

ABBAY INTERNATIONAL BAPTIST CHURCH, READING

WORSHIP SERVICE

10.30 AM 23RD FEBRUARY 2025

SIMON BIRD LEADING AND SELINA CHAN PREACHING

www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk.

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THEME: 'We are Family' 6... 'One another's'

A CALL TO WORSHIP: PSALM 136:1-3,

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

His love endures for ever.

Give thanks to the God of gods.

His love endures for ever.

Give thanks to the Lord of lords:

His love endures for ever.

HYMN BPW347/MP445

Lord, the light of Your love is shining, in the midst of the darkness shining:
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us; set us free by the truth You now bring us.
Shine on me, shine on me.

Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with the Father's glory;

Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire.

Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy;

Send forth Your word, Lord, and let there be light.

Lord, I come to Your awesome presence, from the shadows into Your radiance;
By Your blood, I may enter Your brightness; search me, try me, consume all my darkness.
Shine on me, shine on me.

As we gaze on Your kingly bright-ness, so our faces display Your likeness;
Ever-changing from glory to glory: mirrored here, may our lives tell Your story.
Shine on me, shine on me.

GRAHAM KENDRICK © 1987 MAKE WAY MUSIC

SOAKING IN GOD'S LOVE JER 31:3; ROM 5:5; 1 JN 3:1; ROM 8:38-39.

The Lord said, I have loved you with an everlasting love;

I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.

God's love has been poured out into our hearts

through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!

And that is what we are!

I am convinced that nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

A CALL TO LOVE: 1 JOHN 4: 7, 9-11

Dear friends, let us love one another

for love comes from God.

This is how God showed his love among us

he sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

This is love: not that we loved God,

but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Dear friends, since God so loved us,

we also ought to love one another.

THE LORD'S PRAYER: *You are invited to pray in your own heart language*

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,

your will be done on earth as in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins,

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours

now and for ever and ever. Amen.

FAMILY TIME: One another

(There will be an offering taken during the following song, and after the song the children will leave us for their own groups)

MP 734: (3 verses)

We really want to thank you, Lord,

We really want to bless Your name,

Hallelujah! Jesus is our King!

We thank You, Lord, for Your gift to us,

Your life so rich beyond compare,

The gift of Your body here on earth

Of which we sing and share.

We thank You, Lord, for our life together,

To live and move in the love of Christ,

Tenderness which sets us free

To serve You with our lives.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him all creatures here below,
Praise Him above, you heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

ED BAGGETT © 1974, 1975 CELEBRATION/ KINGSWAY'S THANKYOU MUSIC.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

BIBLE READING 1 Matthew 22:37-39 and John 13:34-35

BIBLE READING 2: Romans 12:9-16

BPW 470/MP1:

A new commandment,
I give unto you,
That you love one another
As I have loved you,
That you love one another
As I have loved you.
By this shall all men know
That you are My disciples,
If you have love one for another.
By this shall all men know
That you are My disciples,
If you have love one for another.

DAVE BILBROUGH © 1977 KINGSWAY'S THANKYOU MUSIC.

SERMON: LOVE ONE ANOTHER (Romans 12: 9-16)

Good morning, my dear Church family. Today we continue to celebrate Epiphany – a time when the light of Christ was revealed to the world. As we reflect on this season of revelation and renewal, let's focus on our theme which is timeliness and significant "We Are Family" and we should **LOVE ONE ANOTHER**.

The Church is not just somewhere we like to go, but it is WHO WE ARE. In the book of Romans 12:9-16, Paul depicts a clear picture of what it means to live as a spiritual family member, and today, we are going to explore more deeply about the meaning of **LOVE ONE ANOTHER**.

1. Love must be GENUINE

Paul begins by saying, "Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good" (Romans 12:9). Greek word for sincere here is *onupokritos*, meaning "without hypocrisy." True Christian love is not performative or self-serving, it flows from a heart transformed by Christ Himself.

Jesus exemplified sincere love when He reached out to the leper (Mark 1:40-42), embraced the outcast woman at the well (John 4:7-26) and wept for Lazarus before raising him from the dead (John 11:35). We can see His love was not selective or superficial. It was compassionate and

sacrificial. We are called to this level of **agape love**, which is true and without expectations of return.

2. Devoted to one another in love

Paul urges believers to be “devoted to another in love. Honour one another above yourselves” (Romans 12:10) This echoes Jesus’ Words in John 13: 34-35, “A new command I give you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

It is a kind of selfless love. It is the love of the Good Samaritans (Luke 10: 25-37), who saw the wounded man and did not walk away. It is the love of Ruth, who chose to stay with Naomi even when she had no obligation to do so (Ruth 1: 16-17). This devotion, this kind of love compels us to put others first, to seek their well-being, and to bear their burdens (Galatians 6:2)

3. Love in Action, Serving and Rejoicing Together

Paul continues, “Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer” (Romans 12:11-12) Love is not just a feeling or a sentiment; it is an ACTION.

James reminds us, “Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead” (James 2:17) Out of love, we stand up and serve in our deeds – feeding the hungry like we buy from the Fair Trade table every second Sunday of the month, comforting the grieving such as we lend a shoulder and pray for those who are distressed with bereavement, providing shelter to homeless like our Church which participates in Bed4Nights.

