphrase.

Astronomers have suggested that the Earth may once have spun around the axis with no tilt at all, like a whizzing top. Then, about 100 million years into the development of the solar system, (4.4 billion years ago) a protoplanet called Theia snuck in and smashed into the fledgling Earth. The collision kicked up a lot of debris which eventually coalesced into the Moon, and it also knocked the Earth about 23 degrees off true. This cataclysmic event is felt today in the formation of the seasons.

There is an abundance of astro-physical theories of how it all started and when time began, but the reality is that proof is difficult as we must try to extrapolate backwards in time and end up with approximations at best.

The Bible won't definitively give us the mathematics or physics behind the establishment of the Earth on its axis (thus resulting in the seasons) or its position in space, but it will tell us who God is and what God has done. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the Earth" (Genesis 1:1). I'm not sure of the details of "how" this all happened, because it is a supernatural input with a natural outcome. The Genesis account places heavy emphasis on terms like "God said", meaning that the created universe and our world were brought into existence by spoken words, not mystical mythology or chance collisions of celestial bodies. This implies a living (and speaking) God, powerfully creating stars and worlds with their necessary physical properties, imparting information and communicating precisely. It tells us a great deal about our Maker. The God we worship is a God of awesome (miraculous) power and holiness as well as love and if He is who He says He is, then we must trust His word and His promises to be true.

It's also far too much for my puny mind to comprehend fully.

As the apostle Paul wrote in Romans 1:20: "For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse."

The passage of the seasons can be viewed statically (from our location) or dynamically (in terms of the global setting). Either way, the Christian accepts this as the Creator-God's mighty hand in how our world works and how it has done "from the beginning".

Paul Tarbuck



AN ANECDOTE

For the last years of my final placement, I was Presbytery Secretary. The Chairperson was a woman of similar age whose husband had been a cane cutter. This was at the challenging time of the UCA's discussions, and decisions, on the ordination of homosexual people. As well, she held a few positions in her congregation, including organist. Very busy in church work to say the least.

Some years later, I passed through her town, and we shared a coffee. I asked about her continuing church workload. Her reply was quite simple. She was no longer involved other than as a worshipper each Sunday.

My face must have given my thoughts away because she followed her comment up with another simple, but deeply profound comment, I thought.

"Graham, we're told in the bible there are seasons for everything under heaven. When we worked together, that was my season of service to God in the church. Now, is my season to serve by looking after my husband who has kidney disease and is on weekly dialysis."

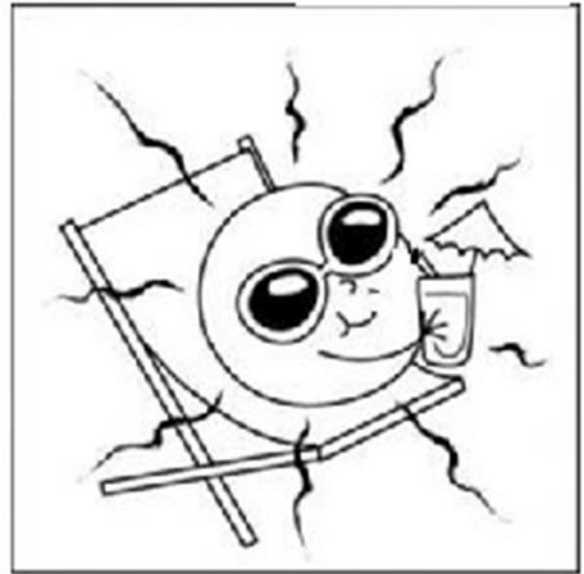
When I left, I had a great deal to think about as I drove to my next destination. She had taught me yet another great lesson that has stayed with me.

