



Sprout

Wednesday 4th December 2024



"Fig Tree, Panama, STRI" by Marcos A. Guerra, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Acc. 11-009, Image No. 90-14986

Scripture: Psalm 23

¹ The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;*

³ he restores my soul.*

He leads me in right paths*
for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the darkest valley,*

I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
⁶ Surely* goodness and mercy* shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
my whole life long.*

To reflect

Today's word for reflection: sprout, comes from the parable of the Fig Tree that Jesus tells in the Gospel of Luke (21.29-36). Jesus speaks of observing and looking and noticing the sprouting of the leaves of fig trees and other trees indicating that Summer is nearly here. We talk about growing our faith, so it sprouts and grows. The Anglican tradition speaks of the foundations of scripture, reason and tradition, but all these things are encourage us to grow to be more Christ like and help us to love God and love our neighbour. However, in the same way there are different types of trees, each of our individual journeys of faith will have different things that create sprouts and growth.

Clement of Alexandria is remembered today in the Scottish Episcopal Calendar, he was a theologian and philosopher who taught in Alexandria in the 2nd/3rd centuries AD. At the Catechetical School people gathered to discuss, analyse and teach the Christian faith.

What do you so to grow your own faith, to make it sprout and grow? For some it might be individual or group bible study, taking courses or individual study, for others it might be putting your faith into action. Perhaps this Advent you might try something new, for a short season, to allow and cause your faith to sprout and grow.

Rooted in Christ by George MacDonald (1824–1905)

Thou in my heart hast planted, gardener divine,
A scion of the tree of life: it grows;
But not in every wind or weather it blows;
The leaves fall sometimes from the baby tree,
And the life-power seems melting into pine;
Yet still the sap keeps struggling to the shine,
And the unseen root clings cramplike unto thee.

To Listen (these and other suggestions can be found on a Spotify playlist at
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0F5bU2sf4OiOtQY3q78Rf2?si=a99cbbf61e7d4587>)

- 'Christ Hath a Garden' by Howard Helvey sung by the OCP Choir. This is a setting of words of Isaac Watts. The first verse is 'Christ hath a garden walled around, A Paradise of fruitful ground, Chosen by love and fenced by grace From out the world's wide wilderness.' There are many settings of this text.
- 'Tend' by Emmy Rose, Michaela Gentile, Jessie Parker Early (Bethel Music). This song speaks of God as the gardener of our hearts. It chimes with some of the themes of Psalm 23 (the Psalm appointed for the Daily Eucharist on 4th December 2024).

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.