

FOCUS

Portsoy Church Magazine



June—July 2020

Letter from the Locum



I hope you are doing ok, at this time? As I begin this I am being optimistic and assuming that by my next letter in two months time, the government's lockdown measures will have begun to be eased. But if that is the case, how will we feel especially if we have been confined to our own homes in recent weeks? And if there is still an element of the coronavirus around, as we are told there still will be. All-in-all will we feel that returning to something resembling 'normality' will be like a step into the unknown?

With that in mind I've been thinking about Abraham, one of the faithful men of God in the Old Testament who also literally stepped into the unknown. He was well off having just inherited his deceased father's property and would have been very settled into his own family life, with Sarah his wife....but all that was to change. God said to him: 'leave your country, your people and your household and go to a land I will show you.' So God was sending them to a new land, into the unknown. But Abraham had the faith to obey.

Eventually they reached what became known as the 'Promised Land,' the territory which became the land of Israel and where God promised Abraham that he would be the forefather of many generations. But there seemed to be a problem with that because Abraham and Sarah were childless after many years of marriage, so where would those future descendants come from? Abraham, as a man of prayer, approached God about the situation. God then prompted him to go outside and look up at the stars above and count them, 'if indeed you can!' God then said to him: 'so shall your offspring be.' Abraham, we are told

believed the Lord. What about us?

Maybe like the settled life of Abraham, we've gradually got settled into lockdown life? And so do we see the future, after lockdown, as something of a new land to be entered?

Uncertainty is never a comfortable feeling. And two things you hear at the moment are people express how this is a time we've never experienced the like of before and also that they are fearful. Therefore what we all need is someone who does know the future, as well as someone more powerful and more able than us, who we can trust. Abraham believed God could be both - will you?

Best wishes

Steve Hay

To contact me ring 07926 773607 or just let your elder know.

PS

Here are some, I'd say encouraging, statistics I came across recently:

One snapshot of life under lockdown:

A recent survey found 44% of UK adults are praying in the current coronavirus situation. Indeed Google reported recently that 'prayer' was the number one item entered in their search engine. The website eden.co.uk reported a 55% increase in bible sales during April.

So if we pray and read the bible we are part of a growing trend!

Covid-19 Virus: Update

As indicated in the last Focus the Session had put in place a number of arrangements to deal with the exceptional circumstances arising from the current Covid-19 crisis. Here is an update.

Church Services

Sunday services are still cancelled and are unlikely to start before 12 July at the earliest. Churches may be able to open for private prayer but not before 18 June. We await guidance on arrangements to permit this and will try to facilitate if there is a demand. Funerals are still not permitted in Church and this is unlikely to change before 9 July. We realise that this is difficult for people wishing to pay their respects but hope that there is understanding in these very unusual times.

Church Family News

CFN has been replaced temporarily by a weekly Church Bulletin containing a message from Steve Hay, our usual weekly prayer topic together with other information. A link to the new bulletin can be found on our website on the Church Family News page. A copy is also being posted on the notice board outside the Church Centre. For those who do not have access to the internet and do not wish to leave their homes Steve Hay is delivering copies to homes. Please contact Steve Hay on 07926 773607 if you would like a copy delivered.

Social contact

Elders are available if you wish to talk about any issues or just have a news. Elders have been contacting people in their district to offer this opportunity. However Steve Hay is more than happy for you to ring him at any time to talk.

Video of Steve's service

To keep you in touch with Church Services we are producing a video of Steve's weekly service with his suggested hymns. There is a "weekly video" page on the website where you can find it together with previous weeks' services. We also produce a DVD of the service for

those with a DVD player and will continue to provide a CD of the service for those who do not have a DVD player. Steve is also distributing those so let him know if you would like to receive either a DVD or CD.

Tae a Virus

Twa months ago, we didna ken yer name or ocht about ye
But lots of things have changed since then, I really must salute ye
Yer spreading rate is quite intense, yer feeding like a gannet
Disruption caused is so immense, ye've shaken oor wee planet
Corona used tae be a beer, they garnished it wae limes
But noo it's filled us awe wae fear, these days, are scary times.

