

BETTY CASAGRANDA



Introduction

The congregation and minister of St James would like to express their sincere condolences to Betty's family, and we hope that these words may be a comfort to them and create a memory to who Betty was. The Lord bless you and keep you.

Gathering/ Call

The grace and the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all.

The Bible says: For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

We have gathered here in this sad hour to take our leave of Elizabeth Casagranda, whom everybody knew as Betty, to remember her life and to commend her to God's grace,

We grieve for Betty because a loved and loving sister, mother and grandmother is no longer with us, we remember her with gratitude for all she meant to us and we take comfort in the thought that Betty may be beyond our reach, but is not, as I firmly believe beyond God's loving care, as was promised to us through Jesus Christ when he said: I will be with you to the end of time. Not everyone who would like to be here can be with us in these difficult times, but we know that their thoughts are with us in this hour.

Prayer

Gracious God,

You have promised that your unfailing love will follow us every day, that you will be our comforter and our saviour. In remembering this and in bringing our loss and grief before you we also remember Betty's life with gratitude for all that she was to those who knew and loved her and we give you thanks for a fulfilled life full of love for her family, full of laughter even in difficult times. May it be a comfort to all that Betty was precious to those around her here on earth and that she is still precious to you beyond this life.

We thank you for the memories we share of a life that was valued and loved, for childhood memories of camping holidays in Cheddar, for a last perfect Christmas, for a busy and varied work life both at home and in employment.

We thank you for the love and warmth Betty gave and received within her family life, for the brothers and sisters she grew up with, for the husband and son and daughters in law she cared for, for the home she gave to her husband, son and grandchild.

We thank you for Betty's life and for the eternal life you have promised her from now on at your side through your son Jesus , where she will find eternal peace, peace that this world cannot give, In this sad hour let us all remember that you have sent your son Jesus Christ, so none

of us is lost, that you have sent him to provide a place for each of us, let us live in the assurance that Betty has now found a place in your house, as we all will.

Loving God,

You know that times of grief and loss can disrupt our lives, overwhelm us and leave us in pain. May we be able to seek and find your comfort in times of sadness and grief and may we be assured that you keep us and all our family, living and departed, in your loving hand.

Loving God, we know that you have loved us before we were born and that your son has given his life as a ransom for many. We entrust Betty and ourselves to your loving and forgiving care in this time of sadness and grief. For this we pray in Jesus name. AMEN

Music: All things bright and beautiful

Reading:

Reading OT: Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the mountains—
 where does my help come from?
² My help comes from the LORD,
 the Maker of heaven and earth.
³ He will not let your foot slip—
 he who watches over you will not slumber;
⁴ indeed, he who watches over Israel
 will neither slumber nor sleep.
⁵ The LORD watches over you—
 the LORD is your shade at your right hand;
⁶ the sun will not harm you by day,
 nor the moon by night.
⁷ The LORD will keep you from all harm—
 he will watch over your life;
⁸ the LORD will watch over your coming and going
 both now and forevermore.

Reading NT: Gospel of John 14

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God^[a]; believe also in me. ² My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going.” ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Eulogy

It is a great sadness for us that we cannot take our leave as we normally would, that some who would like to be here cannot, but we will still honour Betty's life, a life that was precious to us and is precious to God now and so let us take a moment to remember our time with Betty, the respect and love she gained throughout her life, and then let us commend her to God's grace.

Jesus said: I am going to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you, I shall come again and take you to myself so that where I am you shall be also, and so we take our leave of Betty in the assurance that she is now with Christ Jesus, as he has promised to her and to all of us.

And yet, it is hard for all who loved her, for all who accompanied her on the path of life, journeyed with her through her time on earth, took the steps on the road of time with her, may those be many or few, that she is now beyond our reach and so let us take the time to share the sorrow we feel for a person who was important to all who have come here and let us take the time to share the memories of who Betty was. Elizabeth Casagrande, who was better known as Betty, was born on 29 December 1937 in Douglas in South Lanarkshire to George, a coalminer and his wife Catherine and grew up there with her five siblings, to all of whom she maintained a close relationship. As a young woman Betty's passion was dancing and before illness struck, she was remarkably fit. Betty kept up her passion for Jive and Rock n' Roll in her later years and still went to the dancing when she was already

diagnosed with Motoneuron Disease and so it is no surprise that it is through dancing that she met a dashing young man from Muirkirk called Joseph at a dance event in Lanark. It is through Joseph's work that the married couple ended up in Ayr and they lived in McCall Avenue for forty years. Betty's pride and joy was her son Joe, who was integrated in the local community through BBs and Bible Class at St James church opposite their street and through a Youth Club, for which he was a founding member and through which they raised money for the Princes Trust. The little family was close knit, not least thanks to Betty, whose first thought morning and night was her husband and her son and who to the last was the glue of the family, which of course included later on granddaughter Kim and in which Duke, the Yorkshire Terrier must not be forgotten. For fifteen years the three of them went to the same place on holidays, a camping site near Cheddar in England, a place that is connected with many happy memories. Only when Joe had grown up Joseph and Betty ventured further to sunny places like Italy or Spain.

