



I really have been looking forward to the coming weekend. Tomorrow we harvest the pumpkins. I will feel as if I'm floating in the sea of orange. And, on Sunday we have our *"Festival of Leaves"*. You will not find that on any church calendar that I know of but it is very special here and I know that friends far and wide are joining with us, each in her or his own way and place.

At Starcross we will individually roam around with little baskets before our Sunday Gathering. As we pick up leaves, we try to enhance our awareness of the stories they reflect and the land on which we walk. When the bell is rung we move toward the chapel.

The leaves we have gathered are placed upon the altar and wherever there is any space to be found.

It is always amazing to me that these leaves have come from many different trees and the hands of people with different life stories. And yet, it always seems as if they all fit together perfectly. There is an incredible aesthetic and spiritual unity in the chapel on that day. Everyone and every leaf belongs. Sometimes a cat will wander in. And we can be sure this year there will be a baby playing with the leaves on the floor. Every being and everything belongs. This is as it should be always.

As we have wandered around we have collected not only leaves but quiet thoughts and sometimes readings or poems. I always remember how moved I was when our Sister Marti shared this haiku;

*Under the same tree  
that showered me with petals—  
red and yellow leaves.*

I think of that moment whenever I pass that old Apple tree. And, I think of its cycles and those of my own life.

After we have meditated, read, reflected, and sung together most of us just go outside on the deck, lingering a bit while taking in the mysteries and beauties of an ordinary autumn day.

And I will be thinking of you with a leaf or two in your hands sitting somewhere; at home, on a park bench, in a hospital room, in a

foreign land ... any place. And I will like to feel that for a precious moment all of us and all of the leaves we hold are united.

May the autumn winds bless us all with peace.

***Brother Toby***