



PORTSOY CHURCH

FAMILY NEWS 18/9/22

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 digested version 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

"With all his abundant wealth through Jesus Christ, my God will supply all your needs."

May our lives be filled with thanksgiving and praise for the countless blessings we enjoy each day.
May we be given assurance that our Lord will supply our every need through His generosity.

Blythwood Shoebox Appeal: We are supporting the Shoebox appeal again this year so please start knitting and collecting toiletries etc. Leaflets are available on the table by the door to remind us what items are needed. Please take one. Shoeboxes themselves are always in short supply, so please bring along any that you have.

Focus Magazine: The deadline for items for the next Focus Magazine covering the months of October and November is this Sunday 18th September. Please let Johanna Sturrock have articles and any photographs for inclusion: unicornathome@gmail.com.

Dementia UK: Kath Findlay is wearing out the shoe leather this month, walking 90 miles in September in aid of Dementia UK - helping families face dementia. If you'd like to sponsor Kath, the sponsor form is in the Church Centre, or you can call her on 07759 692968.

Let's Talk: The next Let's Talk is next Thursday 22nd September at 7pm in the Church Centre. Let's Talk is an informal study group and everyone is welcome.

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.

Monday Prayers: Our morning prayer gathering will now take place every Monday at 8.00am and the evening gathering at 6.30pm in the Church Centre. Everyone is welcome!

Coffee and Tea after the service: Coffee and Teas are being served after the service. Please stay and join us if you can. Visitors especially welcome.

Weekly message from John Gow

Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8

The writer of Ecclesiastes, commonly known as the 'Preacher' speaks about seasons within seasons, saying how there are certain times for certain things, that through our lives we'll experience all these

things, and I think he's saying to us we've got to face them and accept them and, ultimately, give thanks to God for them all.

The Preacher begins with the defining moments of our lives. '*A time to be born and a time to die.*' And, of course, it's not up to us to choose these times, there's no right and wrong times for either of them, they just are.

The Preacher goes on to say there's '*a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted.*' and I think what he's saying here is that if we try to interfere with the natural rhythm of things, if we plant a crop in the middle of winter, or if we bring in the crop before it's ready for reaping, then we're heading for disappointment. But I think he's also saying if we don't take care of our bodies and our minds, well, chances are we're heading for disappointment too.

And that brings us on to the next verse. The Hebrew word for 'kill', in '*a time to kill and a time to heal*' isn't the same as the Hebrew word for murder. It's more closely related to the word for 'get sick', so we can read it as '*a time to get sick and a time to heal*'. People get ill, they get well, with the help of doctors and medicine. God doesn't promise it won't happen, but he'll be with us when it does.

'*A time to break down and a time to build up.*' Youth is the time of building up, muscles grow, co-ordination improves. But then, if we live long enough, things start to deteriorate. Getting old is, again, part of the natural order of things, there no point in railing against it, or fighting it.

The Preacher goes on to talk about matters of the soul. Verse four tells us that there's '*a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance.*' There's no escaping the hurts and the sorrows of our lives, and the lives of everyone around us, we've only got to think back on the events of the past week to know that. There are times when we grieve, but there are times too when grieving has to be left behind, because life always has to go on.

And '*a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather them together*' says much of the same thing. It's about re-building, it's about leaving behind the things that don't matter so much anymore and building something with the things that do.

'*A time to seek and a time to lose; a time to keep and a time to cast away.*' I think what the preacher's saying here is that having a clear out of our minds is good for us every so often, when we should make some space for fresh perspectives, new knowledge. need to be forgiven and forgotten.'

And then we have '*a time to tear and a time to sew*'. At the time when the preacher was writing, the Jewish custom at times of grieving or repentance was to tear the clothes you were wearing, so I think he's saying here that there's a time for grief for the past, a time for repentance, for looking back and regretting what's been, but also a time for putting it all back together again, to put what you've learned from it into practice.

'*A time to keep silence and a time to speak.*' We've all had times when we've spoken out but wish we hadn't, and other times when we should have said something but we didn't. The Book of Proverbs has got some lovely words on this: 15:23: '*A person finds joy in giving an apt reply – and how good is a timely word,*' and 25:11: '*A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.*'

And now we're coming to the end of the Preacher's advice for life. He says there's a '*time for love and a time for hate.*' How can hating be spiritually healthy for us? I think if it's good enough for God, it's good enough for us and, looking at Proverbs again, we're given seven things that God hates, which can be found in verses 17 to 19.

Which brings us to the last, '*a time for war and a time for peace.*' Sometimes wars are inevitable, to counter the things that God hates. But always, afterwards, there's a time of healing and a time of re-building.