SEASONS

Spring



Summer

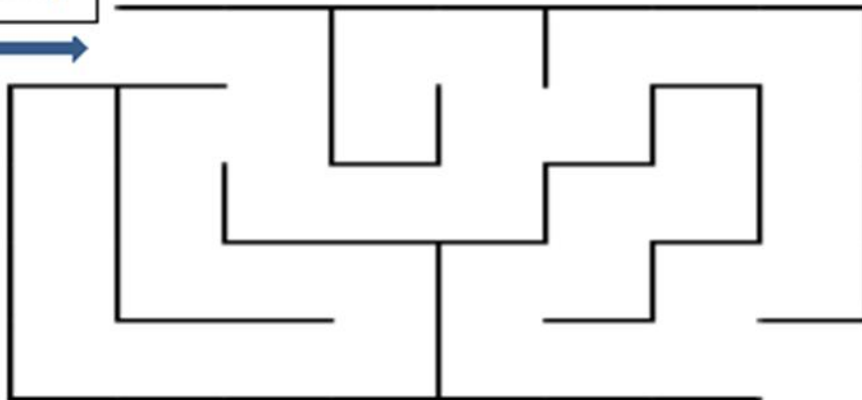


Autumn



Winter

Find the butterfly



SEASONS

When I think of Seasons my thoughts go to the Top End of Australia and the differences in seasons there to this part of the world. In the southern part of Australia we have four distinct seasons of 3 months each - Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. But in the Top End there are 2 seasons. One lives with the certainty that from early May through to the end of September there will be no rain. For the other 6 months there will be rain and in some places – lots of it. April and October are transition months. In October talk is about the build up. The temperature and humidity rise making life almost unbearable; then relief as the first storm comes, followed by the monsoon rains. Then the ‘knockem down’ storms come in April. The rain and wind of these storms knock down the grass that grows to 2 meters high and is now partly dry.

As we learnt to listen to the Aboriginal people (in Kakadu) we discovered they had 6 distinct seasons linked to changing seasons but also linked to when certain foods were available for harvest e.g. August marked the change from cool to hot dry weather. This was the time the native plum trees began to flower. We also learnt dragon flies appearing in multitudes was a sign that the rain was gone; when black cockatoos appeared, it was a sign that the rain was about to start. The season speak to us of the wonderful creation God has given us with all the changes and varieties of understanding that we have in our various cultures.

In the Top End during the dry, fires burn the Savanah bushland. If they are left too late everything is blackened and almost no greenery is left. In many places cycads are growing and after the fires all their leaves are burnt and only a black stump is left. After the fires the first green to appear are beautiful soft green pastel leaves on the many cycads. It is a wonderful sign of new life and new hope. I have often used this event as a good symbol for the Easter resurrection story.

There is always a season for everything. God speaks to us through the changing season of both nature and of our lives. Be attentive to what God is saying through such changes, and be enriched and enlivened. I have a book (*Kakadu Reflections* 1988. by Bruce Prewer) with a poem written out of experiences he had in Kakadu with a dear friend, Ian Morris, who took beautiful photos of Kakadu that are included in the book which I would like to share.

*SEEING GOD (Bruce Prewer:
Kakadu Reflections 1988)*

*God is in the land,
God is on the mountain,
God is in your hand.*

*God is in the forest,
God is on the plain,
God is in the desert,
God is in your brain.*

*God is in the sunlight,
God is in the air,
God is on a falcon's wing,
God is in your prayer.*

*God is in our laughter,
God is in sad loss,
God is in forgiveness,
God is on the Cross.*

HOW'S YOUR MEMORY?

Do you remember the hit song *Turn! Turn! Turn!* [To everything there is a season!] from 1965? I'm sure we all do, but just in case, here it is again. Sing away if you want.

*To everything, turn, turn, turn
There is a season, turn, turn, turn
And a time to every purpose under heaven*

*A time to be born, a time to die
A time to plant, a time to reap
A time to kill, a time to heal
A time to laugh, a time to weep*

*To everything, turn, turn, turn
There is a season, turn, turn, turn
And a time to every purpose, under heaven*

*A time to build up, a time to break down
A time to dance, a time to mourn
A time to cast away stones
A time to gather stones together*

*To everything, turn, turn, turn
There is a season, turn, turn, turn
And a time to every purpose under heaven*

*A time of love, a time of hate
A time of war, a time of peace
A time you may embrace
A time to refrain from embracing*

*To everything, turn, turn, turn
There is a season, turn, turn, turn
And a time to every purpose under heaven*

*A time to gain, a time to lose
A time to rend, a time to sew
A time for love, a time for hate
A time for peace, I swear it's not too late*

We know where the lyrics came from, and they were based on the KJV words apparently.