The contact to Joe, however, was kept up throughout Betty's life, through calls every morning and evening for instance and she loved Joe and Kim, no matter what. At home Betty loved her telly, and enjoyed particularly her Westerns and her soaps, and when the latter were on, no disruption was allowed. Anyone who called or phoned at that time did so at their peril.

The year Joseph passed away, was a hard year for Betty. Not only did she have to deal with the loss of her husband, but her first daughter-in-

law, Anna, also passed away and the two women were close. In the same year Betty also had to deal with her own diagnosis of Motoneuron Disease, and so it is not an exaggeration to say, that life was challenging for her.

Betty remained, however, her own unselfish self and welcomed Jacqui into her family as she had done with Anna. For Joe's 50s she gave Joe and Jacqui the money for a holiday of a lifetime in Florida, even though she herself was unable to go and she kept on spoiling Joe and his family into his adult life.

Betty was never idle and from the Bell in Lanark to the local corner shop at McCall Avenue or the local garage, she kept on working and never stopped until her illness forced her into early retirement and eventually to exchange her home – the stairs of which proved to be an unsurmountable obstacle – for Newton Park Court, where she was one of the longest staying residents. Betty was popular at Newton Park Court and retained her sense of humour, which had served her throughout her life, to the last. Whoever came into Betty's new home was greeted with a laugh or a smile or – rarely – with a withering death stare.

It was hard for those who cared for Betty to see her health deteriorate, and so it may be a comfort to all who knew her, that the family was allowed to say their good-byes, however hard that may seem just now, that they can cherish the memories of a last perfect Christmas and it is my sincere hope that I can share with you the comfort that Betty is now

in a place where frailty and suffering can no longer touch her, that she is now in God's good hands as we all will be one day. AMEN

Loving God,

We give you thanks for a life of love and laughter, for the privilege to have known in Betty a lady full of love to her family, for a lady who was strong and resilient. We give you thanks for a lady who will be remembered with love and respect and in giving thanks we pray for all who were closest to Betty.

We hold in prayer Jean and Graham, who knew Betty the longest grew up with her, shared her memories and in this sad hour we honour the memory of Joseph, David, Pearl, Isabel and Anna. May you grant them all the peace that only you can give here on this earth and beyond.

We pray for Joe and Jacqui, who have the greatest reason to be thankful to Betty for all that she has done for them, for her unselfish dedication to her family, for the memories they have made together.

May they find the courage to grieve and when the time is right, the strength to let go.

We hold in prayer Kim who shares her parents' pain, who lost a grandmother, whose love cannot be replaced, who will have tears to cry

and memories to cherish. And we remember all of Betty's friends new and old.

May they find peace and consolation in you and in those they love.

We pray for all the staff at Newton Park Court and Crosshouse hospital, who tirelessly care for residents and patients like Betty, who feel the pain, when they have to say goodbye. May they keep their strength and their commitment, so they can continue to serve their community.

For all this we pray in Jesus' name. AMEN

Committal:

Do not be afraid, I am the first and the last says the Lord and I am the living one. I was dead and now I am alive for evermore.

Elizabeth Casagranda is committed into the hands of God in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ who died was buried and rose again for us and is alive and reigns for evermore

Music: Abide with me

Closing Prayer

Loving God,

As we turn from this place to face the world

As we return to our places of work and leisure, we pray for ourselves,

We acknowledge before you that our hearts are sore, and our wounds are raw

Grant us the courage to grieve, grant us the courage to acknowledge our loss

We come to you in the knowledge that you have taken Betty to yourself. May our tears of loss turn into smiles of happy memories, in the trust that Betty is in your loving care

Let us look to you in hope, the hope that you have prepared a place for all of us, so we may find your comfort and your peace.

In Jesus name we pray AMEN

Benediction

And now the grace and the peace of our Lord, who so loved the world that he gave his only son for our redemption guard you and guide you as you go from this place. And the almighty God, father son and holy spirit be with us all – AMEN

