

FOCUS

Portsoy Church Magazine



The fruits of autumn

October 2022—November 2022

A Message from the Manse

It's always a bit of a risk writing about the weather when you know what you're writing will be read a week or two later. For all I know, writing this on a still and sunny morning, by the time you're reading it there could be lashing rain or a gale blowing. What is sure, though, is that these will come at some time or other during the winter months. And what's also sure is that none of us will be looking forward to sub-zero temperatures or snow showers, knowing that heating our homes is going to cost us so much more this year.

It's true that the government has put some measures in place to help us keep the bills down, but it's still going to be a hard winter for so many. As a church, we can't solve everyone's problems (how I wish we could!) but I think we can still help to lessen the blows a little, help to provide a little warmth where it's needed and maybe even help a little with those ever-increasing bills.

The 'Winter Fund' we put in place a couple of months ago has been steadily building, thanks to the generosity of those attending church on a Sunday morning, and those who can't be there too. The purpose of it is to have some funds available for those who need a little help maybe with some shopping or to offset an unexpected bill. It won't change anyone's life, but it might make things a little easier.

We have plans too to open the Church Centre on a daily basis for a few hours as a 'warm place,' to give folks a chance to turn

off the heating in their home and spend the time instead in a place of warmth and welcome, with a cup of tea or coffee, a chance to chat or just to sit quietly and read - however they want to spend the time. We have a wonderful facility right in the heart of the community and it's only right that we make it available to as many of those who need it as possible.

There's a famous quote by Mahatma Gandhi that says, *'The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members,'* and it's hard to argue with that. But who are the 'most vulnerable'? I think the coming months will show who the most vulnerable are, and I think there are more than any of us really realise. And I also think, as a church, we should be reaching out to them so, in our small way, that's just what we'll do. Jesus said, in John 12:8, *'The poor you will always have with you,'* and maybe that's a depressing thought, but I think we should all remember that he was referring to words found in Deuteronomy 15:11, where it goes on to say, *'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.'*

So this winter, let's all open wide our hands, open our arms, and open our hearts.

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.

Blessings to you
John



Here are the answers to last magazine's Bible quiz

1. How many words are in the shortest verse in the Bible. **Two. 'Jesus wept' (John 11:35)**
2. Who is the oldest man mentioned in the Bible? **Methuselah. He lived 969 years. (Genesis 5:27)**
3. What book in the Bible doesn't mention God by name? **The book of Esther.**
4. What is the last word in the Bible? **Amen. (Revelation 22:21)**
5. How many wives did King Solomon have? **He had 700 wives and 300 concubines. (1 Kings 11:3)**
6. Which two men in the Bible never died? **Elijah (2 Kings 2:11) and Enoch (Genesis 5:21-24).**
7. Who closed the door of Noah's Ark? **God. (Genesis 7:16)**
8. What street did Judas live on? **Straight Street. (Acts 9:11)**
9. Which apostle was a tentmaker? **Paul. (Acts 18:1-3)**
10. What were the first spoken words in the Bible? **"Let there be light." (Genesis 1:3)**
11. Who was the only female judge of Israel in the Old Testament? **Deborah. (Judges 4)**
12. What book in the Bible mentions mowed grass? **Psalms. (Psalms 72:6)**
13. How tall was the giant, Goliath? **Nine feet nine inches. (1 Samuel 17:4)**
14. What two books of the Bible are named after women? **Esther and Ruth.**
15. How many days after birth was Jesus officially nameless? **Seven. He was officially named on the eighth day. (Luke 2:21)**
16. What so-called mythological creature is mentioned in the Bible? **Unicorn, in the King James translation. (Isaiah 34:7).**

WELCOME TEAMS

10.30am Portsoy Church Centre

2 October	Helen D'Arcy & Yvonne McKay
9 October	Moira McKenzie & Joan Morrison
16 October	Margaret Whewell & Olwen Christie
23 October	Edith Stuart & Eileen Brown
30 October	Helen D'Arcy & Yvonne McKay
6 November	Moira McKenzie & Joan Morrison
13 November	Margaret Whewell & Olwen Christie
20 November	Edith Stuart & Eileen Brown
27 November	Helen D'Arcy & Yvonne McKay
4 December	Moira McKenzie & Joan Morrison
11 December	Margaret Whewell & Olwen Christie
18 December	Edith Stuart & Eileen Brown
25 December	Helen D'Arcy & Yvonne McKay

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

FLOWER LIST

October	November	December
2 Eileen Brown	6 Communion(FF)	4 Olwen Christie
9 Harvest (FF)	13 Remembrance(FF)	11 Margaret Whewell
16 Helenor Henderson	20 Yvonne McKay	18 Christmas (FF)
23 Helen D'Arcy	27 Sheila McKay	25 Christmas (FF)
30 Anne McArthur	FF = Flower Fund	

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, please let Margaret know. (01261 843 125)

Portsoy Church Centre - Latest News

We have reached an important milestone in what was known as the Hall Redevelopment Project. As you probably know it was a very major project for which we received considerable financial assistance from grant funders, and we were fortunate to be able to contribute significant amounts from our own resources.

