

FOCUS

Portsoy Church Magazine



August—September 2021

A Message from the Manse

It's a little hard to believe, but as I write this piece for Focus it's very nearly a whole year since I first visited Portsoy with a view towards applying to be your minister here. It was on the 7th of August last year that I was first shown around the church centre and had a wander around the town, and I think my future was sealed from that day on. I remember driving back to Falkirk, thinking I might have just been looking at my new home - and thanks to God's good grace, that's exactly how it's turned out to be.

So much has changed in the past twelve months, and I'm not just talking about my own situation here. In August last year the country was taking tentative steps out of the pandemic that we'd been in the middle of since March - only we weren't to know that it would come back to bite us again before the year was out. It turned out to be like taking two steps forward and then three steps back. But gradually - and I do mean gradually, because sometimes it seems like time has been dragging on and on - we've been seeing signs that normalcy may not be that far away. The two-metre distancing that we've all become used to (and disliked so much) has been cut to one, we can meet in ever-larger groups, we're now on Level 0 everywhere in Scotland (is 'zero' a level, surely not?). It's not over yet, although it may be sometime soon.

But we have to be patient, and patience, as we know, is a virtue. It's one of the fruits of the spirit described in Galatians 5: 22-23, '*...the Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control. There is no law against such things as these.*' But aside from being a virtue,

what is patience? Is it just waiting without complaining, or is it more than that? I think it is. Being patient, to me, is when we go through *hardship* or *discomfort* without complaining, not simply waiting quietly for it all to be over. And that's not easy. But it's not impossible either.

We've all been through hardship and discomfort over the past year. The hardship of not being able to meet with friends and relations, the discomfort of wearing face coverings wherever we go. But we're still here, and we're looking forward. What was it Del said in *Only Fools and Horses*, 'This time next year we'll be millionaires?' Well, this time next year, God willing, we may not be millionaires but I just know we'll be looking back saying our patience has paid off.

Blessings

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

21 June	Robbie Murray
23 June	Helen Sutherland
16 July	Helen Runcie
20 July	Stan Sutherland
22 July	Jimmy Milne

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

Church Treasurer - Help needed

Ishbel our Church Treasurer has decided, after a number of years in the role, that she wishes to give up the position as Church Treasurer. We are therefore urgently seeking a new Treasurer to replace her. You do not need to be a member of our Church to take on the role. If you or anyone you know of would be willing to take on the position then please get in touch with Ian Whewell 01261 843125 or ian.whewell@btinternet.com or John who can provide more information on what is involved.

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**“Blog unto others as you would have them blog unto you.
Spam not, lest ye be spammed! Though I surf through the
valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no virus...”**

Let's Talk

Let's Talk is an informal Bible discussion group led by John which meets every other Wednesday at 3pm and Thursday at 7pm currently in the Manse garden. As Covid restrictions ease still further, and autumn creeps up on us or the weather is inclement, the meetings will be held indoors in the meeting room at the Church Centre. If you would be interested in going along John would be delighted to welcome you. Just give him a ring 01261 838506 or look out for the date of the next meeting in the Weekly Bulletin.

Thought for Thursday

“Thought for Thursday” is John's series of short video reflections on a Thursday. Each one is no longer than three or four minutes. They can be found on the Church web-site on the special Thought for Thursday page as well as on the Church's Facebook page. The latest one is posted on the page and a link to all previous reflections can be also found on the same web page. Why don't you give it a go?

FOCUS DEADLINE

The next edition of Focus will cover October—November 2021. Please let Johanna Sturrock have articles and any photographs for inclusion no later than Sunday 19 September. unicornathome@gmail.com.

When our love is torn or battered

When our love is torn or battered,
When relationships are strained,
When all sense is broken, scattered,
And our draught of care is drained;
Cool our tempers, give us patience
And a willingness to wait,
Ears to listen, clearer vision,
Ways of hope instead of hate.

When our anger breeds resentment
And our words are filled with spite;
When we cannot find contentment,
Doing wrong, avoiding right;
Still our storming, raging, rending,
Quell our striving, help us cease
All this pleading and pretending;
Show us truth and bring us peace.

Andrew Pratt



Tidy up!!



A working party met up in June to tidy up the grounds of the old kirk. They're pictured here taking a well-earned tea break, looking tired but happy.

