

Simplicity as spiritual practice

13 december 2009

three points from last week

- difference between simplistic and simplicity
- finding balance in a culture of zzzzzzap! requires adaptation
- adaptation requires relationships of agency and accountability



what is simplicity?

- we know it's not about being simplistic
- numerous orders and various Christian communities have long argued it's a constitutive element of Christian life
- perhaps this song might help





‘tis a gift to be simple.... but we are “in over our heads”

one way we are “in over our heads” has to do with
how we understand *time*

Time is commonly ...

- something we never have enough of
- linear, moving through a line from past to present to future
- perceived in the passing of it
- *chronos* : sequential time (think “chronology”)



Time can also be...

- elastic
- perceived with special intensity in certain moments
- valued differently in different cultures and contexts
- marked ritually
- in Christian theological terms, *kairos* : God's time



chronos contrasted to *kairos*

paradoxes

- (from last week) we long for joy, we are offered desire
- simplicity requires complexity
- we value time, but perhaps only *chronos* not *kairos* time



faith communities make and mark time

- liturgical year
- small rituals (daily prayers)
- focal rituals (sacraments)
- story-ing our lives



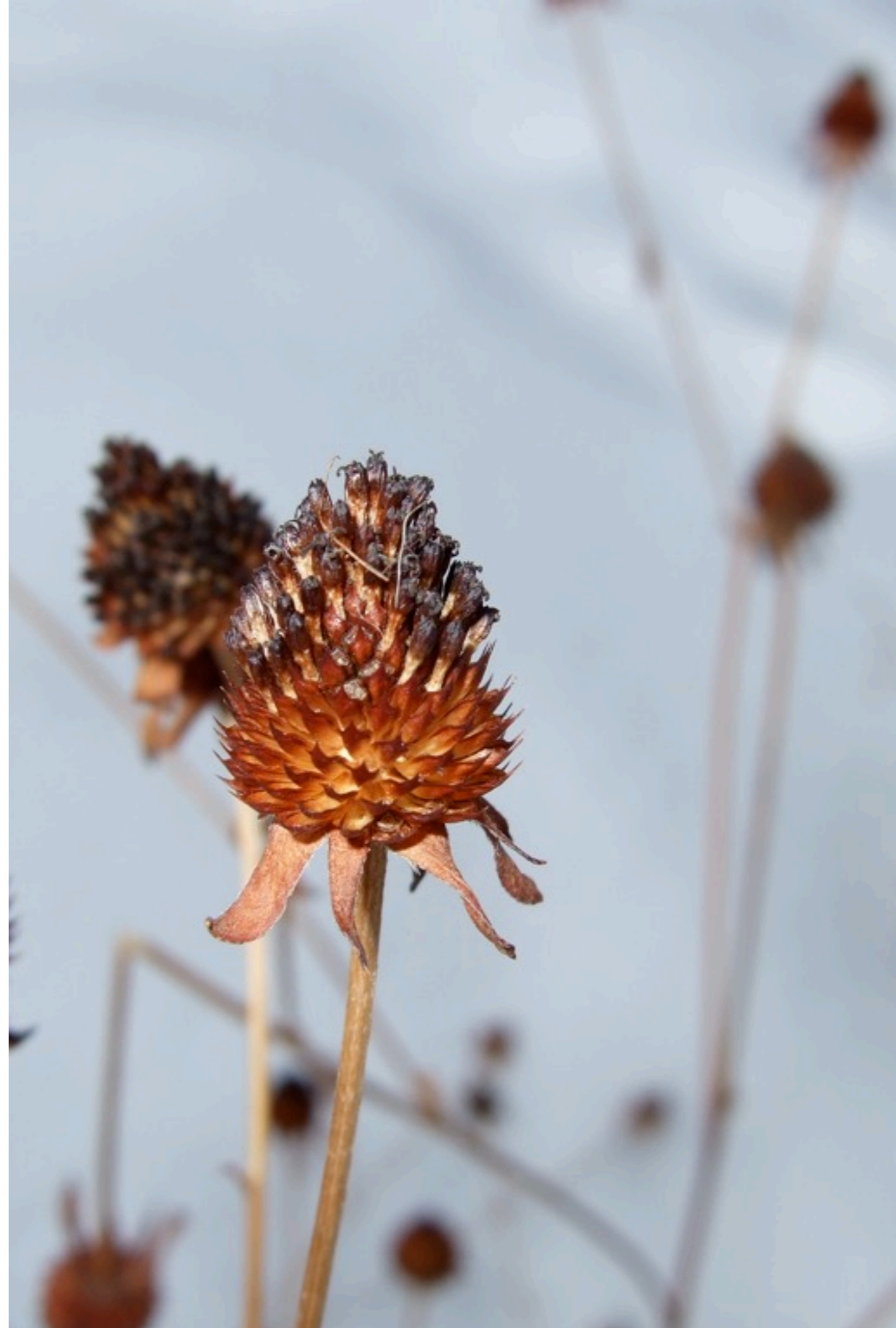
At Christmas we mark time

- through lighting of Advent candles
- through the beginning of the liturgical year
- through genealogies
- Jesus breaks through all of that, both connected and disruptive



