

FOCUS

Portsoy Church Magazine



October—November 2020

Letter from the Locum



A recent front page newspaper article told us that 'Anxiety levels in Scotland have increased in recent years.' Therefore they were on the increase long before concerns over the coronavirus. And of course at a nationwide level, in addition, we have also been going through Brexit and the possibility of a vote on independence. And most people face other, more personal issues, such as health concerns, money worries, family problems.... you can probably add more items to the list.

Whenever I find myself developing anxiety over something, I find it helpful to stop and ask myself: 'What can actually go wrong here?' I ask that because in my opinion uncertainty/the fear of things going wrong is at the root of anxious thinking. Or to put it more positively, we relax when we feel everything is going well.

Now the issues which I mentioned above are all uncertain and largely outside of our control, so it is natural that they, and other issues, have led more and more folk to feel anxious. But as someone said: 'there is nothing new under the sun,' and so throughout history there has never been a time when anxiety didn't affect humanity. For instance, back in the time of the bible, the writer of the collection of wise sayings found in it called 'Proverbs,' said: 'An anxious heart weighs a man down but a good word makes him glad.' And certainly a word of support or advice at the correct time can relieve the most troubling circumstance.

But, what if the uncertainty can't be resolved? What if it concerns an issue which is truly outside of our control? Is

there any hope, or do we just inevitably join the company of those who make up the number of anxious folk in Scotland? There isn't anything wrong with talking to yourself occasionally, despite what others may tell you! And when in dire straits at one time, the writer of Psalm 42 asked himself: 'Why are you anxious, O my soul. Why are you so disturbed within me?' And he answered his own question with sound advice: 'Put your hope in God, my Saviour and my God.' This man had faith in God, but let's note how he described God-as his Saviour.

If as I said above, anxiety occurs within us when we fear something in our lives may go wrong, I would say it is a big advantage to believe in God. But how much better if we don't just believe in his existence but also that he can do something about our problem...that he can save us? God sent Jesus to earth to be the one who can save us. And if we have handed Jesus control of our lives, then the salvation which we consequently receive, will lead to either a change in our troubling circumstances or it will give us the assurance that we will be strengthened to successfully face them. Therefore 'why be anxious, O my soul?'

Best wishes

Steve Hay

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

Funerals

31 July	Bunty Gardiner
3 Aug	Jessie Matthews
14 Aug	Christina Murray

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

At last, a Sole Nominee

The wait is almost over. After four years of patient work, quite a number of enquiries and several applications, our Nominating Committee has now chosen a Sole Nominee whom they propose to the congregation to be our new Minister. The name of the person is John Gow who has recently completed his training for the ministry.

The next stage is for John to preach as Sole Nominee, and arrangements are now being made by the Kirk Session for John to conduct the service in the Church on Sunday 15th November. Because of the current restrictions, including the much reduced seating capacity in the church, special arrangements are being made to enable members and adherents who won't be able to attend the service in person to see and hear the service in different ways. A video of the service will be posted on the Church website, DVD and CD recordings will be made available to members on request and, if there is a demand, arrangements will also be made to provide a phone link to the recording.

Some two weeks before the service, all members and adherents on the Church Electoral Register will receive full details of the arrangements, a return slip to indicate their preference for seeing and hearing John's service, and details of how the ballot will be conducted. While we will accommodate as many people who wish to come to the service as possible, priority will be given to those who do not have internet access and are unable to view the video of the service online.

We look forward to your participation in this important moment in the life of our congregation.

Covid-19 Virus: Update

Church Centre open

The Church is now open for worship on Sunday mornings at 10.30, but not for any other activities. We can hold funerals in the building again. But, attendance is restricted to close family and friends with a maximum of 20 at the service. We realise this is difficult for people wishing to pay their respects, but hope there is understanding in these very unusual times.

Church Family News

CFN is still replaced temporarily by a weekly Church Bulletin containing a message from Steve Hay, our usual weekly prayer topic, and other information. There is a link to the bulletin on the Church Family News page of our website. There is also a copy on the notice board outside the Church Centre. Steve Hay is delivering copies to those who don't have internet access or do not wish to leave their homes. Please contact Steve Hay on 07926 773607 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 Steve Hay is more than happy for you to ring him at any time to talk.

Video of Sunday morning service

For those who cannot attend services on Sunday mornings, we are producing a video of the service with hymns. You can find this on the "weekly video" page on the website where you can find it together with previous weeks' services. We are also producing CDs and DVDs of the service, free of charge. Steve also distributes these, so please let him know if you would like a DVD or CD.

Shoebox Appeal

The Blythswood Christmas Shoebox Appeal is going ahead as usual this year, despite the Covid19 situation. If you have any empty shoeboxes that you can donate, please let me have them as soon as possible. They can be brought to the Church Centre on Sunday mornings when we are holding our service, or to my house, or I am happy to collect from you.

