

FOCUS

Portsoy Church Magazine



October 2023—November 2023

A Message from the Manse

Well, it wasn't too bad a summer, was it? I've read and seen on the news so often folks in the south II don't mean Aberdeen!) complaining about it having been one of the wettest for so many years, but that certainly hasn't been the case here in Portsoy. In fact, I can hardly remember, up until the time of writing this, that is, a full day's rain. Okay, maybe it wasn't '*scorchio*' all the time, as was a TV catch phrase a few years ago, but at least it was pretty settled.

And that's not unusual for the part of the country in which we live. I've been told that prevailing weather tends to come from the south-west and systems blow themselves out over the Cairngorms before reaching us - and that sounds plausible to me. Whatever the reason, here in the '*Riviera of the North*' or '*Scotland's Cornwall*', as I've heard the Moray Coast referred to, we enjoy (mainly) a pretty temperate climate.

If only it was like that in our lives...

If only our lives had a Cairngorms protecting them, acting as a buffer against all the difficult situations and the unpleasant conditions that come our way.

Unfortunately, it doesn't work like that. When we see a hard time coming, when the weather map of our lives shows isobars packed closely together suggesting stormy times ahead, all we can do is batten down the hatches and wait until it passes.

Not quite, though. Because although we don't have a buffer

against the hard times, we have a God who'll help us through them. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul said, '*God will give you peace, a peace which is too wonderful to understand.*' We don't have to understand His peace, any more than we have to understand weather systems, all we have to do is ask for it and accept it.

We're heading into the winter months now, autumn will come and go very quickly as it always does, and no doubt there will be some dark and stormy times ahead - there always are, isn't it always the way? But with God's peace with us, we can make it through. Winter, do your worst...

Every blessing

John

If you need me for anything or if you just want to call for a chat, you can reach me at the manse on 01261 838 506.

Funerals

4 August	Dorothy Gillespie
8 September	Helen Cowie
22 September	Kathleen Hall
27 September	Alan Duffy
29th September	John E Smith

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

Blythswood Care Shoebox Appeal

We hope you will be happy to support the shoebox appeal this year. As in past years, we are liaising with Buckie Baptist Church, who have a team ready to cover and pack the shoeboxes to transport to those in need. However if you can cover your boxes that would be much appreciated.

Here is a quote from Blythswood about last year's shoebox deliveries: "Through challenging days of restriction and uncertainty, 88,816 boxes were delivered to people in need across Eastern Europe last winter. This winter, we will again be sending shoeboxes to people in Ukraine, to neighbouring countries supporting Ukrainian refugees, as well as to those whose lives continue to be marked by poverty across Eastern Europe. Your support counts more than ever in 2023."

Leaflets about the Appeal, are available at Church on Sunday mornings and at Coffee and Company on Tuesday mornings. Please check the leaflet for what we **can and cannot send in** the shoeboxes. Margaret Whewell also has a more detailed list. Please ask for a copy.

You can hand in donations at the above times, or contact Margaret on 01261 843 125 if you would like her to collect from you. **All contributions must be handed in by the end of October. Uncovered shoeboxes need to be handed in sooner, to allow time to cover them.**

Our friends at Buckie will be delighted and most grateful for your support, whether filled shoeboxes, items to fill empty boxes, or donations towards the cost of transporting boxes to their destinations.

Many thanks for your interest and help. We will let you know how many boxes in total were sent from Buckie this year in due course. God bless you all for your compassion and generosity.

WELCOME TEAMS

10.00am Portsoy Church Centre

October

- 1 October Helen D'Arcy & Yvonne McKay
- 8 October Moira McKenzie & Sheila McKay
- 15 October Cullen
- 22 October Margaret Whewell & Olwen Christie
- 29 October Edith Stuart & Eileen Brown

November

- 5 November Helen D'Arcy & Yvonne McKay
- 12 November Moira McKenzie & Sheila McKay
- 19 November Margaret Whewell & Olwen Christie
- 26 November Cornhill

December

- 3 December Edith Stuart & Eileen Brown
- 10 December Helen D'Arcy & Yvonne McKay
- 17 December Moira McKenzie & Sheila McKay
- 24 December Margaret Whewell & Olwen Christie
- 25 December Edith Stuart & Eileen Brown
- 31 December Helen D'Arcy & Yvonne McKay

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

FOCUS DEADLINE

The next edition of Focus will cover December 2023 to January 2024. Please let Johanna Sturrock have articles and any photographs for inclusion no later than Sunday 19 November. unicornathome@gmail.com.

FOND MEMORIES

On Saturday 9 September, I entered Edinburgh's General Assembly Hall for the first time. The occasion - to attend The Guild Annual Gathering, the biggest event in the Guild's year. There was an uplifting buzz about the place as I searched for a seat out of camera view! Some ladies from Currie (a village on the outskirts of Edinburgh) welcomed me as I settled down beside them. During conversation I soon discovered they had connections with a few people in Portsoy.