Giving Day 26th September

As part of the Church of Scotland's National Giving Day campaign we will be holding a special Giving Day Service on 26th September. Please try to come and support us. All gifts given on the day will be used to support our Church and its activities here in Portsoy and help our recovery from the difficult period resulting from the Covid pandemic.

 The Church of Scotland

**NATIONAL
GIVING
DAY**





Prayer Focus

"Daniel....Knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed as was his custom." Daniel 6:10

Some years ago, a friend gave me the following wonderful poem called "Travelling on my knees". I found it so meaningful, thought provoking and poignant and well worth sharing with many.

Last night I took a journey
To a land across the seas.
I didn't go by boat or plane-
I travelled on my knees.
I saw so many people there
In deepest depth of sin,
And Jesus told me I should go-
That there were souls to win.
But, I said, "Jesus, I cannot go
And work with such as these"
He answered quickly, "Yes, you can-
By travelling on your knees."
He said, "You pray, I'll meet the need.
You call and I will hear.
Be concerned about lost souls,
Of those both far and near"
And so I did—I knelt in prayer,
Gave up some hours of ease.
I felt the Lord right by my side
While travelling on my knees.
As I prayed on, I saw souls saved

And twisted bodies healed,
I saw God's workers strength renewed
While labouring in the field.
I said, "Yes Lord, I'll take the job
Your heart I want to please
I'll heed Your call and swiftly go
By travelling on my knees.

I have a friend who has difficulty getting around and her time is spent mostly indoors. She commented to me one day that she couldn't do very much but can spend much of her time in prayer for others. In spite of her disabilities she has a calling that reaches beyond the walls of her home where she lives.

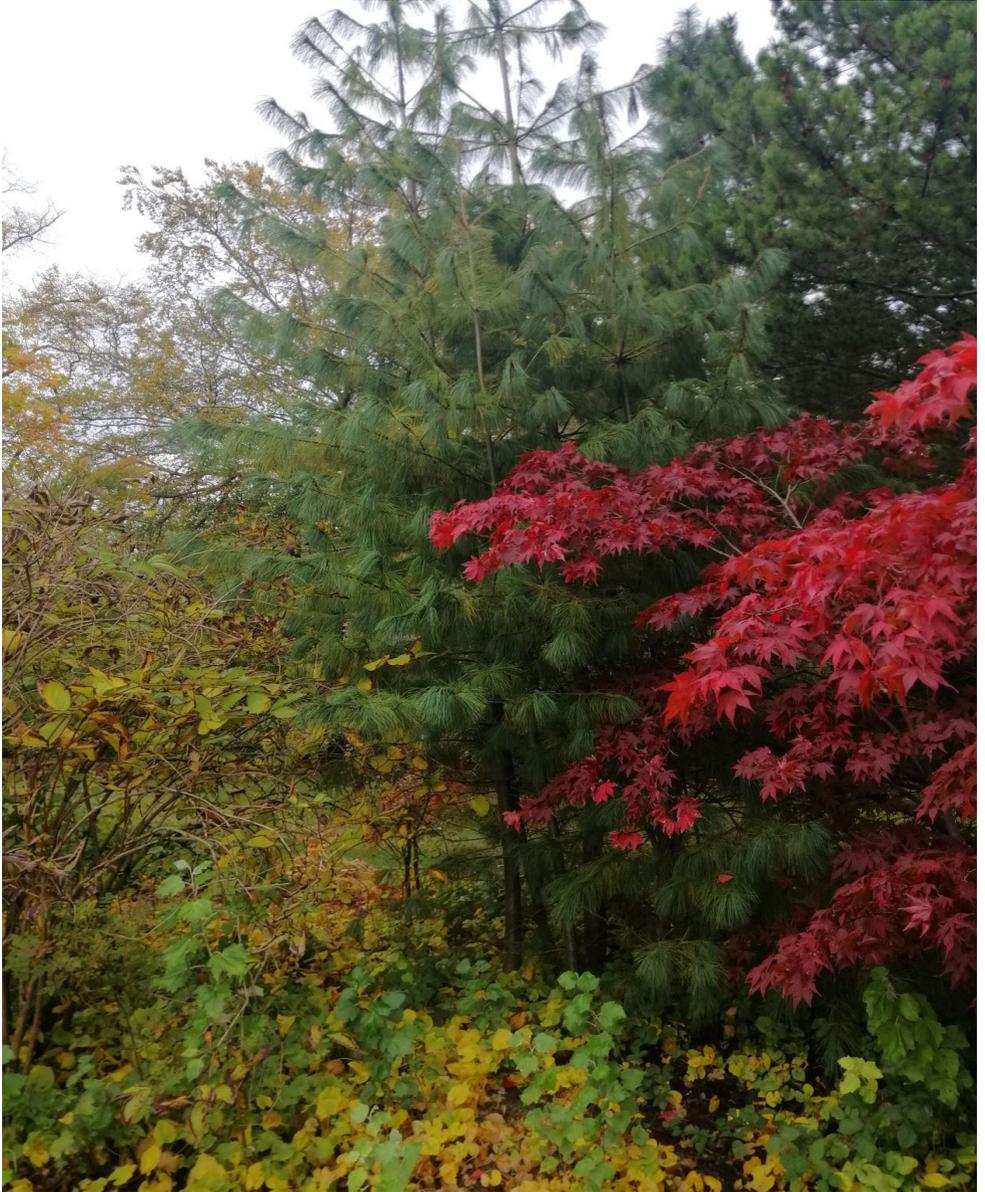
Prayer has power. We are to "continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant" Colossians 4:2