The same applies to any items you are able to give to fill the boxes. I have already been given some knitted items (hats, scarves, mittens, knee-blankets, baby clothes) and some toiletries and small gifts. I think most of you know the kind of things that are needed, but if you would like more information, don't hesitate to give me a call.

Of course if you prefer to cover and fill a shoebox yourself, that would be most welcome. Or if you would prefer to give a donation to help with the cost of transporting and delivering the shoeboxes, I can either pass it on for you, or give you details of where to send it.

The last date for donating at Portsoy is quite early this year. All donations need to be in by 18th October.

Thank you for your support.
Margaret Whewell (01261 843125)

FOCUS DEADLINE

The next edition of Focus will cover December-January 2020-21. Please let Johanna Sturrock have articles and any photographs for inclusion no later than Sunday 22nd November. unicornathome@gmail.com.

Portsoy Church Fairtrade

I have just sent for a supply of the latest Traidcraft catalogue - the Autumn/Winter version, which has Christmas cards, 2021 calendars, wrapping paper and gift ideas in it.

It also has a number of informative articles about topics such as recycling, the Vegan Society, and information about all the producers who make the goods, and how Fairtrade has helped to make a difference to their lives. There are even a couple of recipes - one for a rather delicious-looking vegan chocolate mousse which I might just have to try!

All the usual lines are still available - tea, coffee, cookies, chocolate, pasta, rice - and many others. Quite a few I have in stock, but I am really happy to order any of the items in the catalogue for you, which keeps our stall going, and saves you paying any delivery charges.

Please let me know if you would like a catalogue and I'll put one through your letterbox, or hand it to you at church if that suits you better.

I know your purchases are making an even greater difference than usual to the producers whose lives have been turned upside down, just as ours have, by this pandemic. By buying Fairtrade we are showing our love for them in a very practical way.

As always, thank you for your continued support. God bless you.

Margaret. (margaret.whewell@btopenworld.com Tel: 01261 843125)



Prayer Focus

"Let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver". 2 Corinthians 9:7

We have had such a wonderful summer. Day after day of brilliant sunshine. It is a wonderful time of the year. When we look around and see the trees, shrubs, etc laden with fruits for the birds and animals, swathes of grain swaying in the wind and gardens blooming with beautiful flowers, surely they should move us every day to give thanks and praise for God's many blessings and gifts. He never lets us down and showers us with spiritual gifts, possessions and money. We should share as lavishly as we can out of these abundances and riches.

The bible says a lot about giving and generosity. Luke 19:11-27 and 1 Timothy 6:17-19 contain a warning to the rich to be generous in sharing what they have with others. God opens the door for us to be good to all whether to fellow believers or non believers. Those who have been blessed with so much should not be greedy and remember the needs of others. What would you like to give to show your love to Jesus? Our time, talent, treasures? It doesn't matter if it is costly or inexpensive Whatever is given from the heart is beautiful to Him. Giving is a measure of our love. How much do we love?. You can give without loving, but you can't love without giving.

One of the gifts God gave us it the gift of time....and most of us have it in abundance during this lockdown. We should use it wisely in many ways. A few pointers could be to commit our time to God who gave it to us for a reason. Set a time for Him and for others, for our church and the wider world and for our own needs. See each day as a gift from God.

Father God, none of us can match Your standard of giving. When we wake each day, please remind us that we may be called upon to give of our love, time and other gifts to those around us. Create in us a new and giving heart and to use the blessings You have given us to recognise the needs of others and the burdens they have to bear.

Lord, we praise and thank You for everything You have bestowed on us and may we share them in love and devotion to You, all people here and in the world.

Amen

Help Required for our Flower Ministry

Our sincere thanks to those who provide flowers for each Sunday service and to Diane Williams who has organised a rota for many years. We are seeking a new volunteer to take over from Diane.

After the service these flowers are gifted each week to people in our congregation or parish who are ill or have recently been bereaved. Sometimes the flowers are given to people to mark special anniversaries, birthdays or achievements.

This is an important ministry reminding people that they are not forgotten and that we are thinking and praying for them. We also have a flower fund where money donations are welcomed. The flower fund allows us to provide flowers for special dates and celebrations throughout the church calendar e.g. Easter, Harvest and Christmas.

Please contact Olwen on 07813529280 or e mail olwenac@outlook.com if you would like to volunteer or add your name to the flower rota or wish to make a donation to our flower fund.

Covesea and Guildry Houses

Our church supports 2 homeless supported accommodation units in Elgin. Covesea House for 16-24 year olds and Guildry House for those aged over 24 years.

The service offers residential accommodation in a flat sharing environment with access to staff 24/7, 365 days of the year.

Staff will work alongside those using the service to help them with cooking, cleaning, budgeting, shopping as well as educational and employment prospects, addiction issues, relationships and wellbeing.