Nae shakin hawns, or peckin lips, it's whit they awe advise
But scrub them weel, richt tae the tips, that's how we'll awe survive
Just stay inside , the hoose, ye bide nae sneakin oot for strolls
Just check the lavvy every hoor and stock-take, your, loo rolls
Our holidays have been pit aff noo that's the Jet2 patter
Pit oan yer thermals, have a laugh and paddle ' doon the waater '
Canary isles, no for a while nae need for suntan cream
And awe because o this wee bug we ken tae be..19

The boredom surely will set in, but have a read, or doodle
Or plan yer menu for the month wi 95 pot noodles.

When these run oot, just look aboot a change, it would be nice
We've beans and pasta by the ton and twenty stane o rice
So dinny think yell wipe us oot, aye true, a few have died
Bubonic, bird flu, and Tb they came, they left, they tried
Ye might be gallus noo ma freen as ye jump fae cup tae cup
But when we get oor vaccine made yer number will be up.

With thanks to Willie Sinclair

Church Centre Development - Help still needed

Just a quick reminder that the Church still has two loans totalling £25,000 to repay over the next 5 years. Loan repayments total £5,588 per year. This is in addition to our ordinary expenditure.

A number of members have very generously pledged regular monthly or annual sums over the next 5 years to help to repay these loans. However there is still a significant shortfall in pledges to cover these repayments. We are proposing to run a number of fundraisers once we are able to. But it would help greatly, if you haven't already done so, if you would commit to paying a regular amount over the next five years either monthly or annually specifically for the redevelopment fund. If you feel able to help us meet these final costs please contact Ishbel Mackinnon Tel: 01261 842545 or email:

ishbel.mackinnon@btinternet.com

*Thank
you*

Funerals

27 March	Cathy Seivwright
3 April	Maureen Munro
1 May	Bob McGregor

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Portsoy Church Fairtrade

Thank you so much to all who have continued to support our Fairtrade "stall" during lockdown. Things are still ticking over, and earlier in May I was able to send a cheque for £100 to Traidcraft Exchange from our Fairtrade account. When I think how hard lockdown and the coronavirus crisis will have been for those in the places where so many were already wondering where their next meal was to come from, I am really grateful for the opportunity to help in even a small way. And it's all you faithful Fairtrade supporters that give me that opportunity. So please do keep the orders coming. Sometimes items are, inevitably, out of stock, or no longer available, but it's worth trying me first! As always, I am very happy to deliver your purchases to you. Phone 01261 843125 or email:

margaret.whewell@btopenworld.com

Just before I stop - anyone for socks? Our beautiful bamboo & cotton socks are at the special price of only £5.00 per pair, which is a bargain for such comfortable footwear. And for summer the "No Show" socks on page 66 of the catalogue might be good for wearing with trainers or summery shoes.



If you would like a catalogue to look through, let me know and I'll pop one through your door, or visit traidcraftshop.co.uk to browse, but order through me to get free delivery and still support our stall.

Thanks again, and love, Margaret.



Prayer Focus

"The Lord protects and defends me; I trust in him. He gives me help and makes me glad; I praise him with joyful songs." Psalm 28:7

Snowstorms, earthquakes, tornadoes, cyclones, erupting volcanoes have affected various parts of our world from time to time. These, when they occur, causes disruption and suffering to many. Disastrous though they may be only to the people there, and not to the rest of the world, feel any physical effects from them.

Tragically, we are now in a terrible situation which really does affect virtually everyone the whole world over with the onset of the coronavirus. How many of us would ever have thought that, even in our wildest dreams, such a thing would cause worldwide devastation, loss of life and hardship?. It has caused anxiety, worry about how we will cope, what the outcome will be and how long it will last. It leaves us feeling that everything is spiralling out of the control of man.

But, there is a greater Power, the Creator and controller of these terrible incidents—God.

through the storms of life, we have a loving Father who cares for us, supplies all our needs, comforts and heals and in whom we can put our trust. For this we need to give Him all the praise and all the glory. Certainly God is powerful and is to be feared and respected but He is also there to give us rest and safety and we can enjoy feeling secure and calm in His presence and

we need not be afraid.

