



PORTSOY CHURCH

FAMILY NEWS 7/12/25

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 digest 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

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God." — Matthew 5:9

Please remember those who work quietly and courageously for peace in our world: those who mend divisions in families, those who stand against injustice, those who bring relief to the poor and comfort to the anxious. May God strengthen their hands and soften our hearts too, so that our words of peace are always matched by deeds of compassion.

Movie Monday: Movie Mondays are back most Monday afternoons for the winter. Our next Movie Monday will be this Monday 8th December starting at 2pm in the meeting room. This week we will be showing **"Saving Grace"** a comedy starring Brenda Blethyn and Craig Ferguson. Come along and enjoy the film in the warmth with company and tea coffee and a snack at the interval.

Remembering Service: Our annual Remembering Service will be held on tomorrow 8th December at 7pm in the Church Centre.

Carols and Teas: A reminder that on Saturday 13th December at 2pm in the Church Centre we will be having our annual Carols and Teas afternoon. If you wish to attend please put your name on the sign-up sheets at the back of the hall to allow us to know how many to cater for. Everyone is welcome.

Focus Magazine: The December to January edition of Focus the Church magazine is out now. Spare copies are available in the vestibule for those who do not have the magazine delivered.

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.

Well Café: Every Friday during term time from 9.15 to 11.15 providing free tea, coffee, fruit and snacks together with a play area for the children.

Monday Prayers: Our morning prayer meeting takes place every Monday at 8.30am in the Church Centre. Please join us for this short informal gathering.

Message from John

Isaiah 9: 2-7

Back in the summer in church, I mentioned a book I'd picked up during Thrift Week: *The Reader's Digest Book of Strange Stories and Amazing Facts*. I first owned a copy when I was about ten years old, and it was full of everything a boy could want, like spooky tales, mysterious disappearances, and

curious legends. Among its most memorable pages were those devoted to the prophecies of Nostradamus. This 16th-century Frenchman wrote hundreds of short, cryptic poems that later readers claimed foretold great events: the Great Fire of London, the rise of Hitler, even the assassination of President Kennedy. At least, that's what the books suggested.

But here's the problem: Nostradamus's words were never exact. They were vague, open to multiple interpretations, and flexible enough to be fitted to almost any circumstance. That's the trouble with prophecy, it just isn't an exact science.

So what do we make of the prophetic words in Isaiah 9? *"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given... and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."* Is this just another vague prediction, or is it more than that?

Unlike Nostradamus, Isaiah wasn't trying to be mysterious. He was speaking God's word to a people living in deep darkness. His prophecy was clear, saying that God would act. That a child would be born. A ruler would come. And this ruler's reign wouldn't be marked by fear or violence, but by peace.

Isaiah's vision begins with light breaking into darkness: *"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light."* For Israel at the time, darkness meant oppression, fear, and uncertainty. In the time of Jesus' birth darkness meant Roman soldiers, heavy taxes, and the constant threat of violence. Yet Isaiah declared: light has shone. And with that comes peace. Peace begins with light, with God shining into places where there's fear and restlessness. And this promise of peace isn't a denial of darkness; it's a declaration that darkness won't have the last word.

And it's a special kind of peace. It's *shalom* peace, and that means more than quiet or calm, it means wholeness, completeness, harmony. It's peace with God, peace with our neighbour, peace with ourselves. Shalom is about the world being set right. It's not fragile, it isn't easily broken by arguments or wars. It's the peace that comes when God reigns, when justice and righteousness are upheld. Isaiah promises: *"Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end."* That's shalom.

The people of 1st century Bethlehem, they didn't know that the prophecy they'd heard countless times was to be fulfilled. They didn't know that the true Light of the World was about to be born there. They didn't know the Prince of Peace would finally arrive in their time.

But the child that was born would go on to embody peace. He'd break down dividing walls, calm storms, heal wounds, forgive sins. He'd say to his disciples: *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you."* He'd be the personification of shalom. Worldly peace is fragile, treaties and ceasefires can be broken, but *his* peace is lasting, and it's eternal.

Like Isaiah's time, our world is restless. Wars rage. Communities are divided, sometimes deliberately. Anxieties run deep. The news often tempts us to be frightened of the future, scared of loss and change. But the promise of peace is still alive. The Prince of Peace came, and his shalom endures. Darkness and fear won't have the final word. Light has shone; it goes on shining and the peace it brings will always be God's gift to the world.