

VINTAGE ADVENTURE

Ⓐ HOME

**Knowing the Lord
as our Shepherd**

Psalm 23



Caraway
Spiritually Resourcing the Older Person



Dear Vintage Adventure @ Home friends

Once again we are embarking on a new year! I wonder how you are feeling about it? In the face of the unknown, we felt prompted to spend the first three months of 2026 reflecting on this well-known Psalm 23, with its familiar picture of God as our Shepherd.

David, the writer, grew up as a shepherd boy and knew all about a shepherd's role, the dangers he and his sheep faced and ways of dealing with whatever occurred. He lived in a mainly barren land, where a lot of the countryside was bare and rocky, with boulders and stones and little for the sheep to feed on. David later became one of Israel's most famous kings and lived a long and at times tumultuous life.

Erica has written our worship and introduces lectio divina, a particular way of reading and re-reading a short piece of Scripture slowly and mindfully.

Ann provides a delicate illustration of the psalm, and Jenny a fresh way of reading it too.

Last year we pondered on some of our favourite hymns, and this month Anne has shared her thoughts on Great is Thy faithfulness whose words are so appropriate at the start of 2026.

We enclose a little calendar and verse, which we pray you will find practical and inspirational.

Jesus also described Himself as the Good Shepherd and our prayer is that we will all place our trust in Him for this coming year.

With all our love

Cynthia and your Caraway friends

Psalm 23

The LORD is my Shepherd.
I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.
He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness
for His Name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
for You are with me;
Your rod and staff,
They comfort me.
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

WORSHIP

Psalm 23:1-3



*The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside quiet waters,
He refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths for His name's sake.*
(New International Version)

As we come to worship with these familiar verses, we will use an ancient monastic practice called Lectio Divina, a practice which allows us to listen deeply to God and encounter Him through His word.

Not only are the words of Psalm 23 familiar, but many composers and hymn writers have set these words to a variety of music over many years. As we settle into this time of worship, I suggest that you begin by listening to a favourite setting of Psalm 23 or perhaps, even dust off an old hymn book and sing out the words once again.

Historically Lectio Divina was a practice used at a time when there weren't bibles for everyone, so the monks gathered to hear a member of the community reading from scripture. They were encouraged to listen with their hearts rather than their heads.

So, begin by finding a quiet place, you may have a favourite chair, or you may prefer to be outside in nature, but find a place where your heart can be still and attentive.



There are four stages to Lectio Divina:

1. Read

2. Reflect

3. Respond

4. Rest



Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, as I come to read Psalm 23 today, I pray that You would open my heart to encounter You in these familiar words from scripture. Help me to listen attentively, respond generously and come to love You more deeply. Amen

Read

Slowly read these verses through several times, savouring the words, and the images that the words convey. Be attentive to a phrase that stands out to you, be prepared to be surprised, it may even be something that unsettles you.



Stay where your heart takes you; you may find yourself sitting beside quiet waters, or it may be a gentle reminder that with God you lack nothing. Or perhaps you feel prompted to mull over one single word.

You may want to read these verses from a different bible translation; a few are included at the end.

Reflect



Stay where the Holy Spirit has led you. Ponder the phrase or word that has spoken to you. Ask God what He might be showing you. What is it about the phrase, word or perhaps picture, that is significant for you today?

Respond



Whatever has stirred your heart, whatever image you've been given or however the Holy Spirit has led you, now spend some time talking to Jesus. You may want to thank Him for what you've been shown, or you may have some questions that you're pondering. Another suggestion is to write down your thoughts or even be creative and as an act of contemplation and gratitude, express what you're feeling by decorating the phrase or word. Use this as a bookmark or pop it on your fridge as a reminder of what God has revealed to you.

Rest

As you come to the end of this time of listening to God, spend a few moments quietly knowing that God has been present with you in your worship.



Closing Prayer

Circle me, O God, encircle me with Your presence.

Keep joy within, keep bitterness out;
Keep generosity within, keep greed out;
Keep love within, keep self-seeking out;
Keep light within, keep darkness out.

In the name of the Sacred Three, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Amen

Ruth Jewell, based on an ancient Celtic prayer.

