



PORTSOY CHURCH

FAMILY NEWS 2/10/22

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

"For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, "You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land."

Deuteronomy 15:11.

Please give thanks for the dedication and skill of surgeons, nurses, paramedics and others who do their utmost trying to save lives each day in our hospitals. May they be guided through difficult procedures and in their care of patients.

Blythswood 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 of what items are needed. Please take one. Please bring any donations to the Church on Sunday morning or to Coffee and Company by the end of October. Shoeboxes themselves are always in short supply, so please bring along any that you have.

Portsoy Church Guild: The next meeting of the Church Guild is next Tuesday 4th of October at 2pm in the Church Centre. The speaker will be Colin Wood Senior Coastal Operations Officer talking about the work of the local coastguards. Please come along and join us. Everyone is welcome.

Harvest Thanksgiving: Next Sunday, 9th October, is our Harvest Thanksgiving Service. If you are available to decorate the Church Centre, please come along at 10am on Saturday 8th - the more help we have, the better! Donations of non-perishable goods (tinned meats, pasta etc) can be brought along to Coffee 'n Company on Tuesday or next Saturday or Sunday.

Warm Welcome: With winter on the horizon, we're planning to open the Church Centre every weekday from 10am until 3pm as a 'Warm Welcome' place for the community - somewhere to come and save on home heating bills, enjoy some company or just to sit quietly with a warming drink. We can only do this if we have enough volunteers to make it possible, so if you'd like to go on the rota, even for a few hours a week, please add your name to the sign-up sheet

Let's Talk: The next Let's Talk is next Thursday 6th October at 7pm in the Church Centre. Let's Talk is an informal study group and everyone is welcome.

Focus Magazine: The October – November edition of Focus is now available. If you do not have the magazine delivered copies are available in the vestibule. If you would like a regular copy delivered please contact Ian Whewell: ian.whewell@btinternet.com

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 takes 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

2 Kings 2: 19-25

Matthew 17: 14-20

We're looking at a bit of an odd story this week in church, where the prophet Elisha calls down on a curse on some boys, which ends up with them getting torn to bits by bears, just because they call him make fun of his baldness. As always in scripture however, I think there's a wee bit more going on that what we pick up on first hearing or reading the story.

To start with, we hear them described as boys, but the Hebrew word for boys covers anything from 12-year-olds to teenagers, even young men in their twenties. So the chances are they were young men who should have known better. In effect, what the boys were saying Elisha was they didn't have any need for him or his God.

Justifiably Elisha was annoyed by this – and by the 'baldhead' comment, of course. Whether he meant for them to be attacked by bears I suppose we've no way of knowing. What Elisha did was put the matter into God's hands but the important thing to remember is that it was God who decided on the boys' punishment, not Elisha.

The whole situation was all the more frustrating for Elisha as he'd only just come from Jericho, where he'd purified the lake there, he'd made it healthy again for the people to drink from. Actually, God had – Elisha played his part with some salt and a bowl, but it was God's words he was quoting when he said, '*I make this water pure.*' The people had a lot to thank Elisha for, he was their prophet, he was their conduit to God, but certain groups among them still didn't take him seriously. They didn't appreciate the power of his God, or the power that God had given to Elisha. And his frustration eventually boiled over.

Frustration isn't usually an emotion that you'd ascribe to Jesus. But in our New Testament passage this week, we can detect more than a hint of when he says: "*How unbelieving and wrong you people are! How long must I stay with you? How long do I have to put up with you?*" He's talking to the disciples, because they keep leaving the hard work to him, when he'd given them all the power they needed. They had the power, given by Jesus, given by God, to call on Him to perform miracles. They didn't use it. Maybe they just weren't confident enough, maybe they'd forgotten the options they'd been given for situations like this.

Is that like us with God, our Father? We rely on our own power and like the disciples we get frustrated, we fail. But when we call on him for his help, when we remember the options we've been given then things have a way of turning out right. We don't have the power to expel demons, we don't have the power to purify lakes, we don't have the power to summon up bears when someone makes fun at our expense. But with God's help to call on, we're empowered. The thing is, though, we've got to give our problems to him, for him to be able, or ready, to help. Carrying around our problems hoping for a solution isn't the answer, thinking we've got the strength to deal with them. Just putting up with them, enduring them, makes them bigger, not smaller.