

FOCUS

Portsoy Church Magazine



December 2021—January 2022

A Festive Message from the Manse

I think I've probably mentioned it once or twice (!) but before finally seeing the light and entering ministry, my career was in newspapers. I did all sorts of jobs in my time in that industry, and one of them was writing the editorial copy for advertising supplements. They all had to be planned well in advance so often I'd find myself writing about summer holidays before Easter had come and gone, or about places to visit with the kids during the October break before they'd even had their summer holidays. And Christmas used to come really, really early for me. I'd shut myself away while the sun was still shining in early September, put on some Christmas music to try to get me into the mood and write about office parties and gift ideas. I've got to admit, it took a little of the shine off Christmas for me.

Things are so much better now. As I write for this issue of Focus, there's at least a winter feel in the air - leaves have fallen, darkness comes early. By the time you're reading this we'll be into Advent, into the full swing of the festive season, and the days and the weeks will rush by until, well, until it's over for another year.

Now don't worry, I'm not going to come over all 'bah, humbug', but I often wonder if we put far too much emphasis on the wrong things at this time of year. We build up the importance of certain aspects of Christmas, unfortunately the commercial ones, and it's all too easy to forget just why we're celebrating in the first instance. We're celebrating, as Christians, because

God chose to come to us, as one of us, to walk among us, and if that's not a reason to make merry then what is? No amount of Christmas music in the shops, no bauble, no string of tinsel can ever make that reason less, or can diminish it in any way. Embrace Christmas for all the right reasons, that's what I say.

And that's why I'm so glad to be embracing the season here in Portsoy, my first Christmas in my not-so-new home. It's sufficiently far away from the congestion and the busy-ness of the big towns and cities, the nearest retail park with its mixed-up idea of what passes for Christmas is many miles away, and I think Portsoy, and certainly our church here, is full of people who know how to hold dear what Christmas really means - a time of togetherness, a time of friendship, a time of love. The angel Gabriel said to Mary in Luke 26:28, *'Peace be with you! The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you.'* I think, in fact I know, He has blessed us all.

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

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 7 October | Derek Benzie |
| 29 October | Jack Mair |
| 3 November | Agnes Gallow |

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

The future of Portsoy Church Guild

The future of Portsoy Church Guild is on something of a knife-edge! As with so many organisations, the pandemic has had a serious effect on the Guild. There have been no meetings since lockdown hit in early 2020, and now it is proving difficult to build momentum again.

Following consultation with members, the feeling is that they would like the guild to continue and would like to be members. But, many members have held office in the Guild over the years and no one feels able to be on the committee. But, the Guild constitution requires only that we have a "contact person" and a treasurer. At the moment we have a volunteer for each of those positions, plus one committee member willing to remain in office for the time being.

In consultation with John, our Minister, we have decided that we should have a meeting - hopefully in January - of members and others who may be interested in joining the Guild to help consider how we should take the Guild forward. Please look out for notices and information in due course. If you would like more information about the Guild and its activities or think you may be interested in joining us, please contact Margaret Whewell on 01261 843 125.

The Guild was established in Portsoy in November 1887, and has been a place of faith-building and warm companionship all down the years since then. It has offered strong support - both practical and prayerful - to many, and raised money for numerous good causes. It would be a sad loss to its members, to our church, and to the town if it were not to go forward.

WELCOME TEAMS

10.30am Portsoy Church Centre

5 December	Moira McKenzie & Joan Morrison
12 December	Margaret Whewell & Olwen Christie
19 December	Edith Stuart & Eileen Brown
26 December	Helen D'Arcy & Yvonne McKay
2 January	Moira McKenzie & Joan Morrison
9 January	Margaret Whewell & Olwen Christie
16 January	Edith Stuart & Eileen Brown
23 January	Helen D'Arcy & Yvonne McKay
30 January	Moira McKenzie & Joan Morrison
6 February	Margaret Whewell & Olwen Christie
13 February	Edith Stuart & Eileen Brown
20 February	Helen D'Arcy & Yvonne McKay
27 February	Moira McKenzie & Joan Morrison