Other translations of Psalm 23: 1-3

King James's Version

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
 He leadeth me beside the still waters.
 He restoresth my soul:
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake.

The Message

GOD, my shepherd! I don't need a thing.
You have bedded me down in lush meadows,
 You find me quiet pools to drink from.
True to Your word, You let me catch my breath
 and send me in the right direction.

New Revised Standard Version

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
 He leads me beside still waters;
 He restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths for His Name's sake.

New Living Translation

The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need.
He lets me rest in green meadows;
He leads me beside peaceful streams.
 He renews my strength.
He guides me along right paths,
 bringing honour to His name.

Reflection

Knowing the Lord as our Shepherd

As David wrote Psalm 23, he was drawing on a lifetime of experience.



So, what might it mean to know the Lord as our Shepherd and have His goodness and mercy follow us all the days of our life?

The psalm begins *The Lord is my Shepherd*. The Bible offers us many pictures of God and this is an image which would have been very familiar both to Old Testament listeners to David's psalm, and to those in New Testament times. God was like a shepherd to David, and David also realised that he had many of the characteristics of a sheep! In Israel, a shepherd's work was considered a very lowly calling. If a family required a shepherd, they would choose the youngest son (like David). The shepherd actually lived with his flock, guided the animals, protected them from harm and tended to any wounds or illnesses they might encounter.

Have you noticed how many times the pronouns **He** and **me/my** are repeated? David felt that God was a real, personal Shepherd to him. The shepherd owned the sheep; they were his property. *The Lord is my Shepherd* is saying, 'The Lord *owns* me. I belong to Him'

The psalm goes on: *I shall not want*. God never promises to give us everything we want in life, but He does assure us that He will supply all our *needs*, if we trust Him as our Shepherd.

Why not pause a moment and think about our needs. Some are physical: oxygen to breathe, clean water, food, clothing, shelter, warmth, good health. Others are psychological/emotional: a sense of self-respect, belonging, companionship, someone trustworthy with whom to share our feelings, peace of mind, hope for the future. In addition, we have spiritual needs: inwardly we may yearn for a sense of identity and personal significance, of purpose in our lives, a connection with

our Creator. As we reach later life, we may find ourselves asking, "What's it all been about?"

Whether we recognise it or not, God provides for us throughout our lives, supplying what each changing stage of life requires, and has carried us through to where we are today.

David goes on, *He makes me lie down in green pastures*. Sheep are vulnerable.

The only way they can defend themselves is to run, so they remain on their spindly legs, ready to flee from danger. They will only lie down, when they sense they are completely safe and can see the shepherd. Green pastures are extremely scarce in the Holy Land. But here David is

emphasising *resting* rather than feeding. I often find it hard to rest my mind. Thoughts keep crowding in and we lie awake through the night hours, going over what has happened and worrying about what might happen. On the run from Saul, anxious about his divided and dysfunctional family, and carrying the weight of responsibility as king, David found it hard to rest too. But David said, *The Lord... makes me lie down*.

David continues: *He leads me beside still waters*. The phrase '*He leads me...*' is significant. Perhaps you watch Countryfile on a Sunday evening, or you have admired the skills of both men and their animals in One Man and his Dog. We see the dog circling the sheep, lying down, following the course back towards the shepherd and driving them ahead of him into the pen. This is actually a very Western approach. In the Holy Land shepherds always go **in front of their sheep**, which follow them.



Why *still* waters? Sheep prefer quiet, still water as they cannot relax by running streams. They know that if they fall in, their fleece will absorb the water like a sponge and the weight of their coat will cause them to drown. A good Middle Eastern shepherd would dam up a fast-flowing stream to ensure that the sheep could rest by the pools. This is an image of God's care for each one of us and our need to take breaks from the over-connectedness of the 21st century. This shows us how much our Shepherd loves us. He wants us to simply 'be' and rest in Him.



To what extent do we seek stillness to be with God?

Can we make some time each day to pause and be quiet for a moment with Him?

Green pastures and still waters remind us of the good times we experience in life, which can come and go without us really being grateful. Do we need to focus on enjoying God's good gifts more wholeheartedly? This reminds me of the old chorus Count your blessings, name them one by one....

Sheep are easily distracted and scatter swiftly.

