



PORTSOY CHURCH

FAMILY NEWS 5/12/21

Welcome to our weekly news bulletin, keeping you up to date with the latest information on what's happening in Church life in Portsoy, Fordyce and Sandend and also giving you a digested version of John's sermon for the week. It is also available on the CFN page of the Church website.

If you know of someone in the community who isn't online and would like a copy delivered please contact John on 07941 511192.

Weekly Prayer Topic

'Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, 'Take heart, daughter; your faith had made you well.'
(Matthew 9:22)

Loving God, as the Omicron variant of Covid tries to take hold, help us to have faith not just in yourself but in the health professionals who continue to do so much to keep us safe and care for us in our times of need.

Carols and Teas: Our afternoon of carols and teas will be on 11th December at 2pm. If you would like to come along please add your name to the list on the table as you go out so we can get an indication of how many we need to cater for.

Coffee 'n Company continues every Tuesday from 10am to 12 noon in the Church Centre. Come along and enjoy a cup of coffee or tea, some toast, scones or pancakes - and, most important, a time of companionship.

Monday Prayers: Our morning prayer service takes place every Monday at 8am in the Church Centre. For those who aren't up early, though, there's another at 6.30pm, also on Mondays in the Church Centre. Everyone is welcome!

Home Start: We are collecting Christmas gifts for Home Start families. There is a box at the back of the Sanctuary for your gifts. Donations of biscuits, chocolates, selection boxes and Christmas crackers welcome! All donations by Sunday 12th December please.

Weekly message from John Gow

I wonder how patient you are; how good you are at waiting? Are you the kind of person that eats one chocolate a day from the advent calendar, or do you eat them all the first weekend? Do you have a shake at the presents under the Christmas tree or can you resist? Are your decorations up at the beginning of December or can you wait for a couple of weeks?

Last Sunday I wrote about the second coming of Jesus - the promise that we have through scripture that Jesus is going to come back and bring the fulness of his Kingdom to us all. And maybe some of us struggle with that. Maybe it's confusing, maybe it's even frightening to some people. Some church denominations are pretty much obsessed with idea of Jesus' return, and it's easy for some folk to be put off by the extreme interpretations they put forward about it. And some people, well, maybe they tend not to place too much emphasis on it, just kind of give up on it. After all, it's 2000

years ago that Jesus ascended to heaven, so maybe it's understandable when people give up hope that he's ever going to return and put the earth to rights.

If that's you, if you feel like that, you're not alone. Practically all of the first Christians lived with the expectation that Jesus would return in their lifetimes, and after only a few years an awful lot of them started to lose hope. The apostle Peter wrote about it in his second letter: *'You must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, 'Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.'* (2 Peter 3: 3-4).

Maybe you find yourself asking that too. Is 2000 years not an awful long time to wait for the return of Jesus?

The response Peter gives to the scoffers' question is that *'The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient...'* (2 Peter 3: 9)

Knowing that God is patient and prepared to wait is a good lesson for us. We live our lives in a hurry a lot of the time. There are plenty of times when our patience is tested - when we're waiting in a queue at the shop or the chemist, waiting for something to download on the computer, waiting for a partner to get ready when you've been ready for ages.

Peter knew that the return of Jesus would come with judgement over the whole earth and what he tells us is that that God is patiently holding the return of Jesus back to give time for everyone on earth to respond to the gifts we've been given, the gifts of forgiveness and of restoration.

When we're waiting for something, knowing what we're waiting for changes how we wait. A child waiting for a Christmas present has a very different attitude to a child waiting for a trip to the dentist. You wait for your wedding day in a very different way to the day your car gets its MOT.

During Advent, and always, we're waiting for the restoration of heaven and earth, when all good things are made new, and knowing what God has in store changes the way we wait. Peter writes: *'Since everything (meaning the old order of things) will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming,'* and then he says *'make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. Our Lord's patience means salvation.'* (2 Peter 3: 11, 14-15)

Peter tells us how we should live our lives as we patiently wait. He's telling us to live in ways that please God, that imitate Jesus, working for the good of his creation, building community and society, justice, fairness. And when we do, we're bringing the Kingdom of God just that bit closer, we're doing our bit to help *'speed its coming.'*

Contributions for the week's Church Family News should be sent to Ian Whewell
ian.whewell@btinternet.com by Friday evening each week.