

Faith Comment published in the Petersfield Post

29 September 2010: Rev'd Joanna Farrell, Assistant Priest, All Saints', Steep and St Peter's, Froxfield with Privett

Now and not yet

After a rather mixed summer we have finally arrived at Autumn. The trees are changing colour, the days are shortening, the light has changed and the temperature is falling. But, at the same time, the hedges are full of berries, there is fruit on trees, there are seeds on plants - there is the promise of a future, a new season yet to come. All is not yet over, there is a feeling of "now and not yet."

The church lives in a similar tension. At Christmas we celebrated the "now": God had come to earth in human form in the person of Jesus, but looking around the world we can see that his mission has not yet been fulfilled; there is much that needs to change before we can say that the Kingdom of God is complete.

Today the church remembers Michael, the archangel whose name means "Who is like God?", and all the angels, the messengers of God. In the Celtic tradition Michael is often linked with high places such as hills and mountains, places that are sometimes felt by Christians to be "thin" places, places where we feel most vulnerable to good and evil, to beauty and to chaos. In the book of Revelation Michael and his angels are described as conquering the dragon that represents evil in the world and so bringing about the triumph of good.

So it is that we live in a state of anticipation: we celebrate and enjoy all that has already been done for us by God and we look forward to what is to come; we live in a state of "now and not yet."