Before starting the meeting, General Secretary Karen Gillon gave some safety and housekeeping information. With her cheerful personality it was not long before she had the audience in fits of laughter. National Convener 2022-23, Helen Eckford conducted opening devotions and gave a review of her term in office. Personal reflections followed from the Moderator, Rt Rev Sally Foster-Fulton. Unfortunately the planned interaction with some of the livestream venues around the country didn't work. Karen updated us on the current six Guild Projects with approximately £300,000 raised so far.

As the meeting broke for lunch my new friends from Currie invited me to join them. We were like-minded and had brought our own packed lunches. It was a hot, sunny day and with plenty of time left before the meeting resumed, we took a stroll around the old town and many landmarks were pointed out to me. It began to feel like my new found friends, Moira, Elizabeth, Janet and Mary, had been my pals for years. They were amazing! By the castle, some of us indulged in an ice-cream - as I said the weather was hot, and well...any excuse.....!!

Heading back to the Assembly Hall I stopped by the Guild's pop up shop to make a few purchases, where I bumped into Flora Buthlay, the Guild's National Vice-Convener, who said she was looking forward to speaking at Portsoy Guild in February.

The afternoon exceeded all my expectations. Guest speaker was Professor Jason Leitch, CBE. As The National Clinical Director he spoke about Covid and its challenges. Serious and humorous, we were captivated by his talk. Jason is also a board member of The Nazareth Trust and a trustee of the Indian Rural Evangelical Fellowship (UK). It runs a children's home and schools in southeast India where Jason has exercised his skills as a dentist and taught students in this line of work.

A Salvation Army choir provided the entertainment. Led by Matt Ramsay, The Govan Songsters brilliantly sang a mix of old and new songs. A sea of colourful ribbons surrounded the room as the audience waved in time to the music.

Her term in office now over, Helen Eckford removed her badge before the new National Convener 2023-24, Rae Lind was installed by Rev George Lind. The day had been interspersed with hymn singing accompanied by Iain Whyte on the organ.

As the Annual Gathering came to an end, I felt blessed to be a part of this wonderful day. A DVD of the event is on order and should you want to borrow it please contact either Margaret, Ian, John or myself. If you have never been to a Guild meeting, I would encourage you to give it a try. At Portsoy, you will be made very welcome.

Yvonne



Elizabeth, Janet, Mary and Moira



Prayer Focus

"He who abides in Me, and I in Him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." John 15:5

Many a time, I am sure, we have heard a small child say, "I can do it myself" when they want to do a task on their own. With four young children in our family, aged 5 and under, that is heard quite often. When help is offered they invariably turn it down emphatically but in the end they usually have to accept a lending hand. Recently I was visiting my granddaughter and her wee son Charlie, coming up three years old, who is fiercely independent but gets things a wee bit wrong. He was asked to put his sandals on as we were going for a walk. When he had done that his mum said, "Well done Charlie but they are on the wrong feet". With a little bit of encouragement from mum he changed them over.

There can be a lot of that spirit of independence in all of us. We too want to "do it ourselves". Yet we need to realise that, even though we think we don't need God's help, we really do.

The more we learn to depend on God, the more opportunity this gives Him to be active in our lives.

If we think that we can undertake life's tasks in our own strength, that way of thinking will inevitably become our undoing.

"Let your hand become my help" Psalm 119:173. There is help nearby—Jesus our Friend. In all life's tasks, we need a helping hand and strength of our God. He alone can equip us for all of them.

Lord, please help us not to trust our own strength, our own wisdom, our own skills but to depend on You alone for support in all areas of our lives. Father God, give insight into all our weaknesses so that we can bring them before you for guidance on how to deal with them.

Amen

Quiz Time!

So how did you get on with the quiz in the last Focus? John gave away one of the answers on a Sunday morning a few weeks ago, but here's the full set.

- 1 A man is swallowed by a fish. JONAH
- 2 A woman is turned into salt. GENESIS
- 3 There's a talking donkey. NUMBERS
- 4 Someone gets called 'baldy'. 2 KINGS
- 5 A wall falls down at the sound of trumpets. JOSHUA
- 6 Lions lose their appetite. DANIEL
- 7 Someone falls asleep and then falls out of a window during a long sermon. ACTS
- 8 A man goes weak at the knees after he has a haircut. JUDGES
- 9 There's a floating zoo. GENESIS
- 10 Someone is murdered when (sorry!) he's sitting on the toilet. JUDGES



Coffee & Company continues to go from strength to strength.



Inaugural meeting of Link Ladies on 23rd August

Link & Ladies

We're an informal group of women aiming to have fun, friendship, and a chance to explore faith together. We're currently meeting the women of the Bible to find out how their stories can help us and our lives today.