However, despite the grants and money from the existing resources the redevelopment would not have been possible without considerable fundraising efforts over several years, and the generosity of members and others in pledging financial support in the way of gifts, ongoing financial commitment and loans. Finally, the Church of Scotland Trustees also provided a significant loan to cover the financial shortfall. The loans have been progressively paid back over the last three years but there was, until recently, still a significant loan repayment outstanding.

However, as you will be aware, the Church on Seafield Terrace has been sold and the proceeds from the sale have meant that we have now been able to repay our outstanding loans on the redevelopment. We also have a residual amount left in the original redevelopment fund which will be used as intended to maintain and improve facilities at the Church Centre. The fund will eventually be closed once this money has been spent.

A very big thank you to everyone who, over the years, has supported the project and in particular to those who provided continuing financial support, even after the work was completed, through their pledges and regular giving. The Church Centre is a testament to what we can achieve as a Church Family and with the support of our community.

Blythswood Care Shoebox Appeal

We hope you will be happy to support the shoebox appeal. As we have done in past years we will be sending our contributions to Buckie Baptist Church, where a team of people stand ready to cover and pack the shoeboxes to transport to those in need. This year the boxes will be going to Ukraine, and across Eastern Europe.

Leaflets about the Appeal, with ideas for what to include in the shoeboxes, are available at Church on Sunday mornings and at Coffee and Company on Tuesday mornings. Do please check with the leaflet to be sure of what can be sent and what must be avoided. Margaret Whewell also has a more detailed list, copies of which she will have available on request.

Donations can also be handed in at the above times, or contact Margaret (see below) 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 the Buckie team time to cover them.**

Our friends at Buckie will be delighted and most grateful for your support, whether covered and filled shoeboxes, contributions of items to fill empty boxes, or monetary donations to help cover the cost of transporting the 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.

Contact: Margaret Whewell 01261 843125



Prayer Focus

"Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" Ephesians 5:20

From an early age, practically from the time we can say our first words, we are taught to say please and thank you. No one gets quite excited as the proud parents and grandparents—and me as a great grandmother—when a toddler utters those words and makes the connection between asking and receiving thankfully. But, there are times when children have a lapse of memory and excuse themselves by saying, "I forgot!".

A little girl, aged 4, and her mum were walking past stall where oranges were being sold. The kind seller kindly took one from the table and gave it to the girl. "What do you say to the nice man?" the mother asked her daughter. The little girl looked at the orange, then thrust it towards the man and said, "Peel it!"

Thankfulness is something we learn to grow into. What might be excusable as a 4 year old would be rude and ungrateful from an older child or adult. There's one kind of forgetfulness that is inexcusable at any age—forgetting to be thankful to God.

When we are going through difficult times (and it goes without saying that we are in very difficult times right now) we may not be particularly grateful. Yet, even in periods of suffering, anxiety and fear, we can thank God for unfailing goodness.

David the psalmist was determined not to fail the Lord in this way. Psalm 103:2 he says, "Praise the Lord, my soul, and do not forget how kind he is". In Psalm 34 he also wrote, "I will praise

him for what he has done; may all who are oppressed listen and be glad."

Our hearts should be filled with praise and thanksgiving for all that God has done for us and what He has given us.

Now thank we all our God,
With hearts, and hands and voices;
Who wondrous things hath done,
In whom His world rejoices:
Who, from our mother's arms,
hath blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love,
and still is ours today.

Father God, thank You for the salvation won for us by Jesus and we give You thanks and praise for such love through that sacrifice. Please help us to have grateful thankful hearts and to give You glory for the numberless blessings You pour out on us each day. May we be ever ready to reveal them to others. When trouble comes may we know Your love, comfort and strength. Please grant us the peace that passes all understanding that only comes from You. Amen

Funerals

3 August	Isabella Henderson
15 August	George Watson
16 August	Francis Stott
25 August	Ronnie Mair
29 August	George Mair
7 September	Frances Urquhart
28 September	Eleanor Davidson
29 September	John Stewart

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

A Blessing for Every Person on Earth:

The world is now too dangerous
and too beautiful, for anything but love.

May your eyes be so blessed
that you see God in everyone.

Your ears,

that you hear the the cry of the poor.

May your hands be so blessed
that everything you touch is a sacrament.

Your lips,

so you speak nothing but the truth with love.

May your feet be so blessed
that you run to those who need you.

And may your heart be so opened,
so set on fire,

that your love,

YOUR love,

changes everything.

(From A Black Rock Prayer Book)

"The Dead Sea in the Middle East receives freshwater, but it has no outlet, so it doesn't pass the water out. It receives beautiful water from the rivers, and the water goes dank. I mean, it just goes bad. And that's why it is the Dead Sea. It receives and does not give. In the end, generosity is the best way of becoming more, more, and more joyful."

