



PORTSOY CHURCH

FAMILY NEWS 14/5/23

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

"My children, our love should not be just words and Talk; it must be true love, which shows itself in action." 1 John 3:18

Christian Aid Week

Please pray especially for the work of Christian Aid and give thanks for all the people who work for this charity. Pray for justice, peace and an end of poverty.

Christian Aid Week: Christian Aid Week 2023 begins today Sunday 14th May. There are quizzes available and envelopes for your donations will be in the Church and at Coffee 'n' Company for the next week. Please give generously to support this valuable work.

Christian Aid Joint Service: Banff Area Churches are holding an ecumenical joint service to mark Christian Aid Week 2023. All are welcome to come along to Macduff Parish Church on Sunday 21st May at 6pm.

Focus Magazine: The deadline for the next edition of Focus magazine is next Sunday 21st May. Please let Johanna have any articles and pictures unicornathome@gmail.com by that date. We are still very short of content so if you have any items such as recipes, interesting experiences or anything you would like to share please let Johanna have them.

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 8.30am in the Church Centre. No Evening prayers for the moment. Everyone is welcome!

Weekly message from John Gow

We take pleasure in a lot of things. We take pleasure in having comfortable lives, in having security in our lives, we take pleasure in holidays, in days out, in dinners out, we take pleasure in our independence. Money is the tool that makes a lot of it possible and that's not necessarily wrong. But when it becomes our driving force, our sole reason to get up in the morning, that's when it becomes a problem. Because when it becomes our purpose, it takes away from what our true purpose is. Paul, in an often-misquoted parts of the Bible, speaks about money one of his letters to Timothy, saying, '*The love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It's through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.*' What he's saying isn't that

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money itself is evil, but that the love of it that leads there, when it's the love it that controls us. And it's the love of it, the love of material things, that can lead us away from faith and cause us no end of trouble and hardship.

The Craig Blomberg says: 'The single biggest competitor with authentic Christianity for the hearts and souls of millions in our world today.' That's quite a statement, isn't it? So how do we view our possessions and our money, our material things? How do we view giving to the church, or to church-related charities like Christian Aid? Do we give willingly, with a happy spirit – I'm sure we do, really, I am, but can we be forgiven for thinking whatever we give is just a drop in the ocean, it can't possibly make a difference? Perhaps, but it's the act of giving matters as much as the amount, because there's joy in giving, there's joy in generosity, however much it is. And the ocean's just made out of drops, isn't it?

There are other ways to give as well though, there are other ways to practice generosity.

Back in the first and second centuries, when Christianity was just being established, it wasn't unusual for cities in the Roman Empire to be hit by some kind of cataclysm every few years – earthquakes, plagues, fires, that kind of thing. These things happen today, of course, and they're awful, but we've got relief organisations, the Red Cross, disaster aid. Things were very different then, though. It was every man and woman for themselves and after one plague in particular a writer called Dionysius wrote: 'The pagans thrust aside anyone who began to be sick and kept at a distance even from their nearest friends. They cast the sufferers half dead into the ditch and left them unburied.' Compare that with what Eusebius, another writer of the time said: 'The Christians were the only people who amidst such terrible ills showed their fellow feeling and humanity by their actions. Day by day some would busy themselves with attending the dead and burying them. Others gathered in one spot all who were afflicted by hunger throughout the whole city and gave bread to all.'

The only people in those days who genuinely stood up for what they believed in and acted out of charity and love and generosity were the Christians. And they became known for their generosity, for their service, for their caring attitude. And that's part of the reason why the Christian movement flourished and spread.

I think we saw some of that during the pandemic, I think we saw it here during the winter that's just gone (hopefully!) We saw the church community, the Christian community, rallying round at a time of hardship, at a time of difficulty. And I think that's what Christian Aid Week, which begins today (Sunday) is all about. It's about coming together to make a difference, giving generously if we can – but more importantly, it's about making a difference in whatever way we can.