



# PORTSOY CHURCH

## FAMILY NEWS 13/4/25

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*

*'They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna", blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'*

*John 12:13*

**On this Palm Sunday, as we celebrate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, may we know the joy that He is with us, may we follow Him faithfully and live out our lives in honouring Him.**

**Holy Week Prayer Stations:** During Holy Week (Monday to Friday, 12 noon to 2pm), the meeting room annexe will be open for prayer. Interactive stations have been created to provide an environment to prompt prayers for the world, for those we care about and for ourselves. Please do consider spending a little time this Holy Week in prayer.

**Hot Cross Buns:** On Good Friday this week, hot cross buns and tea and coffee will be served in the Church Centre from 11am to 1pm. Come along and enjoy an Easter celebration with good company and conversation!

**Easter Services:** Communion will be shared in a Maundy Thursday service at Cullen Hall Church at 7pm, to which all are welcome. And all are welcome too to the Good Friday service in the Church Centre at 7pm, as well as to our outdoor service at St Comb's Well at 8am on Easter Sunday. After this, breakfast will be shared in the Church Centre followed by our Easter Sunday service at 10.30am.

**Focus Magazine:** The latest issue of Focus, for the months of April and May, is available now. Copies can be picked up in the Church Centre and if you'd like to go on the delivery list for future issues, just let Ian or John know.

**Coffee 'n Company:** Coffee 'n Company is every Tuesday morning from 10am 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 takes place every Monday at 8.30am in the Church Centre. Everyone is welcome!

**The Well Café:** The Well will be back after its Easter holidays on 25<sup>th</sup> April.

## An Easter Message from John

John 12: 12-19

It's the beginning of Holy Week and for Palm Sunday in church this week everyone's being given a palm branch – only a plastic one though, unfortunately!

Palm branches were a symbol of triumph and of victory in ancient Jewish custom, and waving palms, and laying them before Jesus as the people did on that first Palm Sunday as he entered Jerusalem, was the people recognising Jesus as the king and Messiah, they'd been waiting for. They called us 'Hosanna' too, which means, 'Save us.' That's what we want our kings and our leaders to do, isn't it? Save us from everything that's wrong with our lives.

The thing is, though, the people were looking for an earthly Messiah, one who would save them from the oppression they'd been suffering under. The people were looking for someone to lead them to victory over their oppressors – victory in a military way.

If this was the king they were looking for, they were in for some disillusionment. They'd have been disillusioned by what happened during the week to come. They'd have been disillusioned by the way Jesus didn't respect their temple when he turned over the tables. They'd have been disillusioned by him apparently advising folk to pay Roman taxes – '*Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's,*' he said. They'd have been disillusioned by his refusal to agree with the religious leaders. They'd have been disillusioned by him not standing up for himself before the Roman authorities. They'd have been disillusioned – and that's an understatement – by what happened at the end of the week, when Jesus was strung up on a cross like a common criminal. They'd have been disillusioned and afraid too – afraid that their king would never come.

And then came Good Friday, a day that must have seemed like the ultimate disillusionment, the ultimate defeat to those who had placed their hopes in Jesus. How could a king be crucified? How could the Messiah hang on a cross, humiliated and forsaken? The disciples scattered, the crowds fell silent, and the hope that had filled Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, it just seemed to vanish into thin air.

But as the events of Holy Week unfolded, Jesus redefined what it meant to be a king and a Messiah. The things he did in the temple, where He drove out the money changers, they were a proclamation that God's house was to be a house of prayer for all nations, instead of a den of thieves. His teaching about rendering to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's, it wasn't about paying taxes, it was a reminder to the people that ultimate allegiance, it belongs to God, not to any earthly authority.

The beauty of the Gospel is that God's plans, they're so much bigger than we can understand. What looked like defeat on Friday, it became the ultimate victory on Easter Sunday. Through His death and his resurrection, Jesus conquered sin and death, opening the way for all people to enter into a relationship with God. He proved that His kingdom isn't of this world but it's eternal, it's unshakable.

Palm Sunday calls us to recognise Jesus for who He truly is, not who we might want Him to be. It invites us to lay down our own expectations and submit to what he wants for us, trusting that His plans for us are good, even if they don't always line up with our own ideas of what our plans should be. As we begin our journey through Holy Week, may we reflect on the depth of Christ's love and the magnitude of His sacrifice. And may we, like those first followers, rejoice in the knowledge that our King, the *real* King, he came to save us—not just for a moment, but for eternity.