"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor."

Desmond Tutu

Portsoy Church Guild

Our Guild is up and running again - halleluiah!

We met on 6 September, with 20 (prospective) members and friends present, and after our opening worship, while we awaited the arrival of our speaker, we had a short discussion about what form our Christmas Celebration on December 6th should take. A Christmas Meal by outside caterers was one suggestion, and another was for some "homespun" entertainment, which Rev. Gow had previously said he would help to organise. We didn't reach a final decision, so if anyone reading this has any more ideas, or can recommend a caterer, or is a budding actor, comedian, singer etc, please let me know as soon as possible!

Mrs Rosie Campbell, our speaker from the charity "Home for Good" then arrived and gave us an interesting and informative talk, with videos, about "Home for Good", which aims to promote fostering and adoption so that there is a home for every child that needs one. We then enjoyed some welcome refreshments, and a time to chat with each other.

Our next meetings are on 4th October when Colin Wood, Senior Operations Coastguard Officer, will be our speaker, and 1st November, when Alistair Munro, from The Vine Trust, will speak about the "Village of Hope" in Tanzania.

If you would like to come along to our meetings, we would be delighted to see you. There is no obligation to become a member, but membership is free for this year. Meetings start at 2pm on the first Tuesday of the month.

Margaret Whewell. margaret.whewell@btopenworld.com Tel: 01261 843125

Portsoy Church Fairtrade

It seems a long time since I updated you all on our Fairtrade activities. The pandemic put a halt to our regular stalls of course, and I would like to say a heartfelt thank you to all those who still ordered items from me during that time, keeping our Fairtrade activity going.

Our stall is available again most Tuesday mornings at Coffee and Company, and sometimes on a Sunday morning after Church, when there is more room to display a larger selection of the beautiful crafts and gifts available.

Traidcraft itself has been through a difficult time recently, at one point thinking it would have to cease trading. Please remember, when you see an item that you think you could buy for less elsewhere, that the Fairtrade mark means exactly what it says - that we are paying the *fair price* for the work that has gone into a product, whilst some companies will supply goods made by those who are being exploited and underpaid for their skills.

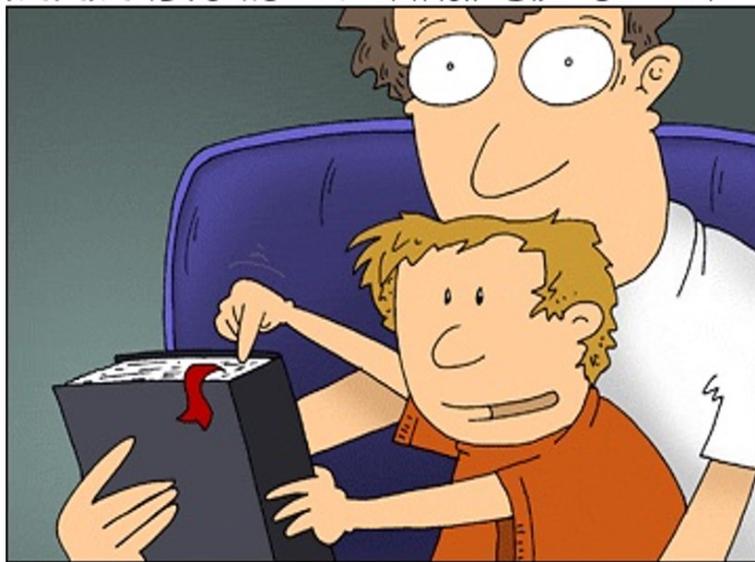
Let's all be grateful for the opportunity and the wherewithal to support the fair pay and fair working conditions of the artisans and producers represented in the Traidcraft range.

I feel blessed to be able to play a small part in the Fairtrade movement, and blessed also by your loyal support for it. And I'm sure you will all be delighted to know that I am about to send a cheque for £200 from our stall to Traidcraft Exchange (now called "Transform Trade") the charity which supports the endeavours of those who supply the stall, helping with training, advice and the setting up of new businesses, thus enabling people to make a living for themselves and their families.

It's a little early to mention Christmas I know, but it's only just round the corner, so look out for the lovely Christmas cards, gifts and tasty treats which will soon be appearing on the Fairtrade stall. Remember every purchase helps to make a difference to the life of someone far away, where the luxuries we often take for granted are not even dreamt of.

With my love, Margaret (margaret.whewell@btopenworld.com.
Tel: 01261 843125)

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I REALLY LIKE YOUR BIBLE, DAD ... HOW DO YOU TURN IT ON?

FOCUS DEADLINE

The next edition of Focus will cover December 2022 to January 2023. Please let Johanna Sturrock have articles and any photographs for inclusion no later than Sunday 20 November. unicornathome@gmail.com.



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)

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

Service Times

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

Special Services

9th October - Harvest Festival

6th November - Service of Holy Communion

13th November - Service of Remembrance

Please join us for all are welcome

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

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Scottish Charity No: SC 000522