A little bit of extra background tells us that the song was written by Pete Seeger [1919 – 2014] in the late 50's; released, sung by him in 1962; and became a hit in 1965 when sung by The Byrds.

Even more trivia quiz answers may be found in what follows:

- Seeger arranged for royalties from the song to be distributed in this way:
 - 45% to the Israeli Committee against House Demolitions
 - 50% for composition of the music and
 - 5% for the words which he explained "[in addition to the music] I did write six words and one more word repeated three times."
- The 6 words were in the last line - *A time for peace, I swear it's not too late*.

- Clearly, he was a social activist as can be affirmed by the donation of his hand written lyrics to the New York University by the Communist Party, USA in 2007. I thought this an interesting mix of information – a communist using the Old Testament to seek world peace.
- His other compositions included *Where have all the flowers gone?*, *Kisses sweeter than wine*, and *If I had a hammer*.
- He was also one of the folk singers who popularised the song *We shall overcome* which became the anthem of the international Civil Rights movement.



THE SEASONS OF OUR FAMILIES



This is my Grandma, Lucy Annie Nielen, in the backyard of her home in Montrose Road, Taringa.

The photo shows me with her and her much loved pet “Scrap”. I’m around 9 years old in this photo.

Note the wood heap on the left and the Outhouse on the right.

Here I am at the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary with my granddaughter Ava May Robertson. Ava is around 9 years old in this photo.

One day as I was looking at these 2 photos, I realized that both Grandmas are the same age and both grandchildren also the same age.

What a blessing.

Robyn Robertson



THE PHOTOS ON THE WALL

*I have two photos hanging on the wall
One of an attractive girl, about 18
The other a mature woman, about 80.
What do they show me?*

*The young girl, at the prime of life
A cleanness in the eyes and in the skin
Getting ready to attack the world
But far too gentle to cause upset.*

*The mature woman, skin and eyes of her age
But complexion showing contentment
Ready to enjoy a pleasant late life
Thinking of the days before.*

*So here we have two lives
Looking out upon us
And thinking of the futures
One considering the past.*

*The plans in the mind of the young one
Have they come true?
And of the older one
What thoughts now bring joy, or despair.*

*Why would I have these photos on the wall?
They are both of the same person
Taken some 70 years apart
The same young girl matured.*

*And in that maturity
Have the young girl's dreams come true?
In looking back, has life been as she had
wished
Or has her life been different.*

*Life will rarely be as we desire.
But as maturity joins with youth
Our life progresses through bad and good
As the years slip away.*

*And what happens when our life is spent?
How will people remember us
As people who lived their dreams of life
Or just photos on the wall.*

Colin Harding



ONE LINERS

Good messages don't need to be long and wordy. One line is often enough.
Try these from various internet sources.

- Seasons Change, God Stays the Same
- Earthly life is seasonal, Heavenly life is eternal.
- Seasons are not permanent, but until God stops the process, the cycle will repeat.
- God has a purpose for every season we go through.
- The farther we are from the Son, the colder we become
- Seasons do not last forever; they are transient
- We have 4 seasons – some places only have two – wet and dry or hot and cold.



Rev Rick Glenn once wrote an interesting thing
about the bible passage we are looking at.
He pointed out it is not possible to do both things
in the one sentence at the same time.
e.g. kill and heal; rend and sew; keep silent and
to speak etc.