FLOWER ROTA

December	January	February
5 Christmas Flowers	2 Yvonne McKay	6 Eileen Brown
12 Christmas Flowers	9 Sheila McKay	13 Helenor Henderson
19 Christmas Flowers	16 Olwen Christie	20 Helen D'Arcy
26 Christmas Flowers	23 Margaret Whewell	27 Anne McArthur
	30 Edith Stuart	

Many thanks to all who are on the flower rota or 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, please let Margaret know.
(01261 843 125)*

Bible Pairs

The names of some well-known Bible pairs (a few maybe aren't so well known!) have been woven together into one, and your task is to unweave them. To give you an idea of what you're looking for, the first two have been filled in:

- 1 J O M A S E R P H Y Joseph and Mary
- 2 C J O A S L H E U B A Caleb and Joshua
- 3 A D E A V E M
- 4 G O D A L V I A I T D H
- 5 B R O U T A H Z
- 6 J E S A C A O U B
- 7 S I P L A U A S L
- 8 D E S L A I M S L O A N H
- 9 C A B A I E L N
- 10 A B S R A A H R A M A H
- 11 M O A A S R E O N S
- 12 P A R I Q U I S C I L L A L A
- 13 M A M A R R T Y H A
- 14 S A N A P A P N H I I R A A S
- 15 I S I S H A M A A E C L
- 16 R A C L E H E A L H

Thank you all for your prayers for my family.

Mum is happy to be back at home and is slowly regaining her strength.

Also, after her early arrival, my granddaughter Alba is progressing well and all the family are very much looking forward to seeing her when she gets home from hospital.

Thank you also to all who work for our NHS.

God bless you all. Yvonne

Lighthouse

It probably won't have escaped anyone's attention that the lighthouse which, as part of the 'Light the North' trail spent the summer overlooking Portsoy harbour, has returned to the town - and it's all thanks to a superb fundraising effort by the community of Portsoy. Back in August, when the lighthouse was in place (and it's back in the same place, for the time being at least) John spoke of it in a Sunday service, saying that Jesus' light, like the light of a lighthouse, continues to shine in our lives. It's worth remembering what the lighthouse was created to represent, though - and given the tough year it's been for so many people, the artist Rachel Davies' words continue to be so relevant:

'This design is about mental health and how having a guiding light or source of support is invaluable in overcoming difficulties. The dark, rougher seas at the bottom represent the dark feelings of depression. As you move upwards the seas become calmer and lighter, representing recovery and a lift in mood. The light stands as a beacon, providing hope and support when someone is trying to find their way through difficult times.'

As the end of a difficult year approaches, we can all know that

there is a light we can always rely on to lift us from the depths we can sometimes sink to, and that's Jesus, the Light of the World.





Prayer Focus

"Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift"

2 Corinthians 9:15

By the time that this issue of Focus is distributed, we will be in to December and Christmas will be only a few weeks away and planning, preparations and excitement will be building up. It will be a time of expectation, anticipation, preparations and joy. However, through all the shopping, present wrapping and arrangements our thoughts should turn to Advent and to its meaning.

The word Advent means "coming" or "arrival". The focus of the whole season is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ in His first Advent, and the anticipation of the return of Christ the King in His second Advent.

Advent also means that Christ has come, that He is present and that He will come again. It is a time of expectation, (a time of being put right with God) anticipation (the return of Christ the King) longing, (the deliverance of evil in the world), hope (for justice and righteousness over His people and creation) preparation (spending time in humble prayer)

At the beginning of Advent some people mark it by decoration their homes and churches with evergreen wreaths and five candles which signify various aspects of the Advent story. The white candle in the middle is called the Christ candle. It is traditionally lit on Christmas Eve or Day.

Young children are given Advent calendars to keep them

involved in the whole season and to teach them the significance of this sacred time.

Father, may this season of Advent renew our hope and the trust which we place in the future that You have prepared for us.

May our hope be strong in the face of despair.

May our trust grow stronger as we celebrate the coming of Christ in glory when pain and hunger will be no more.

We pray for all who wait for Christ with longing

Father, we pray—Come, Lord, Come

Amen



Thank You Thank You Thank You

To all at Portsoy Church for your weekly donations to the food hamper and your very generous donations at the Harvest Thanksgiving Service. The Sacro



projects in Elgin truly appreciate all our help and



Harvest
2021

support throughout the year. It makes such a difference to know that people care.