Father God, when we face difficult circumstances which invade our lives and remind us of our powerlessness, may You help us to remember that we have You, our all Powerful Lord who works on behalf of all who trust You. In our need may we rely more and more upon Your strength, comfort and peace. Lord, please bring into our lives the power of Your love—the love that is wide enough to surround the whole world.

May Your power be in those places where we are most helpless and defenceless.

Amen

A Wee Thank you!

DEAR ALL PORTSBY CHURCH FAMILY
AND OLWEN FOR COMING IN PAST
WITH A VERY LOVELY CARD AND A BIG
BUNCH OF TULIPS AND GOODIES IN A
SPARKLY BAG FOR OUR DIAMOND WEDDING
ANNIVERSARY. VERY MUCH APPRECIATED.
HOPE IT WON'T BE TOO LONG, WHEN WE ALL
CAN MEET UP AGAIN. A BIG THANKYOU
TO YOU ALL.

GOD BLESS

FROM FRANK AND HELENOR
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Wee Larder on Aird Green

The wee larder and library situated outside the library on Aird Green was built by Graeme Barclay and beautifully painted by Heather Barclay. It came out of discussions the Portsoy Area Action Team volunteers were having about creating an outdoor community space to share food and swap books and puzzles. Initially the phone box on Church Road was considered, but it just didn't fit what was wanted.

The ideas behind the wee larder and library are about community mutual aid. Anyone from the community can add to or take from it, no need to ask as it is there for us all. If you're bored and need a book, come and see what's there, if you need a tin of beans and the COOP is closed, don't be shy and go without. If you've puzzled your puzzle until you can puzzle it no more, come and share it with someone who will love it a little longer. The important thing whether we take or leave something is we make good use of it so we all benefit.



Church General Finances: Covid-19

The Church is unlikely to be open again until mid-July at the earliest. However as was said in the last magazine during this time we still have our ongoing overhead costs of running the Church. It is very important therefore that we maintain our income from your generous donations during this difficult time. Thank you to those who have made arrangements for your regular donations to continue perhaps by changing to standing orders or by sending cheques or cash to Ishbel. It has been very helpful.

If you have not done so it would help greatly if you would consider helping in this way. If you wish to change your method of giving please contact Ishbel Mackinnon Tel: 01261 842545 or by email: ishbel.mackinnon@btinternet.com Don't forget if you are a tax payer and fill in a gift aid form the Church can claim, from HMRC, an additional 25% on whatever you donate. Gift aid forms can be obtained from Ishbel.

If you would prefer to continue giving by envelope or open plate can we please ask you, as a number already do, to put on one side, for each week we are closed, an amount you would normally donate and let us have the donations when we reopen. Thank you for your support and please stay safe.

FOCUS DEADLINE

The next edition of Focus will cover August—September 2020. Please let Johanna Sturrock have articles and any photographs for inclusion no later than Sunday 18 July. unicornathome@gmail.com.

Thursdays in Black

I was recently alerted to this campaign through our Guild Weekly News. I would like to make as many people as possible aware of it, and invite them to wear black on Thursdays to show their solidarity with the fight against all forms of violence including domestic violence which has been of particular concern during this time of lockdown.

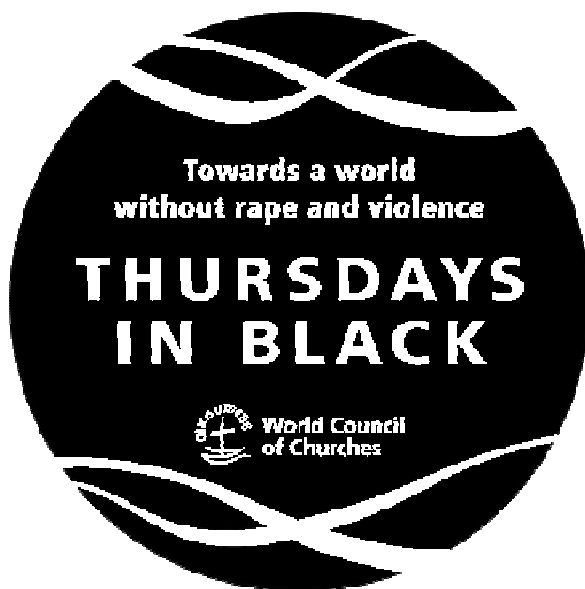
Some of us in Portsoy are already wearing black on Thursdays, which coincides at present with the evening of clapping for the NHS, so look out for any of your neighbours who are showing their support, and consider joining us.

