

**Dwelling in the Word**

Prayerfully read Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and ask:

1. What words, phrases, or images stood out to you?
2. What does this say about what God desires to accomplish in you?
3. How could you respond to what God says in this passage?

Beginning the Conversation

1. Early in every year we as a church review some aspect of our Mission Statement and Values and renew our Church Covenant together (see reverse). Are there commitments or goals that you review and renew regularly?
2. What are some of the main things you give your affections to? (What are some things you would say you love?)

Digging Deeper *(pick some of the following questions to discuss as a group)*

1. That the God of the Bible loves humanity and desires his followers to reciprocate this love stands in contrast to virtually all ancient faiths. Followers are to love God with all of their (1) heart; (2) soul/self; (3) strength; and (4) mind (Deut 6:5; Matt 22:37; Mark 12:29-30; Luke 10:27). What are some ways you can express each aspect of this love?
2. In the Bible, love for God is most often expressed as obedience to God's commands (read Deut 11:22; John 14:23; 14:15; 1John 5:3). What does this say about our responsibility to know the Scriptures, but also live them out?
3. The Song of Songs depicts a passionate love relationship. While this today is (rightly) understood as the love between two humans, there is a longstanding tradition of understanding it as depicting the love between God and his people or Christ and the church. Does the latter way of reading Song of Songs help or hinder your love relationship with God? As an exercise, try reading some passages like Song 8:6-7 as if it is describing God's love for you and vice versa.
4. While the command to love God and others (and even one's enemies!) is a high expectation, the good news is that God is not only the source and inspiration of our love, he also enables us to love (see John 15:9-10; Rom 5:5; 1John 4:7-8, 19; Jude 1:21). What are some of the ways you can "abide" in God's love (cf. John 15) and allow God to pour his love into your heart through the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom 5:5)?

Living it Out

1. What is one way you can show God's love to another this week?
2. The Greenfield Church Covenant notes four general ways a follower of Christ can express their love and affection for God: living one's life as an act of worship; spending time in prayer and other spiritual practices; reading and studying Scripture; and faithfully stewarding one's resources. Is there something connected with one of these areas you could engage in this week that would help you continue growing in your affection for God?

Greenfield Community Church — Who We Are



Mission Statement (Approved by membership June 3, 2018)

Christ followers on mission with God and growing in our love for God, one another, and neighbours.

Values Statement (Approved by membership February 4, 2024)

We strive to be a church that:

- Follows Jesus, submitting to the Spirit and growing in relationship with the Father through acts of worship and service.
- Embraces Scripture as our foundation for theological reflection with grace and humility; discerning the essentials for faith and life.
- Lives life together guided by love for one another, joyfully practicing generous hospitality, and pursuing reconciliation with God and one another in a diverse and egalitarian community.
- Shares Christ's love with our neighbours and engages in local and global partnerships, characterized by mercy and justice.

Membership Covenant (Approved by membership 26 May 2019)

We have been led by the Spirit of God to confess Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour. We believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as the one-and-only true God, who has called us into relationship with himself through Jesus and into relationship with one another as Greenfield Community Church.

Now, before God, we freely covenant together to join God on mission, following Jesus in a life of discipleship as we put our hope in the Spirit's transforming work in us and in our neighbourhoods.

I will strive to:

Grow in my love for God by

- seeking God's kingdom above all else and living all of my life humbly as an act of worship
- engaging regularly in prayer and other spiritual practices
- knowing my place in God's Story as rooted in the reading and study of Scripture
- practicing responsible stewardship of the time, talent, and treasure God has entrusted to me

Grow in my love for one another by

- committing to live life together while embracing our unity and diversity in Christ
- using my spiritual gifts to build up this body of believers
- serving and caring for one another with hospitality and meeting practical needs
- maintaining grace-filled, healthy relationships with mutual accountability and a commitment to reconciliation

Grow in my love for my neighbours by

- living out the gospel of the kingdom of God in deed and word
- engaging with those in my neighbourhood and my networks
- acting with integrity, respect, hospitality, and compassion in all my relationships
- seeking justice, peace and well-being for all, especially the poor and marginalized, both locally and globally

And we promise this all for the glory of God and for the sake of his kingdom in our neighbourhoods, city, nation, and world.