Do we spoil the good times by being distracted by anxiety?

Do we need to be more 'in the moment'?

David says the tender Shepherd *restores my soul*. He satisfies our spiritual hunger. This is a promise that our wellbeing is the Shepherd's priority.

He leads me in paths of righteousness. The shepherd had to guide the sheep. They didn't know where better pastures were to be found. A good shepherd regularly moved his sheep on, otherwise they would eat the field right down and overgraze it. Normally we walk, then we rest but here the order is reversed. We must first rest in the Lord and then we will be able to move forward.

And where does the Shepherd lead His wandering sheep? Into the right paths. Our responsibility is to follow. This phrase tells us that Jesus is the kind of shepherd who makes us feel safe and secure but also that we need to keep our eyes on Him.

For His Name's sake – God does this all for His own glory. Where the Shepherd leads, will always be the right path. But as we shall see in the February Vintage Adventure @ Home, the right path may not always be an easy one.



"I am the Good Shepherd"

John 10:11 is the fourth of seven “I am” statements Jesus made about Himself, only recorded in John’s Gospel. Jesus was speaking at a time when people were arguing about whether He was a mere man empowered by God or a divine being who only seemed human. By recording these statements, John was emphasising that neither of these views was correct: Jesus was God in human form, which makes Him both human and divine.



These “I am” proclamations reveal important truths about Jesus and His divine identity and purpose. Immediately after declaring that He is “the door” in John 10:7 Jesus describes Himself as not only “a shepherd” but “the shepherd.” This shows us that Jesus is unique. There is no one else like Him.

Jesus goes on to describe Himself as the **Good** Shepherd. And as we have seen in our reflection on the opening verses of the 23rd psalm, a good shepherd leads, guides, and nurtures his flock. Jesus is emphasising that He cares for each of us in a very special way indeed.

Jesus continues by contrasting Himself with a hired shepherd or hireling, who is more interested in the wages he is working for, than in the wellbeing of the sheep. His New Testament listeners knew that if a wolf appeared, some hirelings would abandon the flock, leaving the sheep to be scattered, injured or even killed. However, Jesus says as the Good Shepherd He would not just protect His sheep, but would go even further, and willingly give up His own life in order to save the sheep in His care. John 10:12-13. This was, in fact, a picture indicating the significance of Jesus' death for us on the cross. If Jesus had merely been a human man, His death could never have reconciled us to God. But because Jesus was also God, He was perfect and His death was therefore completely sufficient with nothing else required.

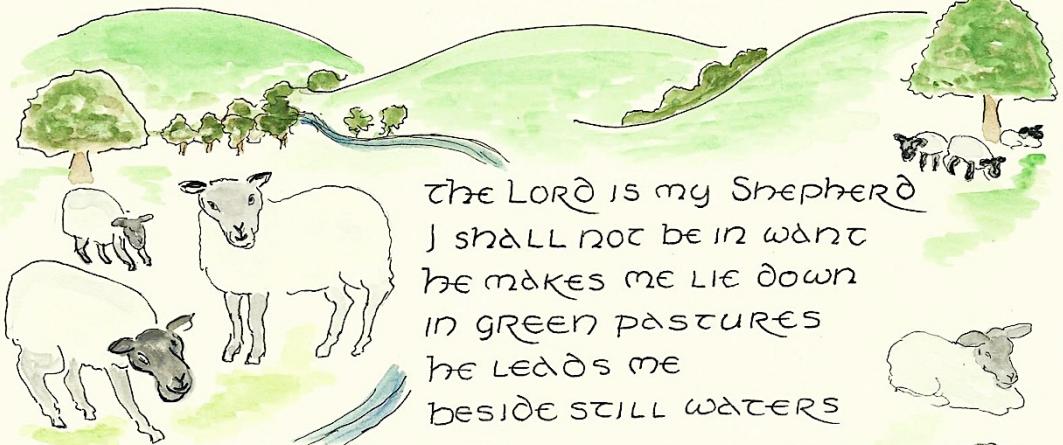
As Jesus explained, *“The Son of Man (the title for God the Son) did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”*

Matthew 20:28. Through His sacrifice, the Lord made salvation possible for all who come to Him in faith.