SEASONS GONE SOUTH

*What if resurrection is ...
not Northern Star
but Southern Cross
and mellow Autumn's
mournful song
of grief and loss ...*

*What if resurrection is ...
more God is not
than God is here,
more there in leaves
stripped bare
as life's signs disappear ...*

*What if resurrection is ...
an apophatic exhalation,
a deep not knowing exaltation
as Winter Spirit fills the lungs
in warming fire,
and foreign tongues ...*

*What if resurrection is ...
not found in creeds
but caring deeds
in stranger ways
and softened gaze ...*

*What if resurrection is ...
not 2000 years
of Western tradition,
but in attrition -
dying, sighing, letting go
of all we thought
we had to know ...*

*What if resurrection comes ...
not in lamb and bunny springing
but in hearts attuned to singing
of harrowed hell
and the great love of friends
walking each other home ...*

Last Easter I reflected with a friend that I had felt a bit stuck in the Garden of Gethsemane over the last few years, feeling that the church had failed to “stay awake and keep me company” to the fore of my mind. The powerful, yet poorly grasped words of Jesus. “I have called you friends”, and his subsequent abandonment seemed a sorrowful truth that did not yield easily to a 24 hour mourning period swept away by the church triumphant and hollow certitudes. I was reaching for the post-resurrection stories of his friends, of Thomas, Mary, and Peter, more than the creeds; for the human grief that sked, “how can we go on without you?” And this poem reached back to me.

Alison Bleyerveen

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With Love to the World is an Australian publication produced by the Uniting Church and it uses predominately Australian writers, who usually reflect on the readings over a two week period before changing to someone quite different. Each day has a reading, a reflection on that scripture, a thought-provoking question, reference to appropriate hymns, identification of important people of faith, and a daily prayer. In fact, it is a comprehensive basis for daily devotions that I find very helpful and challenging. Perhaps you'd like to give it a try. Helpful information follows:

Published 4 times a year
Single subscription is \$28 per year
Sliding fees for larger orders

Currently Betty Diefenbach [Maleny] co-ordinates orders at a slightly reduced rate,
so please speak with her to order

OR

More information can be obtained from:

Trevor Naylor
With Love to the World
PO Box 560
Strathfield, NSW 2135

Phone: [02] 9747 1369 [9 am till 1 pm weekdays]

Email: wlwuca@bigpond.com

Website: <http://www.withloveto the world.org.au>

Luke 24: 25

FROM THE ARCHIVES

When permission was given to use the above reflection from the most recent *With Love to the World*, I had to go back to a previous edition of our journal to find the right words to use in recognising the granting of copyright approval. I found it in issue No 7, Winter, 2018 when our theme was “nudges of the Spirit”; “encounters with the holy while on holidays”; or “thin place” experiences where the divine and the holy have met, with you in the middle, at some stage in your life. The article I had remembered seemed to fit this edition’s theme so I decided to print it again as it may still speak to some of us.

A Couple of Beautiful Spirit Moments

This edition of *The New Vine* has an emphasis on moments in time touched by the Holy Spirit in some way. One such incident happened for me when I opened an envelope recently. It was an ordinary, everyday thing to be doing, but it turned out to be nothing of the sort. I was struck very forcefully by the remarkable image on the cover of *With Love to the World* – a daily Bible reading guide based on the Revised Common Lectionary as adapted for use in the Uniting Church in Australia. For me, also being in the autumn years of my life, I was absolutely captivated by this beautiful photo. But there was more to come - the photographer had also written a reflection inside which touched, even summed up, our theme. It spoke to me very clearly about where I was in my life. I simply had to share both the image and the poem with those who do not use this great little resource on a daily basis – so, I sought, and was given, permission to share both with you. I wonder how they speak to you? What do you hear? What do you feel?



[Leaves by Karel Reus]

The image formed the cover of *With Love to the World*, Vol. 15, No. 7.

And then the reflection followed:

Leaves from the Book of Life

*I found them on the lawn, cast down;
transformed by autumn's alchemy
and boasting new colours
in their death.*

*These leaves unnoticed
when dull green on the branch,
were pregnant with glory.*

*With uncharacteristic reverence
I lifted them – and I was lifted too
and wondered that this glory
could only be revealed in death.
Photographically I translated this deep truth
into a language of ones and zeros
that it may be proclaimed.*

*On my lawn that day
The Spirit spoke
in no uncertain terms.
In my autumnal years,
(until it's my turn on the lawn)
I will seek the meaning of my life
in God's small wonders.*

[Karel Reus]

Copyright. The image **Leaves**, and the reflection **Leaves from the Book of Life**, both by Karel Reus, are reproduced with the kind permission of *With Love to the World: A Daily Bible Reading Guide*.

