

# FOCUS

*Portsoy Church Magazine*



February 2024—March 2024

# *A Message from the Manse*

Maybe only folks of a certain generation will remember it, but there's a song by Mel Torme called 'Mountain Greenery' and in it there's a line that comes into my head just about every time the wind blows or clouds appear: it says, 'When it rains, we'll laugh at the weather.'

I think it's such a good line. We can do a lot of things in this modern world we live in, but one of the things we can't do is control the weather. All we can do is get on with our day as best we can, laugh it off and wait for the sun to come out - and it always does, eventually.

I know it's easier said than done and with some of the weather we've had to contend with over the winter months, laughing has probably been the last thing on our minds. At the time I'm writing this, we've just had storms Isha and Jocelyn (do we have to give them such nice names?) and chances are there's more to follow, but it's always worth remembering the words that are often attributed to Billy Connolly but which were actually from Alfred Wainwright, who spent a lifetime tramping the fells of the Lake District: 'There's no such thing as bad weather,' he wrote, 'only unsuitable clothing.'

We're in Scotland. We expect wind, rain and snow. And if it wasn't for the conditions, the country we live in would be a far less beautiful place, wouldn't it? 'It is what it is,' as they say.

I doubt if Mel Torme was thinking of it when he was laughing at the rain, but there's a verse in Ecclesiastes (11:4) that says, 'He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who regards the

*the clouds will not reap.'* I'd imagine farmers would disagree with the sentiment expressed there, and for good reason, but for the rest of us it's good advice. If we wait until the conditions are just right before we do anything, then we'll seldom get around to doing what we need to do.

The thing is, the writer of Ecclesiastes isn't talking about weather here. Of course it makes sense to stay in when the snow's ankle deep or the rain's lashing down, even if you're wearing the right clothes - let's all be sensible! - but I think he's talking more about how we live our lives. Caution is fine, but there are times when we should just act according to instinct and do what feels right. Yes, sometimes we'll make mistakes, but we'll learn from them when we do - and hopefully we'll laugh about them later. Just like we should be doing with the rain.

Every blessing

John

*If you need me for anything or you'd just like to call for a chat, my numbers are 01261 838506 and 07941 511192, or drop me an email at [jgow@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:jgow@churchofscotland.org.uk)*

## Funerals

**18 December      Aline Merson**

**21 December      Grace Gerrard**

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



*An informal group that's all about having fun, sharing friendship and exploring faith together - although existing faith is not required!*

*We're continuing to meet the amazing women of the Bible to chat about how their stories can help us as we live our lives today.*

*28th February: Mary Magdalene*

*20th March: Easter Women*

*7-8.30pm in the Church Centre*

*Everyone's Welcome! Tea, coffee & snacks!*

*For more information call Kath on 07759 692968*

### Flower Rota

#### **February**

4 Helen D'Arcy

11 FF

18 Cullen

25 Anne McArthur

#### **March**

3 Yvonne McKay

10 Sheila McKay

17 Olwen Chrisie

24 Cornhill

31 Easter

#### **April**

7 Margaret Whewell

14 Edith Stuart

21 FF

28 Eileen Brown

*Many thanks to all who donate to the Flower Fund. This allows us to have beautiful flowers in church each Sunday, which we gift to members of the community after the service.*

*If you would like to join the flower rota, and place flowers in the Church for the Sunday service please let Margaret know.*

*More volunteers are always welcome.(01261 843125)*

*FF = Flower Fund*

## WELCOME TEAMS

10.00am Portsoy Church Centre

### **February**

- 4 February           Moira McKenzie & Sheila McKay
- 11 February       Margaret Whewell & Olwen Christie
- 18 February       Cullen
- 25 January         Edith Stuart & Eileen Brown

### **March**

- 3 March             Helen D'Arcy & Yvonne McKay
- 10 March           Moira McKenzie & Sheila McKay
- 17 March           Margaret Whewell & Olwen Christie
- 24 March           Cornhill
- 31 March           Edith Stuart & Eileen Brown

### **April**

- 7 April             Helen D'Arcy & Yvonne McKay
- 14 April            Moira McKenzie & Sheila McKay
- 21 April            Margaret Whewell & Olwen Christie
- 28 April            Edith Stuart & Eileen Brown

**If any of the dates are unsuitable please ensure you arrange a swap.**

### **FOCUS DEADLINE**

**The next edition of Focus will cover April 2024 to May 2024. Please let Johanna Sturrock have articles and any photographs for inclusion no later than Sunday 17 March. [unicornathome@gmail.com](mailto:unicornathome@gmail.com).**

## Portsoy Church Guild

The next meeting of the Guild is on Tuesday February 6th 2024, when Flora Buthlay, Guild National Vice-Convener, will be our speaker. (I'm sorry to have to apologise for Ian's and my absence. We got our diary in a muddle!)

