



Seafield Parish Church of Scotland, Banffshire

www.seafieldchurchbanffshire.org.uk

Parish Post

1st March 2026

Welcome to your weekly roundup of all that's happening in and around the churches of Cornhill, Cullen and Portsoy, and giving you the chance to read a digested version of John's Sunday message. If you'd like a copy emailed to you or delivered to your home, please let John know on 07941 511192 or jgow@churchofscotland.org.uk

Verse of the Week

'For God alone my soul waits in silence; from Him comes my salvation.'

Psalm 62:1

A reminder to us all that stillness isn't empty, it's where God meets us with strength.

This Week

- Mon 2nd Mar: Monday Prayers at 8.30am in Portsoy Church Centre
Movie Monday at 2pm in Portsoy Church Centre. This week, showing *'The Blind Side'*, an extraordinary true story starring Sandra Bullock. This will be the second last film of this season.
- Tues 3rd Mar: Coffee 'n Company from 10am to 12 noon in Portsoy Church Centre
Portsoy Guild meets in Portsoy Church Centre at 2pm, with guest speaker Laurie Chancellor, who'll be giving a talk on 'Operation Hope', one of the Guild projects this year.
CAOSS group gathers in Cornhill Church Hall from 6.30 to 8pm, when youngsters are very welcome to come along for music tuition.
House Group meets at 33 Aird Street in Portsoy at 7pm. The group are currently looking at the life of Matthew and new members are welcome. Just turn up on the night or call Ian Findlay on 07941 831636 for more details.
- Thurs 5th Mar: Monthly Coffee Morning in Cornhill Church Hall from 10am to 11.30am.
Cullen Thursday Get-Together meets at 2pm in the Hall Church, welcoming Brenda Wood along to address the gathering. Come along and enjoy an afternoon with friends!
- Fri 6th Mar: The Well Café in Portsoy Church Centre from 9.15 to 11.15am. Volunteers to help at the Well are needed – let John know if you can help in any way.
World Day of Prayer Service in Portsoy Church Centre at 7pm. This year's service is prepared by WDP Nigeria, with the theme of *'I Will Give You Rest: Come.'* (Matthew 11:28-30)
- Sun 8th Mar: **Sunday Services at 9.30am in Cornhill Church and 11am in Portsoy Church Centre, both with Rev John Gow. No service in Cullen.**



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Looking Ahead

Tues 10th Mar: Cornhill Guild meets at 7pm in Cornhill Church Hall. This month's speaker is Jodie Barclay, from Buckie, and Jodie will be talking about the RSABI (Royal Scottish Agricultural Benevolent Institution). All are welcome, men and women – please spread the word!

This Week's Word

Genesis 28: 10-16 & Luke 24: 28-32

There's an old Celtic idea called *thin places*, describing locations where the boundary between heaven and earth feels unusually close. Maybe you've experienced this yourself: a windswept holy island, an ancient kirk, a particular stretch of coastline where something in the air seems to settle and the world grows quiet. These places are real, and they matter. But this week's message explores a surprising twist: the thinnest places of all may not be on any map.

Our readings bring together two stories of unexpected encounter. In Genesis, Jacob isn't on a pilgrimage. He's running away, exhausted, guilty, scared, fleeing the consequences of his own bad choices. He has nothing but a stone for a pillow. And it's there, in the middle of nowhere and in the middle of his own muddle, that he wakes from a dream and says: "*Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.*" He realises God was there all along, he'd just failed to notice.

In Luke's account of the road to Emmaus (taken slightly out of sequence as a Lenten reflection!) two disciples walk away from Jerusalem with heavy hearts, accompanied by a stranger they don't recognise. Only later do their eyes open and looking back, they ask each another: "*Were not our hearts burning within us?*" They felt something stirring the whole time, they just couldn't name it until afterwards.

Both stories are really about *recognition*. Not discovering something new, but waking up to what was already there. Re-cognition: recovering a knowledge they already possessed. Neither Jacob nor the disciples went looking for God but both found him, or rather they *recognised* him, in the middle of things, in the mess and the muddle and the grief.

Which brings us to our theme for Lent this year. Rather than giving something up this season, what if we tried taking something up instead? Specifically, this week: the gentle, unhurried practice of *paying attention*.

Not to anything dramatic or extraordinary. Just to the small ordinary moments - the cup of tea in a favourite armchair, the conversation that takes an unexpected turn, the moment of tiredness when something shifts and the weight lifts a little. Those moments happen to all of us. Usually we file them away or tell ourselves we're being daft. The invitation this week is simply to pause before doing that. To sit with it for a moment. To ask, quietly: *is something happening here?*

Because thin places, as it turns out, they're not only found on maps. They can be a hospital waiting room, a conversation where words run out and presence is enough, an ordinary table with ordinary bread. The thin place is anywhere we become open enough to notice that's God's close by – and we can find them anywhere, if we're willing to try.

This week, maybe you'll find your own Bethel, which was the name Jacob gave to his wilderness spot, meaning House of God, He didn't name it because he built something there. He named it because something happened in an ordinary, unlikely place, and he wanted to remember it.

Maybe this week, you'll find a place like that too.