

FOCUS

Portsoy Church Magazine



June—July 2021

A Message from the Manse

It's a little hard to believe that only five months have passed since I made the move from central Scotland to the Aberdeenshire coast, it seems so much longer and I don't mean that in a bad way! I've felt so much at home right from the beginning, from the very first day that I arrived, and one of the reasons for that has been the friendliness of everyone I've met here, whether they've known I was the 'new' minister or not. I don't think I've been anywhere else where people are so forthcoming with a 'good morning,' a 'hello' or a 'bonny day, isn't it?' as here in Portsoy - and Sandend and Fordyce too, of course.

I was reading recently about a man who turned up for an interview for a managerial position in a company and when he reported to the reception desk to say he was there, he was asked to take a seat and wait until his interviewer was available. As he waited, the receptionist tried to engage him in conversation, but he wasn't really interested and he barely even made eye contact with her - he gave off an attitude that said, 'this is just a receptionist I'm talking to, I'm here for more important things than that, I'm only interested in speaking to the important people.' Eventually, after about 10 minutes or so he was asked to go into the interview room. And the 'receptionist' followed him in. It turned out that she was the company's owner and she went on to explain to the interviewee that every member of her team is important and that everyone deserves the same respect. It was a short interview. 'Thank you for your time,' she said, 'but I'm sorry to say you haven't been successful on this occasion.'

Probably without even realising it, I think the company owner and so many of the people I've met on my walks in and around Portsoy, whether they've been strangers or familiar faces, have been putting into practice what's known as the 'Golden Rule' in scripture. It comes from Matthew 7:12, where Jesus says, 'Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them.' In a world where self-centredness is all too common, where we're encouraged to put ourselves first, where it's so easy to become wrapped up in our own needs and not think of others and what they need or want from us, it's good to know that there are so many people out there (and Portsoy seems to have more than its fair share!) who instinctively know that it's simply nice to be nice. A smile and a pleasant word don't cost us a thing, and we're all the richer when we receive them!

Every blessing John

If you need me for anything or if you just want to call for a chat, you can reach me at the manse on 01261 838506.



Funerals

12th April Arthur Beattie

13th May Helen McBain

21st May Nathan Innes

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

Portsoy Church Fairtrade

Just a quick update from me this time. At the beginning of April, with Session's permission, I sent a cheque for £200 from our Fairtrade account to Traidcraft Exchange, for their "Regenerators' Appeal". This amount was doubled by the UK government, under the UKAid scheme. (Hooray!)

This was made possible by your faithful support for our Fairtrade endeavour, my friends, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your generosity and encouragement.

Here are one or two extracts from the letter of thanks that I received from Traidcraft Exchange: "Your support this Spring means that twice as many Regenerators like Issa & Mwanaidi will be able to get the skills they need to fight back against climate change, and earn a decent income in new, earth-friendly ways.....Not only this, but by switching to green technology, reducing use of pesticides and planting trees, they can regenerate their land - and protect the earth for generations to come.....Thank you for helping to build a fairer, greener future."

I'll put a copy of the full letter on the notice board in the Church Centre, where many thank you letters are displayed.

God bless you all, and our brothers and sisters in far-off lands. May they know that we are reaching out to them in love.

Margaret

Dial-a-Service

As well as services taking place in the Church Centre every Sunday and the DVDs and CDs available for distribution, you can now call a dedicated phone line to hear an abridged version of the most recent Sunday service, usually lasting about 20 minutes. The number is 01261 452515 and calls are at local rates (or free if you have a minutes plan with your supplier). It's available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Presentation for Steve Hay

We were delighted to welcome Steve back to our Sunday Service on 9th May when he was presented with the first of his farewell gifts. (See also page 10 for pictures)

There was a substantial sum collected for him illustrating the high regard in which he was held and the grateful thanks of the congregation for supporting us through our vacancy as our locum. Steve particularly asked for a framed photograph of the congregation to keep as a memento and that will be organised as soon as we are again allowed to gather together.

In the meantime a painting of the church centre had been commissioned from Michael Kitchen the well known local artist and that was presented at the beginning of the service on 9th May.

FOCUS DEADLINE

The next edition of Focus will cover August-September 2021. Please let Johanna Sturrock have articles and any photographs for inclusion no later than Sunday 18 July. unicornathome@gmail.com.

Portsoy Church Guild

Hello all Guild friends. We are at the beginning of a new 3-year strategy, called "Look Forward in Faith" which seems very appropriate in view of all we have been going through this last year, and are still in the throes of. The themes for the 3 years are:

- 1)Lights & Bushels;
- 2)Wee seeds, big trees;
- 3)New wine, new wineskins

I think they sound interesting and intriguing, don't you? Space permitting, I'll try to give you more of a flavour of Lights & Bushels in the next Focus magazine.