We commit to reviewing and renewing this Covenant as a congregation annually.



The Affections of Greenfield

A Sermon Series on our 3 Loves

“God knows how much I love you and long for you with the affection of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:8).



Growing in Our Affection for God

January 11, 2026
Pastor Tyler

Our Church Covenant



I will strive to... Grow in my love for God by

- seeking God’s kingdom above all else and living all of my life humbly as an act of worship
- engaging regularly in prayer and other spiritual practices
- knowing my place in God’s Story as rooted in the reading and study of Scripture
- practicing responsible stewardship of the time, talent, and treasure God has entrusted to me

What is “Affection”?



The more emotional side of love.

- “In Paul’s view, both divine and human love are *matters of the heart* as well as the will. Christian love is emotional—though not sentimental—as well as active” (Michael Gorman, “Foreword,” viii).

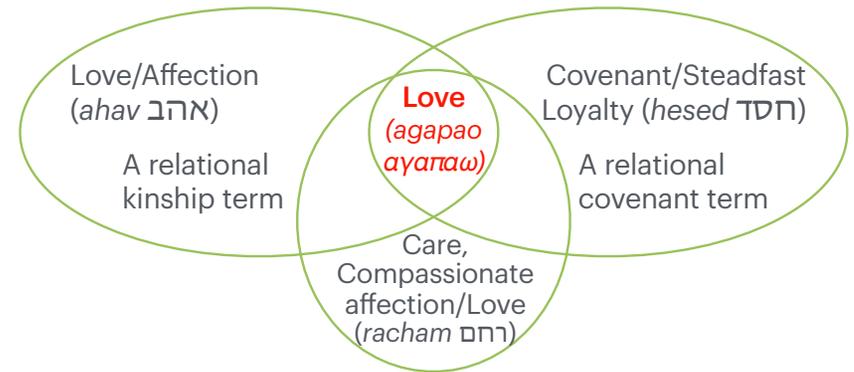
(Really) Old Time Religion



In ancient religions, the notion of “loving” the gods was not an expectation, nor did they “love” their devotees.

- “The notion that there is one true and transcendent God, and that this God loves the world and humanity, may have become subsequently so much a familiar notion... that we cannot easily realize how *utterly strange, even ridiculous*, it was in the Roman era” (Larry Hurtado, *Destroyer of the Gods*, 64).

The Language of Love & Affection



Love & Affection for God



“Hear, O Israel: Yahweh is our God, Yahweh alone. You shall love (ahav אהב) Yahweh your God with all your heart, and with all your self, and with all your strength” (Deuteronomy 6:4-5).

שמע
ישראל
יהוה
אלהינו
יהוה
אחד

Love & Affection for God



“Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment” (Matthew 22:37-38; cf. Mark 12:29-30; Luke 10:27).

Love & Affection for God



The **command** to love God expressed in Scripture:

- Is our most basic response to the prior love of God.
- Expresses exclusive affection & devotion to God.
- All Consuming: Heart, Soul/Self, Strength, and Mind.

Love & Affection for God



Love and affection for God is most often expressed as obedience:

- "... walking in all his ways and holding fast to him" (Deuteronomy 11:22).
- "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching" (John 14:23; cf. 14:15).

Love & The Song of Songs



"The Greatest of Songs" (שיר השירים)

- Modern interpretations have rightly recovered the idea that it is a celebration of passionate human love and affection.
- But there is longstanding recognition that it also symbolizes and *points to a love that is purer than our own*: God's love for his people and/or Christ's love for the church.

Love & The Song of Songs



"Let his banner over me be love" (Song 2:4).

"I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine" (Song 2:16; 6:3).

Love & The Song of Songs



“Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot sweep it away. If one were to give all the wealth of one’s house for love, it would be utterly scorned” (Song 8:6-7).

Invitation



God loves us passionately, endlessly, sacrificially!

- “God **so loved** the world that he gave his one and only Son...” (John 3:16).
- Parable of the Loving Father (Luke 15:11-32).



Invitation



The Source of our Love & Affection is the Triune God

- “We love because God first loved us” (1John 4:19).
- If we want to love well, we need to be inspired, empowered, and transformed by the love of God.