

FOCUS

Portsoy Church Magazine



December 2025 — January 2026

A Message from the Manse

I don't want to alarm you, but you might be reading the last issue of Focus Magazine, at least in its current form. With our union with Cornhill and Cullen now becoming a reality, we'll be looking at producing a new, expanded magazine with the news from all three parishes and whether we call it Focus or not, well, that remains to be seen. But we **will** have a magazine, so don't be too concerned!

It's just one of the changes that'll come with our union and you can read about others elsewhere in these pages, but something I want to assure you is that I'll still be here (although as you've no doubt heard I'll be living in the manse in Cullen eventually) and, more importantly, your church will still be here. I'm afraid that there will be some Sundays when there won't be a service in Portsoy, but what I'd like us all to remember is that just because there isn't one on a particular day that doesn't mean there won't be an opportunity for worship. From the end of January onwards, our church will be Seafield Parish Church of Scotland, Banffshire and we're lucky, we'll have three worship centres, the other two of which aren't far away. And if you have trouble getting to either of them, let me know and we'll work something out!

Much as we might love our Church Centre, we've got to remember that we don't worship a building. You know the hymn, don't you? *'I am the church, you are the church, we are the church together!'* Well, it's true. And it's true that, *'The church is not a building, the church is not a steeple, the church is not a resting place, the church is a people.'* It's not the the

bricks and mortar that matter, it's the folks who come through the doors.

In Acts 7:48 we're told '*The Most High God does not live in houses built by human hands.*' Oh, I know that on a Sunday morning I'll thank Him in my prayers for being with us, but that doesn't mean because he's with us He's not in Cornhill or Cullen at the same time. We can't constrain Him to any four walls - look up the word 'omnipresent' in your dictionary if you don't believe me...

If you've just done that, you're maybe thinking now, 'Well, if He's everywhere, I could just stay at home and He'll be with me there.' Yes, He will be, and I know that's how some people's relationships with God work so that's totally fine. But if you're used to attending church, you go because you want to be with people too. You go because you want to be a part of a worshipping family. Please don't let a few miles prevent you when the Church Centre is having a Sunday off.

Nothing changes until after the festive season, though, so let's enjoy that first - and let me take this opportunity of wishing you a peaceful and happy Christmas and a blessed New Year!

Every blessing

John

Please contact John on 07941 511 192 if you know of anyone who is ill at home or in hospital.

Funerals

2nd October: Margaret Nix

7th October: Jessie Sutherland

5th November Jean Harrower

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

DATE	CORNHILL 9.30AM	CULLEN 11AM	POI
25 th January	Joint Service in Cullen		
1 st February	John	John	N
8 th February	John	No service	
15 th February	No service	John	Rev I
22 nd February	Rev Dr Kay Gauld	Rev Dr Kay Gauld	
1 st March	John	John	N
8 th March	John	No service	
15 th March	No service	John	Rev I

Our New Church

By the time you're reading this, we'll have had our Service of Union marking the birth of Seafield Parish Church of Scotland, Banffshire, the result of our union with Cornhill and Cullen.

Although this means some changes are necessary, it won't be until early next year when we'll see them come into effect.

Some of these changes include our schedule of worship, which you can see above up until the end of March, and I'd like to take this opportunity of explaining the thinking behind it.

We have one Minister (me!) to cover all three of our centres of worship and, of course, I can't be everywhere at once. Two things are important to me: 1) that the pattern is regular so we can become easily used to it and 2) that my time is split evenly between centres (it's only fair). There are times when I can't

be in two places at once so it's necessary to enlist some help, as you can see - though, in time, I hope we can manage these with suitably trained volunteers from our united congregation.

Also, you'll see that rather than monthly joint services, we're now just going to have these when there's a fifth Sunday in the month - that'll be four times a year. As each centre has one Sunday in each 4-week month without a service though, there's plenty of opportunity to get together for worship, as I've talked about in my Message from the Manse in this issue of Focus!

In case you're wondering why nothing changes until the end of January, it's so I can get my holidays in first!

John



Blythwood Shoebox Appeal

A very big thank you to all those who donated to the Blythwood Shoebox Appeal. Above is the Portsoy contribution all ready to send to Buckie and onwards to Eastern Europe. This year the team at Buckie packed, sorted and sent off a total of just under 2,000 boxes.



Prayer Focus

"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?" Isaiah 43:19

As the farmers among our Focus readers will know, when a seed is planted it's got to break open before new life can grow from it. It's worth bearing that in mind, as our congregations in Portsoy, Cornhill and Cullen unite, because the chances are we'll feel the stretching of change - but believe this, in our coming together, we can also glimpse the promise of fresh beginnings. It's good to remember that God's always at work, isn't it? That He continues to open doors we've not imagined, that He keeps on setting us out on paths untrodden..

The people of Israel were reminded that God makes "a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland" (Isaiah 43:19). What seemed barren became fruitful. What felt uncertain became a place of hope. As Portsoy, Cornhill and Cullen go forward together, we're invited to look not so much at what's behind us, but at the new things God is bringing to life *among* us.

Paul writes in Philippians 3:13-14, "forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal." Our union isn't the end of something; it's the beginning of a shared journey. Together, we can discover new ways to serve, new friendships to cherish, and new opportunities to witness to Christ in our communities.

Do you ever wonder what blessings God might unfold when His people embrace change with faith? In trusting Him, we find courage to step into tomorrow with hope.

Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 12:12 too that "just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ." Each of our congregations brings its own gifts, traditions, and stories, but it's when we join hands that we reflect the unity of Christ's people best, showing the world that togetherness is so much better than division. And when His people come together, well, then something special happens. A single candle might give light, but lots of candles brighten the whole room. One voice can sing a hymn, but a choir of voices lift it into harmony.

Gracious God, thank You for the gift of new beginnings. As our churches unite, help us to see the opportunities You place before us. Give us courage to embrace change, patience to walk together, and joy in the journey ahead. May our shared life bear fruit for Your Kingdom, and may we always trust that You are doing a new thing among us.

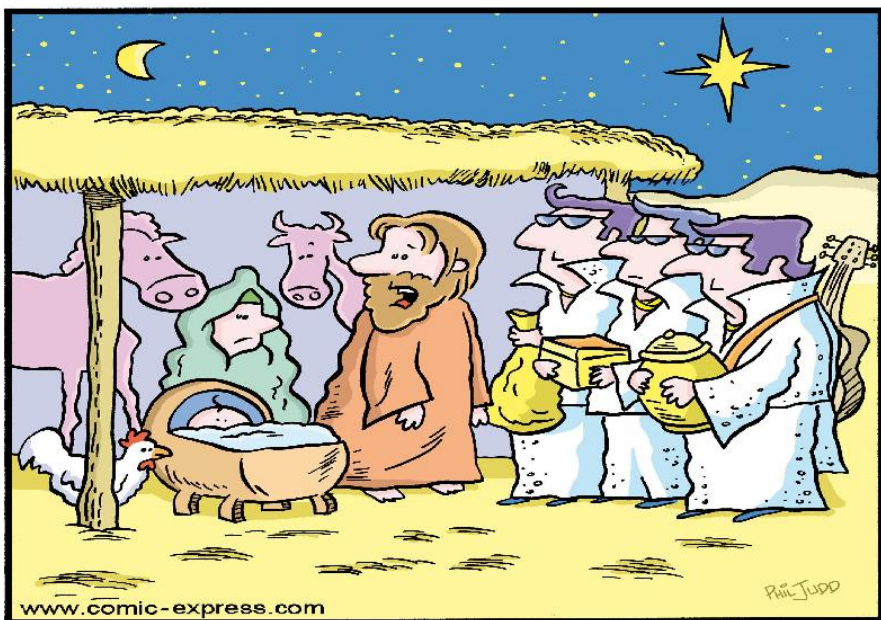
Amen.

Flower Rota

December	January	February
7 Christmas	4 Helenor Henderson	1 No service
14 Christmas	11 Anne Mc Arthur	8 Helen D'Arcy
21 Christmas	18 FF	15 Yvonne McKay
28 Christmas	25 Cullen	22 Sheila McKay

Many thanks to all donating to the Flower Fund. This gives us 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. More volunteers are always welcome.(01261 843125) FF = Flower Fund

**Don't forget our Annual Carols and Teas in the Church Centre on Saturday 13th December at 2pm.
Everyone is welcome**



"They say they are three kings."



The Guild Christmas Coffee Morning in full swing! Thanks to all who helped, and everyone who came along to support us. A special thank you to the ladies who made the delicious pancakes!

The Coffee morning raised over £850 to be shared by charities supported by the Guild.

We are now looking forward to our Guild Christmas Lunch in December, after which Guild takes a break until 2026.

Our first meeting of the year is on 3rd February when Gordon Cruden from the Freedom Challenge Trust will join us to share his experiences of being "Homeless for 30 Days in 7 European countries". This promises to be a most interesting talk which I am looking forward to hearing. Please come and join us if you would like to hear about this challenging venture. We are always pleased to welcome visitors to our meetings, which are held in the Church Centre at 2pm.

Wishing everyone a very happy Christmas and many blessings in 2026.

Margaret Whewell

WELCOME TEAMS

10.00am Portsoy Church Centre

December

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

January

4 January	Helen D'Arcy & Yvonne McKay
11 January	Moirra McKenzie & Sheila McKay
18 January	Margaret Whewell & Olwen Christie
25 January	Cullen

February

1 February	No service
8 February	Edith Stuart & Eileen Brown

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



If You Look for Me at Christmas


*You won't need a special star -
I'm no longer just in Bethlehem,
I'm right there where you are.*

*You may not be aware of Me
amid the celebrations -
You'll have to look beyond the stores
and all the decorations.*

*But if you take a moment
from your list of things to do
And listen to your heart, you'll find
I'm waiting there for you.*

*You're the one I want to be with,
You're the reason that I came,
And you'll find Me in the stillness
As I'm whispering your name.*

Love, Jesus



Directory

Minister

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Treasurer

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Gift Aid Convener

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Mr Ian Whewell - as above

Church Centre Convener Mr Ian Whewell - as above
(For bookings)

Centre Caretaker

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Focus

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Service Times

10.30am at the Church Centre every Sunday

Except for the following joint services:
25th January 10.30am at Cullen Church

Special services

Monday 8th December at 7pm:

Remembering Service

Wednesday 24th December at 6.30pm at Fordyce:

Service of Carols and Lessons

Wednesday 24th December at 11.15pm:

Watchnight Service

Thursday 25th December at 10.30am:

Christmas Morning Service

(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