



# PORTSOY CHURCH

## FAMILY NEWS 19/3/23

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*

**"Respect your father and mother, so that you may live a long time in the land that I am giving you." Exodus 29:12**

May God grant grace to mothers in their own families and women caring for others. Give thanks for the love of mothers, their care, concern and for all that they give, May those who find this day painful be comforted and strengthened in their heartache and difficulty.

**Focus Magazine:** The deadline for contributions to the April – May edition of Focus magazine is today. We really need more contributions to the magazine as we currently get very few. If you have any articles which you think may be of interest to the readers, please do send them in. Photographs and articles for inclusion should be send by the deadline to Johanna Sturrock:

[unicornathome@gmail.com](mailto:unicornathome@gmail.com).

**Coffee 'n Company:** Coffee 'n Company is every Tuesday morning from 10.00am until 12 noon. Please come along and enjoy a cup of coffee or tea, scone and pancakes and a time to catch up with friends old and new.

**Monday Prayers:** Our morning prayer gathering takes place every Monday at 8.30am in the Church Centre. No Evening prayers for the moment. Everyone is welcome!

### **Weekly message from John Gow**

Mark 12: 28-34

The passage we're looking at in church this week is one in which Jesus is teaching in the temple and it's a time when, for his disciples and his followers, things start to fall into place. Not just for them, though, but for those who've previously been antagonistic towards him. I've talked a lot in the past few weeks about how Jesus challenged the authorities just about every step of the way, how he turned their traditions and their rituals on their head and let them know that with him here as God among them, they had to think in a new way, that it was time to question their old beliefs.

And one of the scribes, otherwise known as the Pharisees, seems to be doing just that when he asks, '*Which commandment is the most important of all?*' Jesus tells him the most important commandment is to '*love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength,*' and, as a bonus, he gives him the second most important too, '*Love your neighbour as yourself.*'

Both commandments are based on love. We've got a pretty good idea of what love is, but to understand what Jesus' idea of love was, it's worth thinking about the language he used. The New Testament we read in English is translated from Greek, and the conversations, the statements, the commandments if you like, they all took place in Aramaic or Hebrew. And this word, love, in Aramaic and Hebrew, well, it's got an added dimension that really says something.

This is the Hebrew word for love:

רחם

It's pronounced *racham*. The Hebrew language doesn't have any vowels, it's the wee marks you see under the letters that give the vowel sounds. And when different vowel sounds are used, or if letters are added onto the word, the meaning of the word changes. This is the same word, using the same letters but with different vowels:

רחם

This is pronounced as *rachum*, and it means compassion. And this is the word again, again slightly changed:

רחם

This is *rechem*, and it's the root word, the one that the others are based on. And what does it mean? It means 'womb.'

This word, 'love', spoken by Jesus, is word that's loaded with extra meaning. It means love, it means compassion, and it's based on that most intimate of connections, the connection between a mother and a child. And as we're celebrating Mother's Day in church this week, isn't that appropriate?

When Jesus says, 'love the Lord your God,' and when he says, 'love your neighbour' he's saying put everything else aside and make that connection, make you and the ones you love like a mother and a child, naturally, intrinsically linked. Carry that love, like a mother carries a child.

And finally one of the Pharisees understands and he repeats back to Jesus everything he's just been told, and he says it's worth more than all the 'burnt offerings and sacrifices' the Pharisees make to God. That's what I've been talking about over the past few weeks, all the things that we might think bring us closer to him, the way we dress, the way we worship, the way we act, these are *our* burnt offerings and sacrifices and none of them matter so much as the personal, the intrinsic relationship we have with him and with the people he put on this earth to be alongside us.