Now, the new projects. These are:

"Home for Good": Finding homes for vulnerable children.

"Beat" aiming to beat eating disorders.

"Pioneers UK"

"Chocolate Heaven" - changing lives with chocolate.
(Sounds like one for me!!).

"Starchild" Finding the light in every child. Supporting children with additional needs & their families in Uganda.

"Unida" Hear our voice - training women for ministry & service in Brazil.

And finally **"The Vine Trust"** supporting the development of Kazunu: Village of Hope, Tanzania.

I hope these titles have whetted your appetites to find out more about the projects.



The Unida Project Brazil

Lots more I'd like to share with you, but space is limited in Focus, so I'll stop there for now. I miss our Guild meetings, and hope and pray we'll be able to get together again soon. Surely by September.....? Do all you can to keep safe and well. Feel free to phone for a chat any time.

Margaret (01261 843125)

Christian Aid



Thank you to everyone who donated to support Christian Aid during Christian Aid Week. Your generosity has raised a wonderful total of £610.00 which will go towards helping communities

in Eastern Kenya to combat the effects of drought, hunger and the pandemic.



Prayer Focus

"We love because He first loved us." 1 John 4:19

Do you ever wonder how much God loves us? No one has to earn God's love. No one has to jump through hoops to earn His acceptance. No one has to crawl on his hands and knees to compensate for past sins. No one has to do such things because God already loves us. He has shown His love for us by the sacrifice of His Son.

The Bible states, "God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us". (Romans 5:8). Through the suffering of Jesus, we see the terribleness of our rebellion and the extent of God's love for us.

All we must do to experience His love is to believe that He has done for us what we could not do for ourselves (Romans 4:5). The answer is not to try harder to please God but to trust what Christ has done for us. God's love is offered to us as a gift, not a reward. (Ephesians 8:10)

The apostle Paul wrote, "If we confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved". (Romans 10:9-13). That's how much God loves us.

Sometimes we face struggles in life, and we are tempted to think that God has forgotten us. There may be times when we feel like running from God. Even then He loves us and is at work

guiding us back into restored relationship with Him. (1 John 1:9)
When we repent and receive Jesus' gift of amazing love, He becomes our Saviour, Lord, Teacher and Friend. Looking for someone to love you? Jesus loves you more than anyone else possibly could.

Father God, thank You for loving us so much. We realise that in our thoughts and actions we have broken Your holy law. We believe that you sent Your Son Jesus to take the punishment that we deserve. We believe He died for us and rose again. We now accept Your loving offer of forgiveness. Amen

Book Review

I've just finished reading a great book called "The Badly-Behaved Bible" by Nick Page. As someone who has frequently found it difficult to reconcile my Christian faith with some of what I read in the Bible - especially the Old Testament - I found Nick's attitude really helpful. His light-hearted style, & sometimes provocative sense of humour, make it an easy read. But it is also scholarly & informative, & at last I feel freed to read the Bible without fear of being told I've got it wrong. Here are a few quotes which I hope will give a flavour of his approach:

"Jesus says that he & the Father are the same (John 14:9)...If we want to read the Bible properly, we must read it through the lens of Jesus Christ".

"Dive in. Put aside your fears of getting it wrong & have faith that you might encounter something right & true....Ask questions. Use your imagination. Listen for the voice of God".

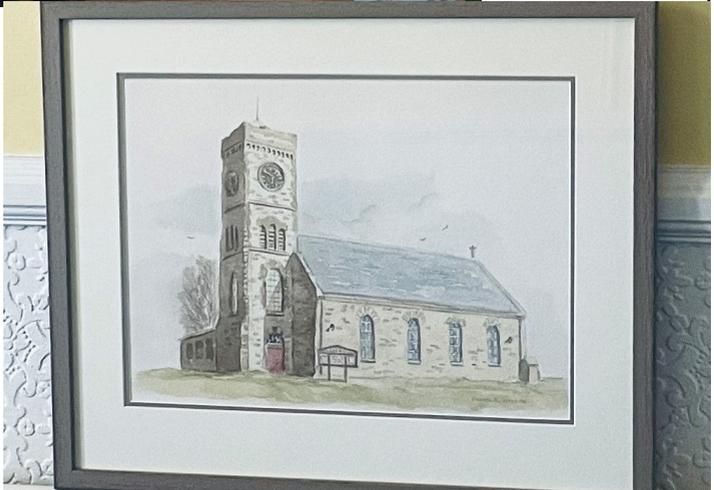
"The Bible is an invitation. The Bible is a call. The breath of God lifts its pages...So open the book. Inhale the breath of God". (Amen to that! Praise God for Nick Page! M.W.)

