

FOCUS

Portsoy Church Magazine



April—May 2021

A Message from the Manse

So here we are, my first 'Message from the Manse' as your minister. To say I'm pleased to be writing these words to you is an understatement - I'm delighted, grateful and okay, I'll admit it, a wee bit anxious as well. Delighted because I've been preparing for this time for what seems like an age and everything has finally come together, grateful because God has seen fit to send me to you, and anxious because..., well, it's only natural, isn't it? In the anxiety stakes, it feels like these past few months have been a little like waiting for the first day of school - not that I can remember too much what that was like, it was a rather long time ago, but surely it must have been like this?

Before they take their place in the classroom for the first time, children worry about whether or not they'll make friends easily, don't they? They fret about if their teachers are going to be strict or scary and if they'll be able to cope with the lessons, don't they? Or do they? I'm not so sure. As I say, I can't really remember what I was thinking in the weeks and months before I started school all those years ago, but I'm pretty sure most of the worrying about friends, teachers and lessons was done by my mum and dad rather than by me. I'm pretty sure they were stressed about it all, and I'm pretty sure I wasn't!

I know it's not the way with all children, but I think the cares of the world tend to come along later in life. And yes, with the perils of social media that those of us who are a certain age didn't have to contend with, those cares are heightened these days. But the youngest of children are the most untroubled,

the child starting out at school has the whole world stretching out ahead, and all he or she wants to do is make the most of it, squeeze it for all the wonder and joy they can get out of it. That's what I think, anyway.

And I'm going to keep that in mind in the coming weeks, months and yes, even years. I know I have friends here, I know no-one here is scary - I haven't met anyone like that yet, anyway! - and I know I can cope. But if ever I feel myself getting a little anxious about what lies ahead, whenever I feel the cares of the world try to overcome me, I'm going to remind myself of the carefree nature of a child. And I'm going to remind myself - how could I ever possibly forget? - that I have a Father I can take my worries to.

I'd urge you do the same.

'Truly I tell you, anyone who does not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.' (Luke 18:17)

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.

Christian Aid Week 2021 10th—16th May

Droughts are now more frequent and more intense due to the climate crisis. Millions of people in Kenya, are struggling to get enough food and water.

Your gift could help a community build an earth dam, so when the rains do come, they will have the water they need to live.

People need **every last drop** to survive the drought.

Watch out for more details on our Church Bulletins.

Letter from the Ex-Locum



By the time you receive this my time as Locum will have ended and so every good wish to John as he takes up the minister's role in our parish.

But as for me, how do I reflect on 4½ years? Whenever you start any new job there is a note of uncertainty: What will the folk be like? And more importantly what will they think of me?! Will any of the job be too difficult? Will I find it too much work, fitting it in with other responsibilities away from work?

Whether we would call ourselves people of faith or not, there is still a measure of faith, as we approach any new task....as we step out into unknown territory. Well, 4 ½ years on, I can say all of the above turned out well (leaving aside, 'what will they think of me?' - I'll leave each of you to answer that for yourself!). I can praise God for many of my times and experiences during my time with you. And it is great advantage for a Christian, that the faith required to face any new task, as mentioned above, is faith to be found in a person.

There is a saying in Christian circles that although, like everybody else, we don't know what the future holds, we do know WHO holds the future.

I don't believe as we look at the world today, or throughout history, that we can say that everything that happens is God's will, but I believe we can say that he is in overall control and so it provides me with great security to know that he has a plan for my future, beyond my time here.

But to make that a reality I need to want to know what that plan is. Probably no passage of the bible describes that need better than Proverbs chapter 3, verses 5 and 6, where it says to: 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your paths.' We all think we know best! But that is where being a Christian should make a difference. Firstly, because they should have the humility to realise they need God's guidance and secondly, they should have the faith to trust that he will guide. And I need to apply that to my future.

But as to my past few years here, thank you to all of you who have made me welcome in the community, especially if I have visited your home.

I look forward to seeing and hearing how life in Portsoy, Fordyce and Sandend continues to develop in the years ahead...and to see the work of God here, through his people.

With best wishes for the future

Steve Hay

FOCUS DEADLINE

The next edition of Focus will cover June-July 2021. Please let Johanna Sturrock have articles and any photographs for inclusion no later than Sunday 16 May. unicornathome@gmail.com.

