



Order of Service

5th of February 2023

10.00 am



Worship led by Rev Dr André Groenewald
Music from Martin Petty and the choir



Gathering of God's People

Time when we greet one another and prepare for worship.

Those who are able please stand for the entry of the Bible.

Words of welcome and announcements.

Good morning and welcome to our service of worship

Allow me a few announcements please:

Session meeting on Wednesday evening at 7:30

Next Sunday we will have Compassion UK to come and talk about their work with Grant Gordon leading the service.

I will be away for the February break and pulpit cover will be in place. In any cases of Pastoral need please contact Kay Coull who will point you in the right direction.

Please remember that we will have communion on the first Sunday of March.

Now let us worship God Together (Psalm 23:6)

Minister: Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the
days of my life,

All and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Beloved I greet you in the Name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen

CH4 399

My song is love unknown

Opening prayer and The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father, through the death and resurrection of your Son, Jesus the Christ, you defeated sin and death, and brought us new life. Like your first disciples, we need your continued direction to help us focus on this new life you would have us live.

Come to us, reassure us, and empower us through your Holy Spirit, that we be faithful disciples in our present age and proclaim the depth of your love to those around us.

Help us in all our endeavours of life to obey your biggest command to LOVE you and others as we love you

Ground and deepen your LOVE in us through your Holy Spirit that we may have peace and hope in all our relationships on earth so that the world can see and hear about YOUR love at work

Help us to LOVE you with actions of forgiveness, mercy, charity, reconciliation towards your people

Please have mercy on our souls for our sins of omitting to LOVE unconditionally and for not obeying your command...

We pray for all that does not FEEL loved, who experience the trauma of abuse and neglect.

We pray for all that is ill and are undergoing treatment, may your LOVE Lord abound in their lives and journeys of pain and suffering,

May they always feel your LOVE through our actions of care, and help

This we ask in Christ's holy name who taught us to pray:

ALL: Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For You are the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.

Reflecting on God's Word

Reading: John 21:15-19

Reader: **Bill Black**

Choir sings Lord you are precious to me

Reflection

I wonder what your answer will be when I ask you to complete the sentence LOVE is???

I cannot help but wonder how many different answers we will get just by doing this exercise in this church this morning.

Love seems to mean different things to different people. Every year in February before, during and even after Valentines day the world seems to be obsessed with LOVE.

I cannot help noticing that despite all the abundance of love in February that our world does not change much. Why is this?

Is this because we are talking of imperfect human efforts to love? Is it because as humans we fail to grasp what love really means? Is it because our world does not know and have never experienced God's love?

I am saying this because it is clear as daylight that the only Love that changes everything for good is God's Love.

His love changed our destiny for ever...

He loved us first ...

He died for us so that we can live...

He overcame death so that we can have a destiny in heaven..

He gave us HIS HOLY SPIRIT as a comforter in all seasons of our lives

There is indeed a big difference between God's love and human efforts to love unconditionally and sacrificially.

Human love is needy, often selfish and temporal while God's love is sacrificial and eternal.

No wonder the Greeks have different words for love to make the distinction between God's love and human love which is reflected in our bible reading ...

But first I must focus your attention to a biblical Mediterranean principle. Jesus questions Peter three times. In those times it meant that something can only be true once it has been confirmed three times which happens in our reading. Peter confirms that he really loves Jesus, although he is challenged

with a response. To us it might sound as if Jesus do not believe him.

The first time, Jesus challenges him to show his love by feeding his lambs. We need to remember that in Johns Gospel Jesus is referred to as the Good Shepherd while His followers are His flock.

Now I do not know if you have ever tried to bottle feed lambs? A few years ago, we took the boys to a farm in West Calder to feed the wee lambs. It is not an easy task. Look at this video if you do not believe me? And the best is they needed to be fed times a day...

And for the 2nd and third time Jesus challenges Peter with deeds to prove his love. If he loves Jesus he needs to look after the flock of Jesus....he needs to protect and feed them ...