Thank you!!!

Thanks to everybody for my tremendous present given to me on May 9th. The portrait of the Church Centre will be another good reason, along with many others, never to forget Portsoy, nor, even more importantly, yourselves.

All good wishes in Him for the future

Steve



More Thank yous!!!

"Thank you to all at Portsoy Church for the lovely cards, flowers, text messages and phone calls I received following my recent stay in ARI Aberdeen. Special thank you to Olwen for deliveries. I am improving and hope to be back in Church soon."

Sheila McKay

"Thank you for the flowers and card delivered by Olwen after my accident, I keep improving every day. Please convey my thanks for the flowers, cards and phone calls from friends and family"

Francis M Urquhart.

Shopping on-line at Amazon?

Remember you can make a difference and help the Church while you shop at Amazon, at no extra cost to you!

Instead of opening Amazon.com when searching and ordering just select smile.amazon.com. There select Portsoy Church, Church of Scotland as your charity. It can also be activated in the AmazonSmile app on your mobile phone. Even if you forget to open Amazon Smile and put something in your 'normal' Amazon basket just close and reopen in Amazon Smile and the item will magically be in your Smile basket!

For everything you then buy at Amazon Smile a proportion of eligible purchases are donated to the church's refurbishment fund to help pay back some of our outstanding loans.

Portsoy Church Centre

Physical Distance-Based Capacity (PDBC)

As you may be aware the limit on the numbers who may attend services has been lifted and now is based on the maximum safe capacity of the building taking into account current social distancing rules (Known as PDBC). We are required to publish the current capacity which is set out below.

Sanctuary:

1) All pairs of seats occupied 51 seated, 1 standing (Minister) and 1 organist. Total 53

2) No pairs of seats occupied 35 seated, 1 standing (Minister) and 1 organist. Total 37

Meeting room:

1) All pairs of seats occupied 20 seated. Total 20

2) No pairs of seats occupied 12 seated. Total 12

We can now use the Sanctuary and meeting room simultaneously to increase numbers over 50 which we were not previously permitted to do.

We still all need to sanitise our hands, minimise physical contact, wear face coverings, and physically distance, while in the church building. We also still need to record contact details each week. We'd be delighted to see you on a Sunday morning. Please join us if you can.

Covid Update — June

We are all hoping that we can get back nearly to normal before too long. In the meantime we still have arrangements in place to help to maintain contact and keep everyone in touch.

Church Family News

CFN is still temporarily replaced by a weekly Church Bulletin with a message from John Gow, our usual weekly prayer topic, and other information. There is a link to the bulletin on the Church Family News page of our website and a copy on the notice board outside the Church Centre. John is delivering copies to those who don't have internet access or don't wish to leave their homes. Please contact John on 01261 838506 or 07941 511192 if you would like a copy delivered.

Social contact

Elders are still available if you wish to talk about any issues or just have a news. However, John is more than happy for you to ring him at any time to talk.

Sunday service-ways to join us.

Our Sunday service is now live on the internet and a recording is on the Church Website on the 'weekly video' page. Please join us if you can. CDs and DVDs of the service are also available free of charge. John also distributes these, so please let him know if you would like either. Also as you may have read on page 5 you can also listen to an abridged audio version of the latest service on our new phone line, 01261 452515, for the price of a local call. Maybe you know someone who'd like to use this service - if you do, give them a call and give us a call!



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 is available in the meeting room in the Church Centre

If you see something you fancy reading, just put your name in the register, borrow the book and sign it back in when you're finished.



PRAYER CIRCLE

Name:
(Not necessary)

Please pray for:
.....
.....

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

Directory

- Minister** Rev. John Gow
Tel: 01261 838506
E-mail: jgow@churchofscotland.org.uk
- Session Clerk** Mrs Yvonne McKay, Bayview, Sandend.
Tel: 07592 395 581
E-mail: Yvonne@therealmckay.co.uk
- Treasurer** Mrs Ishbel Mackinnon, 24, Kirkwood Crescent,
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** Mr Ian Whewell - as above
(For bookings)
- Centre Caretaker** Mrs Sarah Willis, 40, Gordon Crescent,
Portsoy
Tel: 01261 843928 or 07756535731
E-mail: sarahsfamily@btinternet.com
- 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

Every Sunday at 10.30am unless otherwise intimated

The Church is open again for Sunday worship with a larger limit set by the PDBC.

Please join us for all are welcome

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

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Scottish Charity No: SC 000522