Jesus' death was divinely appointed. It is only through Him that we receive salvation. *I am the Good Shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own* John 10:14. Furthermore, it wasn't just for the Jews that Jesus laid down His life, but for the *other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd* John 10:16. By *other sheep* Jesus was referring to non-Jews or Gentiles - which means us!

Jesus invites us to trust Him with our lives. Like vulnerable sheep, we are constantly in need of guidance, prone to drift and wander through life. Jesus assures us that His sacrificial love and tender care make us safe, loved and never alone, whatever life may throw at us. He promises to be with us in this life and the next. We have only to trust Him - so, why not give it a go in 2026? It might just make all the difference!





the LORD is my Shepherd
I shall not be in want
he makes me lie down
in green pastures
he leads me
beside still waters

he restores my soul
he guides me in paths
of righteousness
for his name's sake

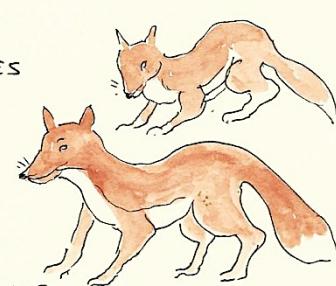


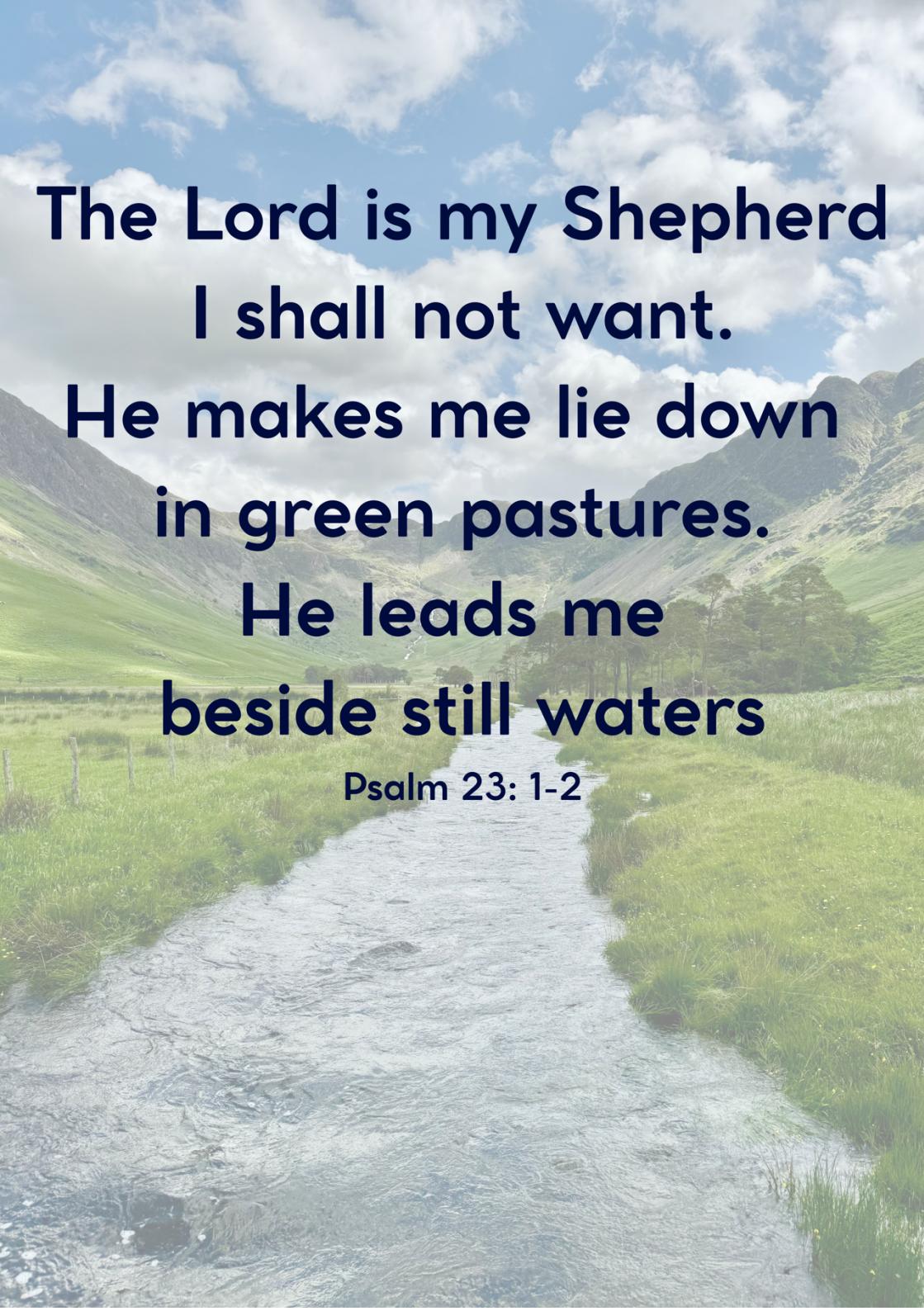
even though i walk
through the valley
of the shadow of death
i will fear no evil
for you are with me
your rod and your staff
they comfort me