4. Loving Through Hospitality

Paul encourages believers to “share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality” Generosity is a tangible expression of love. In James 2:15-16, we are reminded that faith without works is dead. In biblical times, hospitality was a sacred duty and it remains a powerful expression of love today.

The early Church embodied this principle in Acts 2: 44-47, where believers shared everything and met other’s needs. Jesus himself welcomes sinners and dined with tax collectors, as you can read from Luke 19:1-10. Love invites and includes – at Church, we have formed the Welcome Team, but it should not be seen as a duty only confined to the team members. Every one of us, as followers of Jesus, should extend our warm welcome to whoever steps into our Church.

5. Love in the face of Adversity

Paul also challenges us “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse” (Romans 12:14) Loving those who love us is easy, but Christ calls us to a higher level of love – loving even our enemies (Matthew 5:44)

Stephen, the first Christian martyr, exemplified this love when he prayed for those who stoned him: “Lord, do not hold this sin against them” (Acts 7:60). Jesus himself, on the Cross, cried out, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34) Can we take Paul’s challenge and really embody such a radical love? A love that forgives, prays for, and seeks peace even with those who make us feel bad or even hurt us deeply.

6. Love is Empathy

Paul calls us to “Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn” (Romans 12:15) This verse reminds us to empathise, a key component of agape love. When a peer gets a promotion, do we celebrate with them truthfully, or do we allow envy to creep in? When someone is grieving, do we sit with them in their pain, or do we simply offer shallow platitudes?

True love enters into both the joys and sorrows of others, just as Jesus did when he wept with Mary and Martha (John 11:35)

7. Love is Humility

Paul reminds us to “Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited” (Romans 12:16) Harmony is unity in diversity. It requires us to be humble, to be willing to listen and to commit to peace.

In Philippians 2:3-4, again Paul reminds us to “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others”.

To conclude, loving one another is not optional. It is the defining mark of a follower of Christ (John 13:35). Let commit ourselves to being the kind of family that reflects God's love to the world. As we go forth, let us reflect on the followings:

- a) Are we loving sincerely, without hypocrisy?
- b) Are we honouring others above ourselves?
- c) Are we serving, giving, and welcoming with open hearts?
- d) Are we blessing even those who oppose us?

Let's pray:

May the love of Christ so fill our hearts that it overflows into our words, actions, and relationships. May our Church be a place where Your love shines brightly. Help us to love one another sincerely, to share each other's joys and burdens, and to live in harmony. Teach us to honour one another, to practise hospitality, and to live as Your children. Let the world see and experience the love of God through us. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Song BPW471/MP54

*Bind us together, Lord,
Bind us together
With cords that cannot be broken.
Bind us together, Lord,
Bind us together,
Bind us together with love.*

There is only one God,
There is only one King;
There is only one Body,
That is why we sing:

Made for the glory of God,
Purchased by His precious Son;

Born with the right to be clean,
For Jesus the victory has won.

You are the family of God,
You are the promise divine;
You are God's chosen desire,
You are the glorious new wine.

BOB GILLMAN © 1977 KINGSWAY'S THANKYOU MUSIC

INTERCESSION: – Mary Brockington

Lord God, Our Heavenly Father, we dare to bring our concerns and requests to you because you are our Father and you care for us, just as you command us to love one another and care for one another.

We know that you do care not just for us, each of us, as your own, individual children, but also for all the human family which you created and love. Sometimes we despair at the way some members of your human family treat other members of that family and pray for peace in those areas of our world where there is fighting and enmity. We bring before you particularly the people of the Middle East in Gaza, Israel and Palestine; and also those parts of Europe where there is conflict, especially Russia and Ukraine.

We know that we who are here today to worship you have received your blessing, so now we ask for that blessing for those we love who are not here today, those who are away visiting family in other parts of the world and those who have moved away to make a new home elsewhere.

We bring you our prayers in the name of your blessed son, our saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen

Hymn BPW503/MP449:

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven to earth come down,
Fix in us your humble dwelling,
All your faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, you are all compassion,
boundless love that makes us whole;
Visit us with your salvation,
Enter every trembling soul.

Come, almighty to deliver,
Let us all your grace receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more your temples leave.
You we would be always blessing,
Serve you as your hosts above,
Pray, and praise you without ceasing,
Glory in your perfect love.

Finish then your new creation,
Pure and sinless let us be;
Let us see your great salvation
Perfect in eternity:
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place;
Till we cast our crowns before you,
Lost in wonder, love and praise.

CHARLES WESLEY (1707-88)

THE BLESSING:

May you live in love as God lives in you.
May you have power to know God's love that surpasses knowledge.
May you be filled to the measure of the fulness of God.
Go then in love to serve God with joy;
and may the blessing of the God of truth and love be with you today and every day.
Amen.

THE GRACE:

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen.**

Church Information:

Tuesday 25th February – Zoom Prayer Meeting 8pm

Wednesday 26th – Renew 10.30 Bible Study 12.15 iCaf 2.00

Thursday 27th – Toddlers 10.30 Bible Study 10.30

Friday 28th – Ping Pong 5.00 Iranians Meal and Bible Study 7.00

Sunday 9th March – Baptismal Service and Church Members Meeting

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QR Code for Offering:

