



Order of Service

8th of May 2022

10.00 am

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



¹¹ “For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. ¹² As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness.

Edinburgh Balerno Parish Church of Scotland: Scottish Charity No. 018012

Welcome & Announcements

Good morning and welcome to our service. Allow me a few announcements please:

The first Sunday in June - 2 communion services will take place on 10 am and 3 pm.

IMPORTANT DATE has changed:

On the **1st of June** and not on **18th of May 2022** members of the Deployment Sub Group will speak to the Kirk Session about the Presbytery Plan. Members of the congregation are invited to attend as well.

SUPPER AND SONG 25 May 2022 @ 7:30 for £20.00

It is with great sadness that I announce the death of Thea Miller last week.

Let us worship God with our Call to worship (Psalm 23):

Minister: The Lord is my shepherd.

All: 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.**

Minister: He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.

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

Opening prayer and The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray:

Lord, you are our shepherd, we shall not be in want.

You make us lie down in green pastures,

you lead us beside quiet waters,

you restore our souls.

You guide us in paths of righteousness for your
name's sake.

Even though we walk through the valley of the
shadow of death,

we will fear no evil, for you are with us;

your rod and your staff, they comfort us.

You prepare a table before us

in the presence of our enemies.

You anoint our heads with oil; our cup overflows.

May your goodness and love follow us

all the days of our life,
and may we dwell in your house forever.

We ask this in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray:

ALL: Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be THY name. THY kingdom come, THY 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 Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.

Reading: Ezekiel 34:1-16 by George Burt

Shepherds and Sheep

34 The word of the LORD came to me: ² “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? ³ You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. ⁴ You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. ⁵ So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals.

⁶ My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them. ⁷ “Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: ⁸ As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, because my flock lacks a shepherd and so has been plundered and has become food for all the wild animals, and because my shepherds did not search for my flock but cared for themselves rather than for my flock, ⁹ therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the

LORD: ¹⁰ This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them. ¹¹ “For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. ¹² As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. ¹³ I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. ¹⁴ I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵ I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign LORD. ¹⁶ I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.

Choir sings CH4 16 “The Lord’s my shepherd (Orlington) vs 1, 2 & 5”.

Reflection

11 & 12 “For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness.

Currently our news is dominated by the results of the elections that happened on Thursday. People are again looking with hope to a new leader that will come and change the bad into something good.

Well you know what this is exactly also the context of our reading. Ezekiel was a prophet who had to represent God in a very unstable time in the history of the Judean people. In those days they referred to their kings and leaders as shepherds. In our reading the **shepherds, the kings of Judea** were only looking after themselves and not the flock of God. In the year **597 BC King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon** captured Jerusalem taking many of the leading citizens of Jerusalem as hostages to Babylon, among whom was **Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi**. They were

resettled at a place called **Tel Abib** (which means 'mound of the flood') on the **river Chebar**, one of the **stream canals of the Euphrates River** southeast of Babylon, near the ancient city of Nippur. It was here that Ezekiel received his call as a prophet of the Lord approximately in **593 BC**.

Ezekiel did not have a very easy task as a prophet of God. Once he was called, he was so **overwhelmed** that the only thing he did **was to sit in one place** for seven days. He had to do strange things like **eating a book roll as a symbol of God's** action. From the time of his call and until the final fall of Jerusalem in 586/7 BC, he was a **virtual recluse** in his house and afflicted with fits of **dumbness and immobility**. When his wife suddenly died, he was also not allowed to show his

grief in any way. He had to go on as if nothing has happened because her **sudden death** was a symbol of the **sudden destruction of God's temple** in Jerusalem. His contemporaries viewed him as somewhat of an **eccentric**. It was only in retrospect that his obedience to God became apparent.

In our reading we can almost hear his **passion** as he speaks on God's behalf. He is telling the exiles in Babylon that it all happened because the shepherds of Judea, **the King and his leaders** did not bother to **listen to God** and take care of his sheep. After **Josiah** the last kings of Judah were all corrupt. They led the nation to **spiritual and political** ruin. in vv. 1–6 we read about their condemnation:

- they did not seek to meet the needs of the

people but only used the people for their own selfish ends;

- they did not take special care of those in need, the helpless members of society.
- they met **weakness and injury** with callous cruelty;
- the people wandered from the Lord and became a **prey to idolatry** and immorality because of a lack of **positive moral or spiritual leadership**

But now the Lord God will act. He will remove the **corrupt shepherds** and become their one and only TRUE shepherd. It was not unusual for the people to **think of God as their shepherd**. He will **feed them** with the greenest pastures and will quench their thirst with the most peaceful and cleanest streams

of water. He **will bless them** and take care of them. They must put their trust in Him alone. He is the only one who **oversees their lives**. As a faithful shepherd he will look after **all their needs**. He promises them a **covenant of peace**. The large number of the saying “**I will**” in 34:10–29 suggests God’s determination **personally to be involved** in the lives and destinies of his people. There will be showers at the right season that produce bountiful crops. The people will dwell in **security and freedom**. There will be no famine or threats from enemies. The people will know that God, their Shepherd, is with them and that **Israel his flock is his people**.

God will also appoint his **servant David** to be his representative on earth. The use of “my servant

David” represents the **hope of a future resurrection** of the golden age of Israel. David was characterized as a man after **God’s own heart**. God will in future appoint a new leader for them like David who will tend **His flock as His shepherd** and be a prince among them.

I think the message was quite clear to everyone who heard it the first time: The leaders of the world have **feet of clay**. They are not **trustworthy**. Therefore, the people of Judah need to **look at God** for His leadership. They must travel with Him and rely on His words of promise. **He is the Good Shepherd** that knows them by heart! He will give them a new future.

I think this is also a timely message for us all. We have so much more evidence than the exiles in Babylon of **what God really can do.**

I mean to say they did not know in 587 BC that God would indeed **free them and allow them to go back** to Judea. They did not know that **God will come to earth and show in Jesus Christ what a Good Shepherd really does.** God made a new covenant of peace with us in and through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. We can **indeed lie down in green pastures** because we **received all that we need, redemption, and spiritual guidance** through his Holy Spirit. He reached out to you and me while we were **wandering like lost sheep in the hills of darkness and despair.** He **healed us from all the wounds sin**

caused us. He gave us a new future of hope.

In the current time maybe we should focus again on God and what He requires from us.

- If you are appointed as a leader in society, you must tend to his flock as best as you can.
- If you are a church elder, you must tend to your sheep in your district as best you can.
- If you are a member of the congregation, you need to look out for all the lost sheep and tell them about the Good Shepherd.
- If you are sitting in this church this morning and are experience feelings of being lost and lonely, if you are feeling as if you have lost your way, the Good Shepherd is here, and He is inviting you to come to HIM.

- If you are sitting in this church and you feel as if your sins and your past is too much to bear any longer – bring it to the Good Shepherd. He has already wiped away all your sins and transgressions. He is saying to you this morning: you are forgiven!

There are a lot of things around us that is making us negative at the moment – current political instability threatening world peace, the high inflation rate, the hiking of prices of fuel, food and utilities, the Radical plan of the Church of Scotland to reduce ministers all over Scotland and in doing so, urging congregations to UNIONS

Negativity can often lead to a downward spiral of hopelessness and low morale... BUT we need to

remember who we are and whom we serve.

Our reading is giving us HOPE and should fill us all with positivity. WE have a Shepherd God whom we can always trust and rely on. Nothing will befall us if it is not HIS will. We are HIS flock and HE promised us that HE will be a constant presence.

ALL our leaders are appointed by God. If they do not look after his sheep, God promises to hold them accountable, remove them from tending the flock, and rescue his flock!

Let us all look to God as our Shepherd for his guidance. Let us all focus and patiently wait for the miracles of what God can do. Let us sing now the

hymn “In heavenly love abiding” and mean every word we sing....

CH4 551

In heavenly love abiding

Prayer of thanksgiving by Lesley Burt

MP 1008

The Lord is my shepherd

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

Go now in love, hope and peace to embody the good news of our Shepherd God’s presence with all people.

Go now and be a true shepherd of our Lord and Saviour.

And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and His Holy Spirit will be with you, now and with all whom you love!

Congregation sing Amen, Amen, Amen



BALERNO PARISH CHURCH
Intimations
Sunday, 8th of May 2022

WORSHIP SERVICES

15 May 2022 @ 10 am Worship service and baptism of George Edward Easton

22 May 2022 @ 10 am Worship service

29 May 2022 @ 10 am Worship service

5 June 2022 @ 10 am Communion service

5 June 2022 @ 3 pm Communion service

12 June 2022 @ 10 am Worship service

19 June 2022 @ 10 am Worship service

26 June 2022 @ 10 am Summer family service with picnic

IMPORTANT DATE:

On the 18th of May 2022 members of the Deployment Sub Group will speak to the Kirk Session about the Presbytery Plan. Members of the congregation are invited to attend as well.

SUPPER AND SONG 25 May 2022 @ 7:30 for £20.00

BALERNO BANK DETAILS:

Sort code	83 - 19 - 15
Account	00119731
Balerno Church of Scotland	