They appeared in *With Love to the World*, Vol. 15, No. 7.



WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE?

As I was pondering over seasons, I came across this paragraph from the UCA's daily devotion booklet, *With Love to the World*, on 5 March. It was a comment on Numbers 20: 22 – 29.

“Sadly, the leaders of the community that escaped slavery in Egypt and made their long and treacherous journey to the Promised Land, would themselves not survive to see that promised end. First, Miriam dies and is buried in Kadesh [v. 1]. Next, Aaron, Moses’ right-hand man dies at the top of Mount Hor – seemingly as punishment for the previous story’s sin of self-reliance. Leaders, more often than not, fail to see the fruits of their labour. In the prayer he wrote after the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero, Ken Untener reflects: “We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders, ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.” The leaders of the Exodus can be seen in that way: as workers for a season of God’s story of grace and providence. They were imperfect, tired, and frustrated. And yet by their labour future generations of the enslaved could find freedom and rest. What future are you working towards, for God’s story of grace and providence? What seeds are you planting that you may not see grow? What foundation are you laying for generations to come?”

By Rev Radhika Sukumar White, a UCA minister of Sri Lankan heritage,
serving with the Leichardt Uniting Church in Sydney

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SEASONS OF A DIFFERENT NATURE

The seasons of my youth in Ireland differed significantly from the seasons we experience in Queensland. Here is a brief description of what winter and spring were like, which I hope you'll find of interest.



In the good old days, winters in County Tyrone where I grew up were both picturesque and challenging. Christmas was special, probably the highlight of the year. When snow fell the landscape changed into a white, glistening wonderland. However, the cold was far from pleasant. We had no electricity, relying on turf (peat) and

coal fires for warmth in an Aga-type Range Cooker and open-style fire grates. I remember my mother bringing frozen stiff laundry indoors for drying by the fire. Water pipes from the range (cooker) carried warmth to an airing cupboard. Burst pipes due to freezing water were messy. Nights involved hot-water bottles and layers of blankets, and frost patterns adorned the windows in the mornings. I remember icicles drooping from the eaves, paths to the farm buildings slippery as glass. We walked a couple of miles to primary school but caught a bus to secondary school, and I remember my breath like puffs of smoke while waiting, blowing into my gloved hands. Despite the hardships mentioned, this was simply our way of life — we thought nothing of it as it was the only life we knew.

With the coming of spring, everything was gradually transformed. After the harsh, cold winter, the world blossomed into a glorious time of new life. The snowdrops are the first sign, a welcome sight, then the daffodils, followed by an abundance of beautiful spring flowers such as the masses of bluebells in the woods, primroses, and buttercups and daisies growing wild, and I could go on! The trees come into bud, the birds return and build nests, and the cattle are released from their indoor housing.



The baby lambs are born just as nature awakens with new life and brings us to Easter when we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and the promise we have of eternal life. This connection fills Easter with profound meaning. In those days we sang the hymn which reminded us of the meaning of Easter:

"All in the April Evening, April airs were abroad,

.....

I thought of the Lamb of God going meekly to die....

After spring comes summer when anything over 15 deg is welcome and over 20 deg is considered a heatwave, followed by autumn with cooler weather and the vibrant autumn foliage is spectacular. But my focus here was on my life experience in winter and spring, so different from Queensland, and life is so different for the generations that have followed me who have the home comfort of electricity.



Finally, it was a great place to grow up and for me it is still a special place filled with cherished memories.

Muriel Wilson

THE LITURGICAL SEASONS

Most churches around the world follow liturgical calendars that recognise seasons within the life of Christ and His church. As with many other things, they vary. The UCA's adopted liturgical calendar is outlined below and is the basis of the Revised Common Lectionary which outlines weekly Scripture readings over a three-year cycle. Liturgically, each season is also represented by a particular colour, as given below. Church banners, minsters' stoles etc, usually follow these colours as well.

ADVENT

[Purple] A season of preparation, beginning on the fourth Sunday before Christmas, in which the church recalls its hope and expectation in the coming of Christ, past, present and future.