All being well we'll be there for the next meeting on 5th March, when Paul Beaton is coming to tell us about the work of Teen Challenge.

Before we know it we'll be having our AGM in April, so please start thinking ahead about speakers for the next session of Guild.

And don't forget we are always pleased to welcome visitors to our meetings—they may decide to become members, which would be great.

Margaret Whewell

### A few wise words about ageing

"Life's tragedy is that we get too old soon and wise too late."  
Benjamin Franklin

"You don't stop laughing when you grow old. You grow old when you stop laughing." - George Bernard Shaw

"Old age is like everything else. To make a success of it, you've got to start young." - Theodore Roosevelt

"Wrinkles should merely indicate where smiles have been."  
Mark Twain

## Cartoon

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HOW CAN YOU HAVE THE MONDAY BLUES  
WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORK AGAIN  
UNTIL NEXT SUNDAY?



Joint services with our friends from Cullen and Cornhill have been going from strength to strength. The latest was on 21<sup>st</sup> January in the Church Centre - wonderful to see a full church!



# Prayer Focus

"A soft answer turns away wrath" Proverbs 15:1

Life on the whole, for most of us, can be uneventful then out of the blue, without any warning, something happens to make us angry and we feel we must do something about it. Sometimes anger rightly calls our attention to an injustice that needs to be faced, and we are urged to righteous action. Our reactions may be dangerous, impulsive or maybe foolish in the heat of the moment. Anger, for whatever reason, should be handled properly. Anger is explosive. Unless it is handled with wisdom and self-control, it can do great damage.

How can we handle Anger?. First acknowledge it. Be honest with yourself and God. Tell Him how you are feeling.

Slow down. In the book of James we read to be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to get angry. God Himself is slow to get angry, and our aim in life is to let Him form Christlike character in us. ( Galatians 4:19 and Colossians 3:29)

We should all take a close look at our inner anger or rage. We might think we can control it. Unfortunately, though, our feelings of hostility often control us and cause us to do things we should never do while thinking clearly. Not all anger is wrong. But all wrong anger needs to be recognised and confessed before it gets out of control.

Father, angry words and actions bring tears and wounds which linger. Lord, set a guard on our lips and control on our tongues.



Help us to assess each thought and to watch every word we say. May we find inner grace to choose as Jesus would have chosen. Please change our hearts and give us a desire to be at peace with those near and dear to us.

Amen

## Recipe for a Happy New Year

**Ingredients:** 12 whole months.

**Preparation:** Clean each month thoroughly of all bitterness, hate and jealousy and then cut each month into 28, 30 or 31 different parts and leave each to the side for later use.

**Method:** Taking one day at a time, mix well into one part of faith, one part of patience, one part of courage and one part of work. Add to each day one part of hope, faithfulness, generosity and kindness and blend with one part of prayer and (at least) one good deed. Season the mix with a dash of good spirits, a sprinkle of fun, a pinch of play and a cupful of good humour. Pour it all into a vessel of love and warm thoroughly over radiant joy, then garnish with a smile and serve with quietness, unselfishness and cheerfulness.





A new term back for Well Café and below 'To mark Burns Night, children (and parents!) at the Well Cafe worked together on a Saltire collage - great job!'



*My Lord God, I have no idea where I am  
going.*

*I do not see the road ahead of me.  
I cannot know for certain where it will end.*

*Nor do I really know myself.*

*And the fact that I think I am following  
your will does not mean that I am actually  
doing so.*

*But I believe that the desire to please you does  
in fact please you.*

*And I hope that I have that desire  
In all that I am doing.*

*And I know that if I do this,  
You will lead me by the right road  
Although I may know nothing about it.*

*Therefore will I trust you always  
Though I may seem to be lost.*

*And in the shadow of death  
I will not fear, for you are ever with me.  
And you will never leave me to face my  
perils alone.*