you prepare a table for me
in the presence of my enemies
you anoint my head with oil
my cup overflows



surely goodness
and mercy shall
follow me all the days
of my life, and i will
dwell in the house
of the LORD for ever





**The Lord is my Shepherd
I shall not want.
He makes me lie down
in green pastures.
He leads me
beside still waters**

Psalm 23: 1-2

Down Memory Lane



As we start a New Year do you have memories of past new years, when you were younger? I remember my dad walking out the back door just before midnight on New Year's Eve, and as Big Ben chimed on the radio, he would walk in the front door!!

Did you or your family have any **traditions for New Year?**

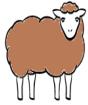
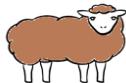
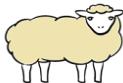
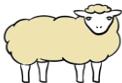


Did you ever make **New Year resolutions?**

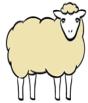


Do you remember **the snow** of December-January 1963?



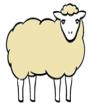


THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD



The Lord is my Shepherd – *that's relationship!*

I shall not be in want – *that's supply!*



He makes me lie down in green pastures – *that's rest!*

He leads me beside quiet waters – *that's refreshment!*

He restores my soul – *that's healing!*



He guides me in paths of righteousness – *that's guidance!*

For His name's sake – *that's purpose!*



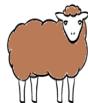
**Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow
of death – *that's testing!***

I will fear no evil – *that's protection!*



For you are with me – *that's faithfulness!*

**Your rod and your staff they comfort me
– *that's discipline!***



**You prepare a table before me in the presence of
my enemies – *that's hope!***

You anoint my head with oil – *that's consecration!*

My cup overflows – *that's abundance!*

**Surely goodness and love will follow me all the
days of my life – *that's blessing!***



**And I will dwell in the house of the Lord
– *that's security!***

For ever – *that's eternity!*

Hello everybody. My name is Anne, and I am a retired secondary school teacher.

If asked what your favourite hymn is, what hymn would you choose? One with a lovely tune? Or meaningful words? Or ideally both? I've chosen - Great is Thy faithfulness. We sang this hymn at our wedding and my Mum's funeral. And I'd like to briefly share why this hymn means a lot to me.



Great is Thy faithfulness, O God, my Father

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God, my Father

There is no shadow of turning with Thee.

Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;

As Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be.

Great is Thy faithfulness, great is Thy faithfulness,

Morning by morning new mercies I see.

All I have needed Thy hand hast provided;

Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,

Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above

Join with all nature in manifold witness

To Thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love. *Refrain*

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,

Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;

Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,

Blessings all mine and ten thousand beside. *Refrain*

Life brings troubles and hard times for everyone. The words in this well-known hymn are affirming and reassuring. God is faithful, which means He is constant and will always be with us.

Even when we have had a bad day, we are reminded that each morning is a fresh start - '*morning by morning new mercies I see.*'

When I was eight years old my Dad died very suddenly whilst refereeing a football match. My mum at 47 years of age had to get on with life - find a job and manage the family. She was a Christian. She would quote the lines in the third verse - '*strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow.*'

So, this is a special hymn that goes right back into my childhood and then becoming a Christian myself at the age of 18; leaning on God's faithfulness especially in the difficult times; knowing His '*strength for today*'; having '*bright hope for tomorrow*' and being grateful for that '*fresh start*' on offer each day.