Oh and before I forget let me return to the significance of the two different Greek words for love agape and Philo. When Jesus speaks about his love, twice He uses agape meaning Gods love ... and

Peter uses philo as expected.

But then at the third time Jesus change the Greek word from agapas to philo ...Instead of saying do you **agapas** me, He says do you **phileis** me?

Why does He do this?

My theory would be that Jesus was referring to his sacrifice on the cross. He suffered, although He was fully God, the death of a human being. He showed the love of a “human being” which explains the choice to use the word “phileis” and not “agapas”. Jesus’ love of course is sacrificial love, love that is costly - something that Peter would soon learn more about in his own personal life. To follow Jesus would mean a life of sacrifice which corresponds with what Jesus said in verse 19, namely that Peter will eventually die a sacrificial death because of his faith.

God’s LOVE is a verb...

If we decide to answer the call of God to follow

Him, we should know that our actions must reflect the love that we have by our 100% commitment of serving Him through our lives of faith, hope and love. We need to look spiritually after our wee ones, the children and our youth. We cannot ignore the opportunities and wait for them to make their own choices, without us leading and guiding them properly.

We also need to look after one another, as brothers and sisters in faith. We cannot ignore each other, or gossip about one another. The easiest way to fall out with people is to always highlight all our differences. Maybe the time has come for all of us to just accept that God has made us all so different with a purpose. We need to dance with one another, despite our differences, in a dance of God's inclusive love.

The only way the world will ever see our commitment of following God is through our actions of love, taking care of one another by ways of helping each other through sickness and health, through bereavements and suffering, through

sunshine and rain, through thunder and stormy situations.

The only way our brothers and sisters of faith will ever see our commitment of following God is through our actions of feeding others spiritually and physically, meaning doing charitable work in our everyday living.

Christian following is like a musical where you and I are the players to show the world why we follow God. WE FOLLOW GOD BECAUSE HE LOVED US FIRST. If we do not perform in a sacrificial way – if we do not give our love away by giving everything we have, then the world will not understand the love that God has for us - A love that God will not let go - A love that God will sustain and nourish as long as we live it. In the love story of God, we have to and we can only respond to His love through our promise to follow HIM with grateful hearts. We can only respond with our love through our actions of commitment, responsibility and the willingness to sacrifice the self.

So let us just LOVE like God loved us by following Him with everything we have.

Let us love by:

- listening to one another without interrupting,
- speaking without accusing
- giving without sparing any costs,
- answering without arguing,
- sharing without pretending...
- enjoyment without complaining
- trusting without wavering
- forgiving without punishment
- honouring God without fail...

May we always abide in God's love ... LOVE that wilt not let us go ...

Amen

MP 450

Love lifted me

Prayer of thanksgiving Margaret Black

MP 452

Loved with everlasting love

Blessing **Receive the blessing of God and go in peace:**

Lord, send us out

as renewed people.

Help us to turn away from what is wrong

and turn to what is right.

Help us to turn towards our neighbours

and to all who are lost.

Help us to turn away from distractions

and towards more adventuring with you.

Help us now and always.

And the blessing of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit will be
with you now and forevermore.

Congregation sing Amen, Amen, Amen



BALERNO PARISH CHURCH

Intimations

Sunday, 22nd of January 2023

WORSHIP SERVICES

5 February 2023 Worship service

12 February 2023 Compassion Sunday with the charity "Compassion UK"

19 February 2023 Worship service

26 February 2023 Worship service

FUTURE DATES:

8 February 2023 Kirk Session meeting



THE MILL CAFÉ

Open Tuesday – Friday, 9.30am – 2pm

Serving teas/coffees, home baking, snack lunches. We

are a friendly group and are *always delighted to welcome new volunteers to our team*. Pop in and see what we are all about.

THANKS TO YOU...

Thank you for all your generous contributions towards the ministry and mission of the Church. Gift Aid envelopes are available at the end of each row or from

the Treasurer after the Service.

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