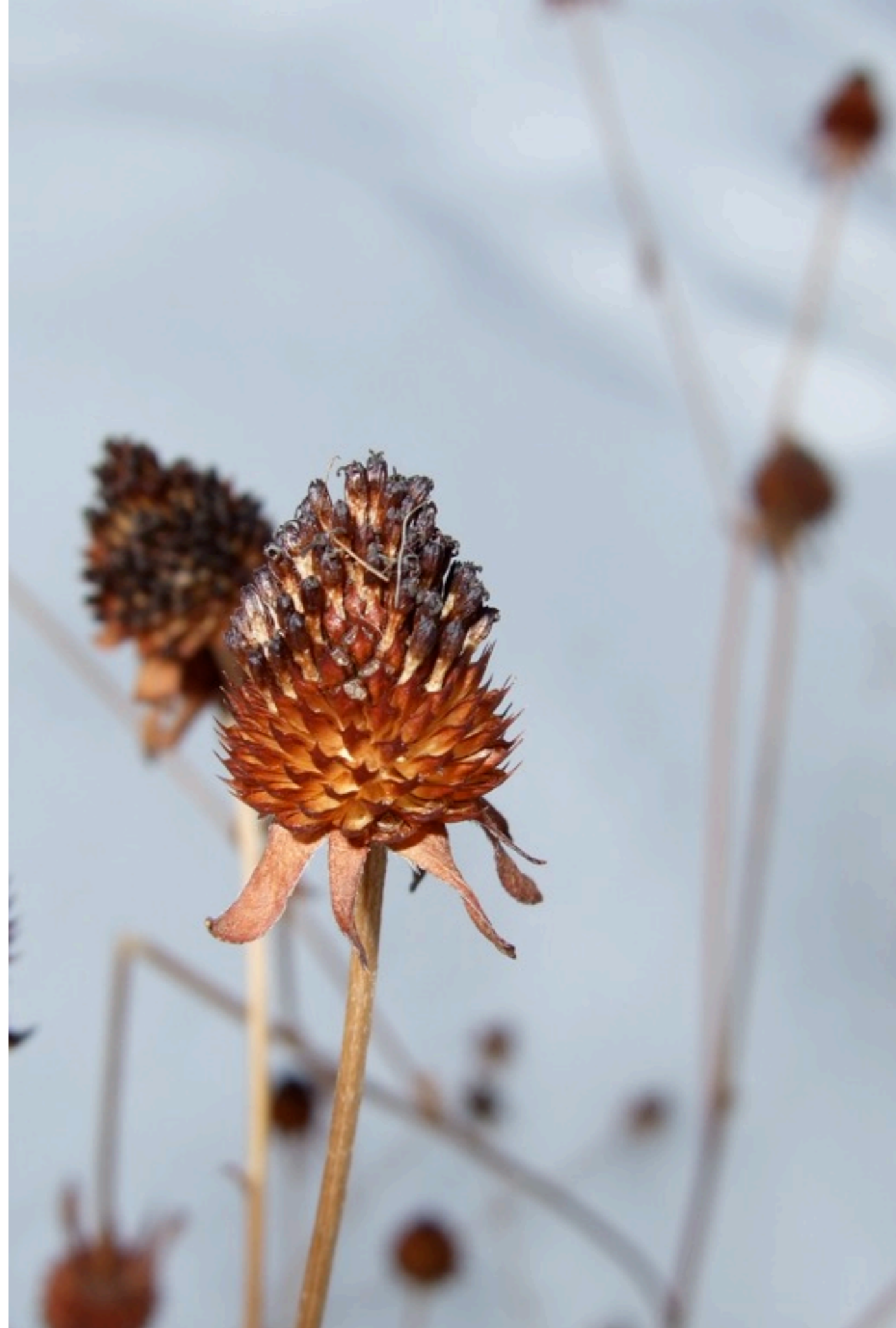
last week: voluntary simplicity

- slowing down
- paring to essentials
- building traditions to sustain relationships
- teaching that joy comes with time, with longing, often with pain
- learning from elders
- **CREATING!!**



this week: voluntary simplicity

- slowing down
- paring to essentials
- being “in” time, “with” time
- teaching that joy comes *with time*, with longing, often with pain
- learning from elders
- RE-CREATING!!



possibilities

- changing news habits
- changing expectations (of yourself, of others...)
- choosing to step down
- breathing
- scheduling time for play
- silence



what are yours?

more info:

[http://www.luthersem.edu/mhess/web/
Simplicity.html](http://www.luthersem.edu/mhess/web/Simplicity.html)