The service aims to offer increased opportunities, reduce isolation, support emotional welfare and gives people a safe and stable space when they need it most.

All dried and canned food Items are greatly appreciated.

At this time cereals, cooking sauces, cooking oil and Fray Bento's Pies and non-food items of toiletries would be especially well received.

Thank you on behalf of the Pastoral Care Group

Church General Finances: Covid-19

The Church is now open for worship so those attending who give in the plate each week are now able to do so again.

A very big thank you to those who have been saving up their weekly donations and have now returned to Church. Thank you also to those who have made arrangements for their 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 also help greatly if you would consider giving by regular standing order. 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. Please consider this, as it is totally confidential.

If you are not able to attend on a Sunday for worship please contact your Elder or Steve who can ensure your gifts are delivered to the Church on a Sunday morning. Thank you for your support.

Portsoy Church Guild

Hello Guild friends. How sad that we are still prevented from meeting together, but I have a few items of news for you.

Sheila, our treasurer, has told me that we have enough funds to be able to make our usual annual donation to the church, & also to pay the capitation fee for each member. We are not asking members to pay their membership this year for obvious reasons, but we hope you will all still remain members of the Guild. The projects are ongoing. If any of you would like to make a donation towards them please hand to Sheila or myself and we will forward it.

I receive a weekly Guild newsletter by email. I have been forwarding this to some members. If you would like a copy, by email, or a printed copy, please get in touch with me, & I'll add you to the list of recipients. It is a good way to keep in touch.

As a result of an idea in the newsletter we are proposing to make a blanket of knitted 6-inch squares. We hope this will symbolise our friendship and togetherness as a Guild, and also benefit someone in need when it is finished & donated to a charity. More details about this will follow, but please start knitting (double knitting yarn, any colour) if you wish to this venture.

All best wishes, Margaret (Guild Secretary)

Information on Sunday Worship

The Church is now open for worship every Sunday morning at 10.30am and we would be delighted if you can join us. We have been open for several weeks now and feel confident that it is safe to attend. **But, it is essential to sanitise your hands before entry, wear a mask, maintain two metre physical distancing and provide contact details.** We cannot sing, but we do play videos of the hymns. Raymond also kindly plays the organ before and after the service. Unfortunately we still cannot offer teas and coffees after the service and we need to socialise outside after the service, rather than within the Sanctuary.

The general arrangements to keep you safe are as follows:

- ♦ You must wear a mask while in the building unless you are exempt from doing so. We have spare masks if needed.
- ♦ You must maintain the appropriate physical distancing and good hand hygiene while you are in the building.
- ♦ As entrance area is small, please be patient to allow for physical distancing of 2 metres. You may need to queue outside until you can safely enter.
- ♦ We will ask if you are well and if you have any Covid-19 symptoms. If you are unwell, especially with any symptoms of Covid-19, please **do not** attend Church.
- ♦ Chairs are placed to allow physical distancing. Please do not move the chairs. If you are with someone from your own household please use the chairs which are in pairs.
- ♦ Please try to minimise points you touch in the building. Ideally only touch the chair you are sitting on.
- ♦ The spacing of chairs limits the size of our congregation to a safe maximum of 37. This means we may have to limit attendance. So far we have not been near that number.

- ♦ Sanitising gel dispensers are provided at the entrance and within the sanctuary. Please use these when you come into the building and before you take your seat.
- ♦ You must not sing along with the videos, although the words will be displayed. Very difficult, but please try to comply.
- ♦ If you need to use the toilet, you can. But, there is a limit of 1 person in each toilet. Please respect this rule and try to maintain physical distancing while using the facilities.
- ♦ If you become unwell during the service please immediately alert one of the elders on duty.
- ♦ If you are in the highly vulnerable category, please consider carefully if you should stay at home. The services are videoed and we post the recordings on the website and produce CDs/DVDs so you can enjoy the services from your own home. The Church of Scotland has produced an assessment tool which can be found on the Church of Scotland website* We recommend you use it to help you decide if you should attend. We can provide a printed copy if you prefer. Please contact Steve if you would like this.
- ♦ We **must** collect contact details for all attending the service., every week. Please be patient and provide the information when asked even if you have provided it many times before.

*https://churchofscotland.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/68499/Appendix-4-Assessment-Tool-for-individual-and-group-health-risks.pdf





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 Session House at Portsoy Church.

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

- Interim Moderator** Rev Kevin Gruer
Tel: 01888 563850
E-mail: kgruer@churchofscotland.org.uk
- Session Clerk** Mrs Yvonne McKay, Bayview, Sandend.
Tel: 07592 395 581
E-mail: Yvonne@therealmckay.co.uk
- 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** 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**

Special Services:

**Sunday 11th October Harvest Thanksgiving
Sunday 8th November at 10.00am Remembrance
Sunday 15th November Service by John Gow
Sole Nominee**

Please join us for all are welcome

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

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Scottish Charity No: SC 000522