*Thomas Merton*

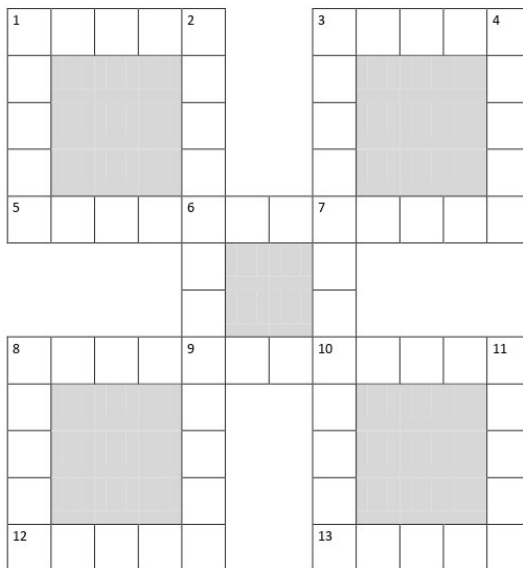
# Quiz

1

## Cloverword



Answer the clues, across and down, to complete this clover shaped crossword and see an example of where the answers occur in the Bible.



### Across

1. Combined together  
[Exodus 29:40]
3. Big stream [Zechariah 9:10]
5. Pulled out - e.g. sword from scabbard [Psalm 55:21]
6. Info of current events  
[Matthew 4:24]
7. Words set to music  
[Colossians 3:16]
8. Females [Esther 1:9]
9. He built the ark [Genesis 7:1]
10. Stringed instruments  
[Revelation 14:2]
12. Blood pumping organ  
[Habakkuk 3:16]
13. Tall, slender part of a castle

### Down

1. Shifted position [Acts 27:8]
2. Suffocate in water  
[Matthew 8:25]
3. Underground parts of trees  
[Mark 11:20]
4. Broken remains of buildings  
[Nehemiah 2:17]
6. Midday [Amos 8:9]
7. Weary breath [Mark 7:34]
8. Find out how heavy something is  
[2 Samuel 14:26]
9. Dusk to dawn  
[Matthew 24:43]
10. Customary practice  
[1 Timothy 5:13]

(All Bible references from NIV)

## **Christian Days of the Week**

### **Monday: Wash Day**

Lord, help me wash away all my selfishness and vanity, so I may serve you with humility through the week ahead.

### **Tuesday: Ironing Day**

Dear Lord, help me iron out all the wrinkles of prejudice I've collected through the years, so I can see the beauty in others.

### **Wednesday: Mending Day**

O God, help me mend my ways so I won't set a bad example for others.

### **Thursday: Cleaning Day**

Lord, help me dust out all the faults I've been hiding in the secret corners of my heart.

### **Friday: Shopping Day**

Father, give me the grace to shop wisely, that I may buy happiness for myself and for others in need of love.

### **Saturday: Cooking Day**

Help me, Father, to brew a big kettle of love for my neighbour and serve it with the clean, sweet bread of human kindness.

### **Sunday: The Lord's Day**

O God, I have prepared my house for you, now I ask that you would come into my heart as my honoured guest that I may spend the day and the rest of my life in your presence.



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 838 506  
E-mail: jgow@churchofscotland.org.uk
- Session Clerk** Mrs Yvonne McKay, 11 The Steadings,  
Findochty, AB56 Tel: 07592 395 581  
E-mail: Yvonne@therealmckay.co.uk
- Treasurer** Mr Raymond Wilson 5 St Tarquin's Place,  
Fordyce, AB45 2SH Tel: 01261 842204  
E-mail: raymondwilsonpfp@btinternet.com
- Gift Aid Convener** Mr Ian Whewell, Eynhallow, 14 South High  
Street, Portsoy. Tel:01261 843 125  
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 843 928 or  
07756 53 5731  
E-mail: sarahsfamily@btinternet.com
- Focus** Mrs Johanna Sturrock  
21 Hill Street, Portsoy. Tel: 07766 390 318  
E-mail: unicornathome@gmail.com

## DIRECTORY (CONTINUED)

<i>Pastoral Care Group Convener</i>	Olwen Christie	01261 843680
<i>Outreach Group Convener</i>	Paul Williams	01261 842338
<i>Finance &amp; Property Group Convener</i>	Ian Whewell	01261 843125
<i>Social Group Convener</i>	Helen D'Arcy	01261 842340
<i>Administration Group Convener</i>	Anne McArthur	01261 842474

# Service Times

**10.30am at the Church Centre every Sunday**

**Except for the following joint services:  
18th February 10.30am at Cullen Hall Church  
24th March 10.00am at Cornhill Church**

**(refreshments served after Sunday services)**

**Please join us for all are welcome**

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

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**Scottish Charity No: SC 000522**