What motives my prayer and drives me to my knees?
Is it a fearful faith desiring calmer seas?
Or do I boldly come before the throne of grace
Stirred by a love that bids me seek my Saviour's face?

Father, there are many out there who are in need of our prayers. People who are deep in sin, lost and broken. Lord, You love them all. Your goodness, wisdom, power and compassion can save them. Forgive us that so little of Your love has reached others through us because we have neglected to spend time on our knees to bring them before You. We all have our limitations so please help us to focus on what we can do to make an impact for Your Kingdom and grant us understanding, courage and strength to do so.

Amen

Thank you - I would like to thank everyone who has phoned, sent cards and flowers following my sojourn in Woodend and ARI hospitals. Many thanks for your kindness and words of encouragement. Joan Morrison



Autumn

What's the point of autumn, and why do things grow old?
Why can't summer last all year, why does it get so cold?
Wouldn't it be better if the light nights lasted all year,
If all the leaves stayed green and flowers didn't disappear?
Why do we need a season when everything withers and dies?
Time passes and we can't prevent it, no matter how hard we
try.

What once was growing decays, it fades off into dust,
Vibrant summer hues to brown, burnt orange and rust.

Autumn is decline, a steady slowing down,
Nights drawing in,
Lamps lit,
Lie low.

No.

Not so.
Harvest,
A gathering in,

Autumn thrives, the thankful time.

The season which serves to remind us that dying isn't the end,
That there's a life everlasting for those who are willing to tend
Their crops and their fields and their thoughts and their soul,
The chattels that matter, that make them whole.
You sow and you reap, you receive your reward,
The fruits of that labour hard won.
The bounty of autumn is the bounty of life
So give thanks to the Father and Son.

Covid Update — August

We are slowly returning to normal although our regular events such as Coffee 'n Company are still in abeyance. Our capacity in the Church centre is now up to 100 and our social distancing is down to 1m. We are delighted to have Raymond back playing the organ for our hymns although we have to still sing through our face coverings which we are required to wear. We are looking at the possibility of serving Teas and Coffees after the service. We still have arrangements in place to help to maintain contact and keep everyone in touch in particular those who still feel unable to come to Church services.

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.

We would be delighted if you feel able to come to Church on a Sunday morning but if you are still concerned about doing so our Sunday service is live on the internet on the Church Website on the 'weekly video' page and a recording is available

to view anytime after the service. 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.



Flower Rota



A heartfelt thank you to all who do the church flowers, and to those who have donated money for flowers to be placed on their behalf.

At the moment there is a team of eight people placing the flowers in church each week. If you would like to be added to the team, please let me know and we can arrange access.

Margaret Whewell (01261 843125)





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 limit of 100 people

**Special Services: 26th September Giving Day
10th October Harvest Festival**

Please join us, for all are welcome

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

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