What do I bring?

Just yourself and a willingness to chat!
Bibles not essential.

Do I need to come every month?

It would be lovely to see you, but NO, there's no expectation of attendance.

Can I bring other people?

Absolutely! We'd love to meet other people from church and no church! Whether you have faith, are seeking faith or have no faith., this group is for everyone.

Dates for your diary:

September 27th: The story of the Woman at the Well

Portsoy Church Guild

A quick PS to Yvonne's lovely account of her day at the Guild Annual Gathering in Edinburgh. The Annual Gathering was live-streamed in the Church Centre here at Portsoy for those who couldn't get to Edinburgh. A few folk came along, including 2 from Cornhill Guild, 2 from Fraserburgh, and 1 from Turriff, as well as some Portsoy members. It was a great pleasure to have the company of these friends from other Guilds. I have never thought of attending the Annual Gathering in Edinburgh, but having watched it live this year I think I might make the effort in the future. It was an uplifting experience.

And although she did her best to be out of camera range, I managed to spot Yvonne 3 times! 😊

Now, on to our next Guild meetings here in Portsoy which will be held on 3 October and 7 November. Our speaker in October will be Andrew Simpson, Lord-Lieutenant of Banffshire, who will tell us about some of his experiences in this role. In November our own Kirsty Harper will tell us about her time living and working in Rwanda.

Visitors are always welcome at Guild meetings, so feel free to tell your friends about it, and to bring them along. But no need to wait for someone to invite you - just come along and join us for the afternoon. Meetings begin at 2pm, and finish by 4pm. We'll be delighted to see you.

Flower Rota

October

1 Helen D'Arcy
8 Harvest Fest (FF)
15 Cullen
22 Anne Mc Arthur
29 Yvonne McKay

November

5 Sheila McKay
12 Remembrance
19 Communion (FF)
26 Cornhill

December

3 Olwen Chrisie
10 Margaret Whewell
17 Christmas
24 Christmas
31 Christmas

Many thanks to all who donate to the Flower Fund. This allows us to have 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, and place flowers in the Church for the Sunday service please let Margaret know. More volunteers are always welcome.(01261 843125)

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Please contact Olwen Christie (Pastoral Care Convener) on 01261 843 680 if you know of anyone who is ill at home or in hospital (especially Dr Gray's in Elgin as we are not notified).

Community Diary:

A diary of local events has been placed in the Portsoy Ice Cream Shop for use by everyone. This will enable event organisers to check that the date and time of their event will not clash with another already planned.

Please pass this on to any other local groups. To work effectively everyone will need to check the diary and ensure their own event is entered in it.

A Christian book lending library is available in the meeting room in the Church Centre

If you see something you fancy reading, just put your name in the register, borrow the book and sign it back in when you're finished.



PRAYER CIRCLE

Name:
(Not necessary)

Please pray for:
.....
.....

Please place completed slip in box at church door or hand to the minister or Edith Stuart.

Directory

Minister

Rev. John Gow
Tel: 01261 838 506
E-mail: jgow@churchofscotland.org.uk

Session Clerk

Mrs Yvonne McKay, 11 The Steadings,
Findochty, AB56 Tel: 07592 395 581
E-mail: Yvonne@therealmckay.co.uk

Treasurer

Mr Raymond Wilson 5 St Tarquin's Place,
Fordyce, AB45 2SH Tel: 01261 842204
E-mail: raymondwilsonpfp@btinternet.com

Gift Aid Convener

Mr Ian Whewell, Eynhallow, 14 South High
Street, Portsoy. Tel:01261 843 125
E-mail: ian.whewell@btinternet.com

Church Website

Mr Ian Whewell - as above

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

Centre Caretaker

Mrs Sarah Willis, 40, Gordon Crescent,
Portsoy Tel:01261 843 928 or
07756 53 5731
E-mail: sarahsfamily@btinternet.com

Focus

Mrs Johanna Sturrock
21 Hill Street, Portsoy. Tel: 07766 390 318
E-mail: unicornathome@gmail.com

DIRECTORY (CONTINUED)

Pastoral Care Group Convener	Olwen Christie	01261 843680
Outreach Group Convener	Paul Williams	01261 842338
Finance & Property Group Convener	Ian Whewell	01261 843125
Social Group Convener	Helen D'Arcy	01261 842340
Administration Group Convener	Anne McArthur	01261 842474

Service Times

**10.30am at the Church Centre every Sunday
except joint services
(refreshments served after Sunday services)**

Joint Services:

October 15th Cullen Old Kirk 10.30am

November 26th Cornhill 10.00am

Special services:

Harvest Festival 7th October 10.30am

12th November Remembrance 11.15am

19th November Holy Communion 10.30am

Please join us for all are welcome

Website—<http://www.portsoychurch.org>

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