A wee reminder also that we will make a delivery during Christmas week, if you wish to donate any Christmas treats or gifts.

The Pastoral Care Team

Nothing like a Royal visitor to cheer you up!

Church member Cathy Milne has had a bit of a rough time lately.

After sustaining some serious injuries from a fall at home, she has been a patient in Chalmers Hospital.

Princess Anne visited the hospital recently

and spent some time in the GP ward, speaking to the patients. Cathy was delighted to spend some time chatting and we're sure it gave her a real boost Wishing you a very speedy recovery Cathy.



Covid Update — December

We are slowly returning to normal and Coffee 'n Company is back and doing well on Tuesday mornings at the usual time of 10-12 noon. We have decided for the moment, that Sunday worship will continue with 1 metre distancing for seating. We must still wear masks during church services and sanitise hands on entry to the building.

We are serving teas and coffees after the service but no longer social distancing at the tables. We have a good number staying after the service and this seems to be working well, but we fully understand if you are not comfortable with these arrangements.

Social distancing in the toilets is continuing, so, only one person at a time in the toilets please. But, you can now use either the hot air hand driers or paper towels.

The Church Centre is now holding events again, with the first soup and sweet being held a few weeks ago. We have several bookings for the Centre, which is almost back to normal. This is certainly helping with our finances, which are still very tight.

Look out for our Christmas services and events happening in the Church Centre.

FOCUS DEADLINE

The next edition of Focus will cover February to March 2022. Please let Johanna Sturrock have articles and any photographs for inclusion no later than Sunday 16 January. unicornathome@gmail.com.

What Christmas Is

It's a big red truck with Coca Cola on the side,
It's a John Lewis ad where we cried and we cried,
It's Santa and Sinterklaas, Wenceslas, Kris Kringle
And baubles and tinsel, turkey-flavoured Pringles.
It's Merry Christmas Everybody, Mistletoe and Wine,
Looped endlessly in shops, time after time.
It's Do They Know It's Christmas with a chiming bell,
And it's buy, buy, buy and it's sell, sell, sell.
It's Dr Who specials, a speech by the Queen,
It's non-stop TV, eyes glued to the screen.
It's nights out and parties, over-indulging,
And wining and dining, with waistlines bulging.

And

It's buy now pay later, accumulation of debt,
It's I got all this and what did you get?
It's consumer madness, avarice, greed
On the high street, where they think they've got what we need.
It's the haunted expression in the eyes of the mums
Who don't want their wee ones outshone by their chums.
It's the queues and the traffic, the tempers fraying,
And 'Oh no, no the in-laws', know what I'm saying?
It's people with nothing, living alone,
No-one to talk to, no-one to phone,
Enjoying their Christmas as best as they're able,
It's a single setting at the Christmas table.

But

It's O Come All Ye Faithful, sung by a choir,
It's Away in a Manger, hymns to inspire.

It's herald angels singing, it's O Holy Night,
And Joy to the World, a world full of light.
It's Mary and Joseph, shepherds and kings,
Gold, frankincense, myrrh, it's precious things.
It's a star in the east that's shining clear,
A beacon from heaven, banishing fear.



It's recalling the night in a stable forlorn,
It's about the arrival of a child that was born.
It's the birth of a Saviour, God's only son,
Who was born to save us, every last one.

© John Gow

Christmas at Portsoy Church

November 28th, December 5th, 12th & 19th: Advent
Services at 10.30am

December 5th: Remembering Loved Ones at 7pm: A service
of peace for those who are sad or struggling with pain and
loss.

December 11th: Carols & Teas at 2pm

Christmas Eve: Watchnight Service at 11.15pm

Christmas Day: Family Service at 11am

Boxing Day: Sunday Service at 10.30am



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
The Manse, 4 Seafield Terrace, Portsoy
Tel: 01261 838 506
E-mail: jgow@churchofscotland.org.uk
- Session Clerk** Mrs Yvonne McKay, Bayview, Sandend.
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 & 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

Every Sunday at 10.30am unless otherwise
intimated

For all Christmas services see page 13

Please join us for all are welcome

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

+++

Scottish Charity No: SC 000522