Farewell and God's speed Steven

Steve Hay who has been our Locum Minister for the last four and a half / 5 years is about to move to new pastures and it is fitting that we mark the move with words of thanks. During his time with us we were in the process of moving from the 'old' building to the new Church Centre and also during this time the whole of the country was beginning to sense the impact of this 'new' virus Covid 19.

Speaking to members of the congregation and especially to those who are Session Members, it has become clear that all members hold Steve in high regard ; commenting especially on his work ethic and the stability he brought to what might have become quite chaotic, especially the state the world is in at the moment. Members also spoke of his approachability and the ease of interacting with him.

He often attended the weekly Prayer Meeting and made a valuable contribution to it. Also on his weekly time-table were his visits to Coffee & Company where he was able to interact with the local public. The monthly Messy Church was another high point where Steven gave the Bible address. His annual outing came with him manning a stall at the Portsoy Traditional Boat Festival; latterly he conducted the Blessing of the Fleet Service.

Some other comments: Kevin Gruer, the interim Moderator, "I was impressed by your passion for the gospel"

John Gow, our new minister, "Steve has been a true shepherd and an inspiration to me"

Funerals

22nd March: Minnie McConnachie

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

Guidance for Sunday Worship

The Church is open again and we would be delighted if you can join us, although we must follow some essential guidance for everyone's safety.

Sanitising your hands, wearing a mask, two metre physical distancing and providing contact details are the most important.

Unfortunately, we can't offer refreshments after the service and please socialise outside, rather than within the Sanctuary.

Please read and carefully follow this guidance:

You must wear a face covering while in the building unless you are exempt from doing so. We have spare face coverings if needed

The entrance area is small, so you may need to queue outside to allow for safe physical distancing of 2 metres.

We will ask if you are well and if you have any Covid-19 symptoms. If you are unwell, especially with symptoms of Covid-19, please **do not** attend Church. If you become unwell during the service please **immediately** alert one of the elders on duty.

Chairs are placed to allow physical distancing. **Please do not move the chairs.** Some are in pairs so you can sit with someone from your own household.

We have sanitising gel dispensers at the entrance and within the sanctuary. **Please use these on entry and before taking your seat.**

We are playing videos of hymns, but we **cannot** sing along with them

There is a limit of 1 person in each toilet. Please try to maintain physical distancing while using the facilities.

We **must** collect contact details for all attending the service, every week.

If you are in the highly vulnerable category, please consider carefully if you should stay at home. The services are videoed and posted on the website, or we can supply CDs/DVDs so you can enjoy the services from your own home.



Prayer Focus

"So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built."

Ephesians 4:11-12

Spring—a wonderful time of the year. There is so much to enjoy in this season. New growth with the flowers popping through the ground and beginning to bloom. In the wood across from my house the birds are singing merrily, the woodpecker drums on the trees calling for a mate and I heard one morning, in the wee small hours, an owl was also calling for one. The farmers will soon be sowing their crops and a few lambs are appearing in the fields. A special time and a new way of life, new beginnings, joys and a promise of hope.

Our church is also about to experience new beginnings. After four and a half years of a vacancy, we have a new minister, John Gow. John has been settled in the manse for a few weeks and he has been spending time exploring Portsoy and the countryside and also meeting and making himself known to the people in the community which is wonderful. It is encouraging to hear that he is enjoying, and loving, being here. A first for him will be his induction on this Friday the 19th then on Sunday 28th the church will open—yet again—so we will have an opportunity to meet with him and with our friends in the congregation.

With the covid restrictions, this new venture will be quite challenging for John but I am sure he will cope with whatever comes his way. We look forward to John's guidance in the work and life of our church and the spiritual needs of our members

and the people of the community.

Father God, we thank you for sending John to be our new minister. Please give him wisdom to carry out his role well. May we all be supportive in his leadership too. Pray that the Holy Spirit will help him to proclaim God's Word, His Truth and His love to many.

Amen

**Thank yous from
Eleanor and Helenor**



Thank you .

I would like to say
thanks to all friends
for the lovely flowers
& cards and phone calls
I received after my
recent stay in Hospital

Eleanor Christie

THANKYOU TO ALL AT
PORTSOY CHURCH FOR THE
LOVELY CARD AND FLOWERS
AND OWEN FOR DELIVERING
THEM TO ME FOR MY
SPECIAL BIRTHDAY

GOD BLESS.