CHRISTMAS

[White] The Christmas season includes Christmas Eve/Day and the twelve days of Christmas. It recalls the stories of the birth and infancy of Christ. The church in this time celebrates the wonder of the Incarnation; the season concludes with Epiphany.

AFTER EPIPHANY

[Green] A period in which the church reflects on the manifestation of Christ to all people. The Baptism of the Lord is the first Sunday of this period. The Transfiguration of the Lord is the last Sunday. The length of this period varies depending on the date of Easter.

LENT

[Purple] A season of preparation and discipline that begins with Ash Wednesday and concludes at sundown on Holy Saturday. During the forty weekdays and six Sundays in Lent, the church remembers the life and ministry of Jesus and renews its commitment to him in Christian discipleship. The season is the traditional time to prepare for baptisms and confirmations to be celebrated at Easter or a week or two later.

EASTER

[White] The great fifty days of Easter includes eight Sundays beginning with the Easter Vigil and concluding on the Day of Pentecost. The season celebrates the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

AFTER PENTECOST

[Green] A period of time that varies in length depending on whether Easter is early or late. In this period, the church recalls its faith in the Holy Trinity. It seeks to relate its faith as a people of God to Christ's mission in the world. It commences with Trinity Sunday and concludes with the feast of Christ the King.



THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM?

While at Theological College, we were encouraged, when preparing a sermon, to always write down, in one sentence, before we started to put pen to paper or fingers to the keyboard in earnest, what we wanted to say. One sentence! Then, when we finished, we were to go back and see if we had achieved our goal. It was always an interesting exercise.

But it seemed to me to beg a couple of questions – “If I can say what I wanted to say in one sentence, why do I have to prattle on for some fifteen - twenty minutes or so? Why not just say the one sentence and let the listeners work out for themselves, what it might mean?”

An interesting theory I never experimented with, but today....?

I thought I would look up sermons on Ecclesiastes 3 to see if the preacher had expressed his/her theme in one sentence. And some had, so I figured it worth a try to encourage readers to imagine how the author might expand that sentence? And ask themselves, how would I?

So, I suggest reading the bible text in your preferred translation on pages 4 and 5, then read a sentence of your choice from the list below; and imagine your way into your own expanded sermon.

- In our time, the Truth of Christ and the Church has come in and out of fashion [season].
[Pat Cunningham]
- Let me suggest some seasonal things for us to do. 1- 'Tis the season for singing 2- 'Tis the season for sharing 3- 'Tis the season for serving.
[Steve Shepherd]
- Just as in nature, there are seasons that are timed out and specifically set in motion, so also are seasons in our lives in both the natural and spiritual sense timed out and set in motion.
- God ordains the seasons we are in as He placed us in this world in these times and in this season.
[Gary Kahn]
- Life is like a wheel in motion moving from one season to another and the Lord has ordained that no season will linger longer than its purpose.
[Dr. Alan Stewart]
- It takes different seasons in our life for God to mould us and make us what He wants us to be.
[Pastor Anthony]
- Seasons change, God Stays the Same.
[Pastor Cole Parlier]
- You simply cannot do anything else in that moment but give yourself over to God, who is the Lord of night and day, of every season of life.
[Rev Dr Randy Bush]
- Life is hard and unpredictable and things you thought were certain, the way of life, the institutions, the structures, turn out to be vapour and disappear. And even so, we do what we can.
[Rev Dr David Clark]
- We serve a God of seasons - but God doesn't measure seasons with clocks and calendars, but through truth and revelation.
[Rev Dr Leslie Verghese]
- God loved each of us before the world was created; knows us by name and will always guide and direct us through all the seasons of life.
[Rich Anderson]
- The things we go through in life are not in vain and our situations will not last forever.
- If you are in a certain season of life, you can be confident the season will come to an end at some point because these verses serve as a reminder that our circumstances will change and that is something we can come to expect in life. Whatever God takes us through has purpose, perhaps to deepen our faith or to help us achieve a breakthrough in an area of life.
[Pamela Palmer]

How did you go?

And before you get too excited, I'm aware some of the above are more than one sentence. Sorry.

