



Tree dedication

‘As the days of a tree, shall the days of my people be’ [Is 65:22], says the prophet, but planting this wee tree, we’re looking -God willing - way beyond the life of anyone here. To do so implies a wee partnership of mutual care between the people who plant and tend and the trees who give life in so many ways.

Indeed, when God gave **King** Solomon wisdom the King spoke of animals, birds, creeping things, fish, and of course trees.

And of all the ways in which to mark a milestone of our own nations and cultures, the dedication of a tree is now, more than ever amongst the most appropriate

I think that I shall never see a carbon capture technology as lovely as a tree, though we've learned from the scientists of COP and elsewhere that what matters is the right tree in the right place. It might be more difficult to dedicate a bog or a grove of seagrass, so trees it is!

If an oak!

An oak has a very special pedigree: it was a species of Oak that hosted the meeting of Abraham and Sarah with God. Isaiah and other prophets cried out against the blasphemous desecration of the self-evident holiness of Oak trees in the abusive cults of Israel's neighbours; It's the right trees and as for the right place: Columba, a friend of *these* islands, learned much

¹ [with some research, the significance of other trees, eg Rowan, Holly, Apple, or other 'sacred trees' of Scottish tradition can be substituted]

from the legacy of his Celtic ancestors about the sanctity of the Oak, which is thoroughly born out by the environmental science of our day.

Dedicating this very long-lived tree is a sign of hope which, in their lifetime connects as we are connected with ancestors of our faith in Scotland, just the lifetime of an oak ago. Thus it is very much in faith, looking into a future we can't know, that we mark the beginning of King Charles' reign in this way, remembering also how, together with the late Queen, over the seventy years of her reign, the planting of trees has been a joy, a delight, and a sign of hope.

Prayer

Dear God who shapes the trees from the same stuff as your people, we dedicate and ask you blessing on the planting and the continuing care of this young oak .[or other tree as applicable]

As a young sapling, may they be a sign of hope and inspiration, and the gratitude we feel today.

As a mature tree, and perhaps within our own lifetime, a fruitful habitat and refuge for the birds of the heavens and the many other creatures on whom, unbeknown, we so crucially. May every creature with breath praise God - as we breathe in what trees breathe out, in all our work and worship.

And if, by your grace, some centuries hence this [Oak] tree reaches that venerable final stage of their life, giving back to the Earth, playing their part in the web of life whilst still offering their rich hospitality, then by that wonder may God's name be praised.

But for us today, as we dedicate this Oak tree on the occasion of the Coronation, in the words of Isaiah

“May your heart and the heart of your people be moved as the trees of the forest are moved by the wind.” and by the Spirit of God, to the care of Creation

AMEN.