



PORTSOY CHURCH

FAMILY NEWS 26/1/25

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

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" Psalm 46:1

May God know and care about every concern of school staff, pupils and their families. Please pray for schools in our area for a blessing, safety, love and peace upon all who work and learn there.

Movie Monday: As a mark of respect as it is Charlie Gray's funeral next Monday 3rd February there will be no Movie Monday. Movie Mondays will be back and will continue each Monday through the winter months. Movies start at 2pm in the meeting room in the Church Centre. Our next movie is on 10th February when we will be showing "The book thief" based on the bestselling book. Come along then and enjoy an afternoon movie in a warm space with good company and teas, coffees and snacks at our interval. Everyone is welcome.

Church Guild: Portsoy Church Guild meets for its first meeting of 2025 this Tuesday 4th February at 2pm in the Church Centre. Our speaker will be Shona Milne from RSABI (Royal Scottish Agricultural Benevolent Institution) an organisation whose mission is to support and take care of as many farming people as possible. Please come along and join us and hear what Shona has to say. Everyone is welcome.

Focus Magazine: The February- March edition of Focus the Church magazine is out now. If you do not have a copy delivered there are copies in the vestibule. If you would like a copy delivered in future, please let John or Ian know.

CAOSS praise band: CAOSS the Cornhill youth praise band is looking for new recruits. There is a poster up on the notice board at the side of the hall for more information or contact Jane Enkle on 07974274304 or email jmenk60@gmail.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.

Well Café: Well Café is every Friday during term time from 9.15 to 11.15 providing free tea, coffee, fruit and snacks together with a play area for the children.

Monday Prayers: Our morning prayer meeting takes place every Monday at 8.30am in the Church Centre. Please join us for this short informal gathering.

Message from John Gow

Matthew 17: 14-20

Maybe you've noticed the recent trend for companies to ask for feedback when you've bought

something from them? Usually, it's an online form where you're asked to choose an option that says whether you're satisfied with your purchase – or not, as the case may be. Asking for feedback – or giving feedback, they're not new, of course. In the reading we're concentrating on in church this week, we hear how Jesus gave feedback to his disciples – and he did it twice, in different ways each time.

It takes place shortly after Jesus' transfiguration, after he and the disciples had come down from the mountain. At the foot of the mountain there's a big crowd of people waiting for Jesus, among them is a man with a child who's described as demon possessed – most likely epileptic. The man says he'd brought his child to the disciples, but they couldn't heal him, they couldn't cure him, so now he's bringing him to Jesus in the hope that he will. And Jesus turns to his disciples and says: *'O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me.'*

You can tell how frustrated he is, can't you? This is a very public show of feedback that Jesus is delivering. And then, after Jesus heals the child and the disciples are alone with him, they ask him for his feedback. Speaking about the demon, or the child's condition, they ask, *'Why could we not cast it out?'* Why could we not cure him? And Jesus gives his feedback. *'Because of your little faith,'* he says, and then he goes on to speak of mustard seeds and moving mountains.

Two different examples of feedback. One very public, the other private. Which would have been the more effective? The second one, of course. Because the first was just words, it was just an outburst, it was all emotion, nobody learned anything from it.

The second was solid, it was sound advice. I can imagine the disciples, after receiving this kind of feedback, delivered calmly, delivered rationally, they'd have carried on walking with Jesus with a new sense of direction, with a greater purpose in their steps. Believe, and anything's possible. Believe in yourself and that'll help too.

How we give feedback and how we receive it, they matter. In our daily lives, feedback is an essential tool for growth and improvement. Whether it's in our personal relationships, our professional lives, or our spiritual lives, constructive feedback, I think it helps us to see our blind spots, it helps us to see the areas we can improve in. But, to repeat, the way feedback is given and the way it's received makes all the difference.

When we give feedback, and I'm not talking about ticking boxes on an email from the hotel we were staying in, or the washing machine we've just bought, I'm talking about the feedback we give to those around us, when we give it I think we should always be looking to balance honesty with kindness, always making sure that our words build up instead of tear down.

So we ask ourselves, are we open to receiving feedback with humility, with a willingness to learn? Do we give feedback to those around us in our lives in a way that's constructive and compassionate? And if it's not something you've thought about too much, why not give it some thought this week?