HELENOR HENDERSON

Portsoy Church Guild

Hello Guild friends. Thank you once again to all of you who knitted squares for our blankets, not forgetting those who aren't Guild members who also contributed squares. In February Ian and I parcelled up the four blankets - 2 single bed size, and 2 knee or cot-size - and sent them off to Knit for Peace.

I received the following letter from them, dated 24th February:



Dear Margaret and Portsoy Church Guild,

I am delighted to say that we have received your wonderful knitted donations. We look forward to delivering the knitted items, as they will undoubtedly make a big difference to those in need. Thank you for your support, we truly appreciate it.

We are currently particularly in need of: socks and gloves in all sizes, shawls, adult jumpers, and medium or large blankets. We post regular updates of which items are most needed to our Facebook and Twitter.

If you are looking for somewhere to acquire more wool, please look at our ongoing tombola in which you are guaranteed to win a random selection of yarn: <https://knitforpeace.org.uk/product/tombola-2020/>

All the latest information from Knit for Peace can be found in our monthly newsletter and on our Facebook page! You can also support our projects through the Good Gifts Catalogue by following the link at the bottom of this email.

*Warm wishes from the whole team,
Sofia*

We have lost a whole Session of Guild because of the pandemic, but I am hopeful that we may be able to start again in September. If any of you with online access don't currently receive a copy of the weekly Guild News, and would like to do so, please let me know, and I'll forward it to you. If you prefer, you can request it by contacting the National Guild Office on the Church of Scotland website.

Keep well everybody, and try to stay positive and cheerful. We will get through this, and be able to give each other a hug, or shake hands again.

God bless, Margaret. Guild Secretary Tel. 01261843125
margaret.whewell@btopenworld.com

Portsoy Church Fairtrade

Thank you, as always, to all of you who have continued to support our Fairtrade effort throughout this difficult time. I have been kept busy with orders, and the account is looking healthy. Of course, this means that we are continuing to support the growers and producers of all the beautiful (and tasty!) goods in the Traidcraft catalogue. For many of these people the pandemic will have had a far worse impact than for us, and it is good to know that we can support them in this way. For me it is - and has always been - a practical outworking of my faith, and I am so grateful to you all for enabling me to continue this.

The long-awaited new catalogue arrived in mid-February. If you haven't yet got your hands on a copy and would like one please contact me, and I'll be delighted to deliver one to you. As well as promoting the many Fairly-traded products it contains a wealth of information about those who make them, and the way they are helped by our support.

Almost forgot to say - I am "open all hours" (pretty much!) and always happy to deliver.

Love and blessings to you all, my fairtrading friends, Margaret.
(margaret.whewell@btopenworld.com 01261 843125)

Covid-19 Virus: Update

Church Centre open for Sunday worship

The Church opens again on 28th March for Sunday worship. Up to 50 people can attend. We don't have a booking system just now, but this may change. Please see the **Guidance on Sunday Worship** on page 7 for details if attending. We can hold funerals in the building, which is some comfort for families. Attendance is restricted to close family and friends with a maximum at present of 20 at the service. This is due to increase to 50 on 26th April. 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 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 live

We are now streaming a live service from the Church every Sunday morning at 10.30am. Please join us if you can. The service can be found on the "Weekly Video" page of the Church website. If you are unable to join us a video of the service will

be posted on the same page on Sunday afternoon for you to view at your leisure. All previous services for the last two months are also available on the same page.

As before we are also producing CDs and DVDs of the service which are available free of charge. John also distributes these, so please let him know if you would like a DVD or CD.

Church finances: In the red!

We have now received the accounts for last year and it is clear that the pandemic has had a very major impact on our finances with our expenditure for 2020 exceeding our income by over £6,000. Although services have recommenced which helps with our weekly open plate donations with the Church Centre still shut for all events our income is still badly affected.

If you are able please consider giving a little more or making a one off donation during these difficult times which would help the Church to get through to better times when we can open fully again. Thank you again 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 the Treasurer. It has been very helpful. Don't forget also by gift aiding your donation it is worth 25% more to the Church.

Many of you will know that our Treasurer Ishbel Mackinnon has moved house and at this very busy time for her duties are being temporarily undertaken by Ian Whewell. For the present therefore any donations which would have been given to Ishbel should be passed to Ian at 14, South High Street. If you wish to change your method of giving or wish to gift aid your donation please contact Ian on 01261843125 or email:

ian.whewell@btinternet.com



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, 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**

**The Church is open again for Sunday
worship with a limit of 50 people**

Please join us for all are welcome

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

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Scottish Charity No: SC 000522