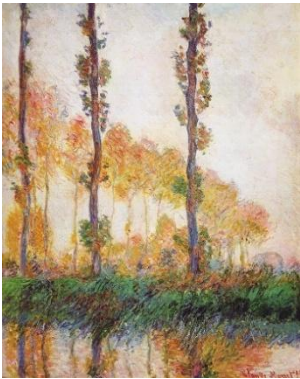


The 'New Curate's' Chronicles – September 2026 (Autumn leaves)



Claude Monet painted the famous Poplars series in 1891 and 1892. The series contains 24 paintings that depict a group of trees that lined the Epte River in France.

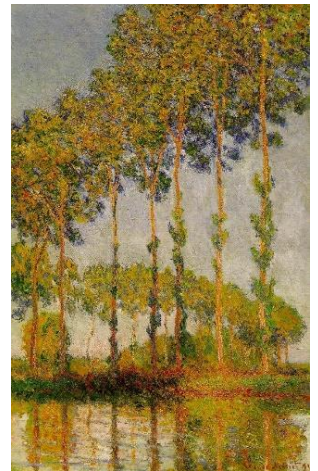
In this first painting (Poplars Autumn, 1891), the leaves are full of warm yellows, oranges, and reds. The sky is light and tinted with yellow. The greens along the shore are rich and dark and act as a point of contrast for the surrounding warm colours.

But, Monet was not satisfied with just one autumn painting.

In this second artwork (Poplars, Row in Autumn 1891) he emphasizes the natural environment, showcasing the stunning seasonal change in a subtly different way.

Upon viewing this second painting, one is immediately struck by the vibrant hues of autumn. A row of tall poplar trees dominates the composition, their slender trunks rising majestically toward the sky. The leaves exhibit a splendid array of yellows, oranges, and greens, testifying to the changing seasons.

Beneath the poplars lies the mirror-like surface of a body of water, which serves to reflect the striking colors of the trees and the diffuse light of the autumn sky. In the background, the sky is painted in a subtle gray, allowing the colors of the trees to stand out prominently.



Autumn is a season marked by change, harvest, and preparation for the coming winter. It is a time of transformation in nature, where the beauty of the changing leaves and the gathering of the harvest serve as metaphors for spiritual growth, reflection, and the cycles of life. The Bible often uses the imagery of seasons, including autumn, to convey deeper spiritual truths about life, change, and God's provision.

"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens." Ecclesiastes 3:1

This Old Testament verse reminds us that our lives are also full of seasons, each life with subtle individualities like the Monet paintings. Autumn, with its transition from the vibrancy of summer to the stillness of winter, symbolizes the natural cycles of change and transition, encouraging us to embrace every stage in our lives with faith and to accept that each season of life has its divine purpose, irrespective of our understanding.

The changes we experience will be deeply personal to each of us but we all have the assurance of God's love for us. When you wake to a season that feels unfamiliar—whether it's a new job, a shift in family life, or a time of waiting—remember that the same God who led you here will also lead you through.

My very best wishes to you all,

Revd Sarah Smith
Curate

For Editors Information



The Revd Sarah Smith was ordained Deacon at St Edmundsbury Cathedral on Saturday 27th June 2026. Sarah has lived in Suffolk for more than 30 years, and has now (mostly) retired from teaching.

Sarah will be serving the Stour Valley Benefice as a non-stipendiary Deacon and will, God willing be ordained a Priest in June 2027.

Our existing curate (The Revd Dr Karen Smith) has completed her Curacy but continues to serve the Stour Valley Benefice whilst she seeks her own permanent Benefice.