In verse three we are reminded that our sins are forgiven; we are given a peace within that endures. We can know God's presence and allow Him to strengthen and bless us every day. We can choose to receive and be grateful for the blessings God gives '*blessings all mine and ten thousand beside*'.

I hope you will find renewed strength, hope and peace and encouragement as we begin a New Year.

Great is Thy Faithfulness

New Year Traditions From Around the World

Belgium: Farmers bless their cows on New Year and wish them a Happy New Year!

Chile: Many people visit cemeteries at midnight on New Year's Eve to pay respects to their loved ones who have passed away.

China: Chinese New Year, also known as the Spring Festival, starts on the new moon that falls between January 21 and February 20.



Denmark: The Danish smash plates on New Year Eve for good luck.

Egypt: New Year is only celebrated once the crescent moon is sighted.

France: They eat piles of pancakes!

Greece: Onions are hung on the front doors signifying rebirth & regrowth. 1

Italy: People wear red underwear to be lucky in love in the New Year.

Scotland: People swing large fireballs around for the 'Hogmanay' festival.

Siberia: Trees are planted underneath frozen lakes & rivers as a symbol for starting over.

South Africa: In some parts of South Africa they throw furniture out of the window.

Spain: At the strike of midnight, 12 grapes are eaten to ward off bad luck.

Switzerland: Ice cream is dropped on the floor.

Thailand: They throw buckets of water and gray talc at each other.

Turkey: Pomegranate seeds are thrown in the air for good luck.

UK: Kissing on New Year's Eve & singing Auld Lang Syne. (This tradition is followed in many other countries too).



This Day in History.....

1st January 1863 The 'Emancipation Proclamation' is issued by Abraham Lincoln to free slaves in UK confederate states.

2nd January 1839 The first photograph of the moon is taken by Louis Daguerre.

10th January 1863 London Underground opens. 'The Tube' is the world's oldest underground railway.

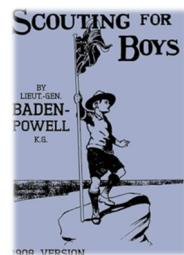


11th January 1569 The first recorded lottery in England is held to raise funds for public works.

21st January 1976 Concorde takes off on its first scheduled flight.



24th January 1908 Boy scouts movement begins with the publication of the first instalment of Robert Baden-Powell's *Scouting for Boys*.



26th January 1905 The world's largest diamond, the 3.106 carat Cullinan Diamond, is discovered in South Africa. It has an estimated value of 2 billion US dollars.

Something to make you smile

- Parallel lines have so much in common. It's a shame they'll never meet.
- The early bird might get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese!
- By the time a man realises that his father was right, he has a son who thinks he's wrong.
- If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong.



Find 10 differences!



Word Search

PSALM 23



T	E	W	M	H	C	F	C	S	F	L	V	L	C
R	W	X	A	X	S	O	W	T	H	P	A	E	Z
I	V	M	K	F	H	R	O	I	D	J	L	A	V
G	T	J	E	E	E	E	V	L	W	J	L	D	G
H	M	T	S	A	P	V	E	L	E	P	E	S	O
T	Q	A	M	R	H	E	R	W	L	R	Y	M	O
E	P	B	E	N	E	R	R	A	L	E	P	E	D
O	E	L	G	O	R	Z	F	T	A	P	A	K	N
U	L	E	R	E	D	X	L	E	J	A	S	O	E
S	O	L	E	V	G	A	O	R	M	R	T	S	S
N	R	O	E	I	V	E	W	S	E	E	U	T	S
E	D	O	N	L	J	N	S	D	R	S	R	A	U
S	A	N	O	I	N	T	O	C	C	K	E	F	V
S	U	H	N	N	C	R	J	Y	Y	I	S	F	C

Lord	Shepherd	Makes Me	Green
Pastures	Leads Me	Still Waters	Righteousness
Valley	Fear No Evil	Rod	Staff
Prepares	Table	Anoint	Over-flows
Goodness	Mercy	Dwell	Forever





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Messy Vintage