Thursdays in Black grew out of the World Council of Churches (WCC) Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-1998), in which the stories of rape as a weapon of war, gender injustice, abuse, violence, and many tragedies that grow outward from such violence became all the more visible. But what also became visible were women's resilience, and their personal efforts to resist such violations.

The campaign was inspired by:

- The **Mothers of the Disappeared** in Buenos Aires, Argentina who on Thursdays protested at the Plaza de Mayo, against the disappearance of their children during the violent dictatorship.
 - The **Women in Black** in Israel and Palestine, who even now protest against war and violence.
 - **Women in Rwanda and Bosnia** who were protesting against the use of rape as a weapon of war during the genocide.
- Black Sash** movement in South Africa protesting against apartheid and its use of violence against black people.

The campaign is simple but profound. **Wear black on Thursdays**, and at other times wear a pin to declare you are part of the global movement resisting attitudes and practices that permit rape and violence. Show your respect for men and women who are resilient in the face of injustice and violence. Encourage others to join you. Often black has been used with negative racial connotations. In this campaign black is used as a colour of resistance and resilience. (If you would like a pin to wear to show your support they are available from Margaret Whewell (01261 843125 at £1.65 each.)



MISSION STATEMENT

We aim to serve God daily through praise, worship and friendship and
serve our
community offering hope, direction and purpose by sharing the love of
Jesus Christ.

"WE LOVE BECAUSE GOD FIRST LOVED US" 1 John 4 :19



Please contact Olwen Christie (Pastoral Care Convener) on 01261 843 680 if you know of anyone who is ill at home or in hospital (especially Dr Gray's in Elgin as we are not notified).

Community Diary:

A diary of local events has been placed in the Portsoy Ice Cream Shop for use by everyone. This will enable event organisers to check that the date and time of their event will not clash with another already planned.

Please pass this on to any other local groups. To work effectively everyone will need to check the diary and ensure their own event is entered in it.

A Christian book lending library in the Session Room at Portsoy Church is temporarily unavailable

We hope to have the books brought down to the Church Centre in due course



PRAYER CIRCLE

Name:

(Not necessary)

Please pray for:

.....

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Please place completed slip in box at church door or hand to the minister or Edith Stuart.

Directory

Interim Moderator	Rev Kevin Gruer Tel: 01888 563850 E-mail: kgruer@churchofscotland.org.uk
Joint Session Clerks	Mrs Yvonne McKay, Bayview, Sandend. Tel: 07592 395 581 E-mail: Yvonne@therealmckay.co.uk Mrs Joan Morrison, 11 Cullen Street, Portsoy. Tel: 01261 843021 E-mail: joanmorrison011@btinternet.com
Treasurer	Mrs Ishbel Mackinnon, 17 Durn Road, Portsoy. Tel: 01261 842545 or 07969 697362 E-mail: ishbel.mackinnon@btinternet.com
Gift Aid Convener	Mr Ian Whewell, Eynhallow, 14 South High Street, Portsoy. Tel: 01261 843125 E-mail: ian.whewell@btinternet.com
Church Website	Mr Ian Whewell - as above
Church Centre Convener (For bookings)	Mr Ian Whewell - as above
Centre Caretaker	Mrs Sarah Willis, 40, Gordon Crescent, Portsoy Tel: 01261 843928 or 07756535731 E-mail: sarahsfamily@btinternet.com
Beadle	Currently vacant
Focus	Mrs Johanna Sturrock 21 Hill Street, Portsoy. Tel: 01261 843009 E-mail: unicornathome@gmail.com

DIRECTORY (CONTINUED)

Pastoral Care Group Convener	Olwen Christie	01261 843680
Outreach Group Convener	Paul Williams	01261 842338
Finance & Property Group Convener	Ian Whewell	01261 843125
Social Group Convener	Helen D'Arcy	01261 842340
Administration Group Convener	Anne McArthur	01261 842474

Service Times

**Services are cancelled for the moment,
due to Covid-19**



Website—<http://www.portsoychurch.org>

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Scottish Charity No: SC 000522