





Parish Magazine of St Stephen's, Hightown



Editor's Letter

From time to time, in place of the usual damp, dull winter day, we have colder days bedecked with blue skies and fluffy white, innocent clouds. Looking up, it can almost be summer again.



On one such afternoon recently, I was taking a walk, with my daughter and our dogs, down Gorsey Lane, on the outskirts of Hightown. It's a peaceful spot, surrounded by fields and wildlife. We were enjoying the quiet moment and the sun on our backs when, to our great surprise, out of the nearby bushes, there arose a vast number of starlings! Very quickly, we were enveloped in their murmuration, flocking and flying around us in perfect formation. It almost felt as if we were becoming a part of the landscape, a part of the wildlife. Their squadron wound its way around us several times, claiming us as two of their own, and then, as quickly as they had arisen, they returned to their bushes to silently observe us. To see a murmuration is a sight not to be forgotten in a hurry, but to become a part of one, as it felt to us that day, is an experience I will never forget.

For me, one of the greatest pleasures of living 'twixt countryside and coast, is the way nature invites us to become part of the natural cycle of the seasons. To receive the invitation we have to set aside a little time, outside of our work or family duties. The benefits of nature immersion are manifold.

The same is true of setting a little time aside for God each day. No prayers are necessary, just an ability, or the discipline, to be still and a desire to be in His presence. He will do the rest.

Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and a peaceful year ahead, Colette.



Entries for future issues of Focus to be sent to

Focus.Mag.2023@StStephensHightown.org.uk

Please Note New Email Address

Please submit before the last day of the month.



Dear Friends,

Sunday 3rd December is Advent Sunday this year, and we begin a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the birth, the Nativity, of Jesus on Christmas Day. Advent is the first season of the Church year.

The word 'Advent' comes from the Latin 'adventus', which means 'coming' or 'arrival' or 'presence'.

In Church we will mark each Sunday in Advent by lighting a candle on our Advent Wreath, the radiance getting brighter each week, until we light the central candle, The Christ Candle, on Christmas Day.

This Advent let us reflect on how we can prepare our hearts and our homes for Christ's birth.

There is so much pressure on getting Christmas 'just right', isn't there? The first Christmas was special, amazing, awesome and wonderful, but it was also very simple. It can be so easy to lose the true meaning of Christmas.

There is a beautiful Christmas Worship song by Ian White... 'Crackers and Turkeys'

"Crackers and turkeys and pudding and cream,
Toys in the windows that I've never seen,
This is the Christmas that everyone sees,
But Christmas means more to me.
It's somebody's birthday I won't forget,
As I open the things that I get.
I'll remember the inn, and stable so bare,
And Jesus who once lay there."



Let's remember what we are celebrating. What does Christmas really mean to you? Jesus is the reason for the season!

I love the Carol, 'O Come All Ye Faithful', and especially the refrain, 'O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord'.

There are many opportunities to come and adore Him at St. Stephen's during Advent, Christmas and beyond, right into the New Year. These are listed elsewhere in our magazine. You will always be very welcome here.

Peace and Joy!

With every blessing for the New Year!

Keith



St Stephen's Church Services December 2023



	Decei	
Fri 1st	09:30am	Morning Prayer
Sun 3rd	10:30am	All-Age Eucharist Toy & Gift Service
Sun 3rd	5.00pm	Toddler Church Nativity
Sun 3rd	6.00pm	Evening Prayer
Wed 6th	10:30am	Eucharist
Fri 8th	09:30am	Morning Prayer
Sun 10th	10:30am	Eucharist
Sun 10th	6.00pm	Carols Round the Christmas Tree
Wed 13th	10:30am	Eucharist
Fri 15th	09:30am	Morning Prayer
Sun 17th	10:30am	Eucharist
Sun 17th	6.00pm	Carols by Candlelight
Wed 20th	10:30am	Eucharist
Fri 22nd	09:30am	Morning Prayer
Sun 24th	10:30am	Eucharist
Sun 24th	4.00pm	Christingle Service
Sun 24th	11:15pm	Midnight Eucharist
Mon 25th	10:30am	Christmas Day Eucharist
Wed 27th	10:30am	Festival Eucharist for St. Stephen's Day
Fri 29th	09:30am	Morning Prayer
Sun 31st	10:30am	Eucharist
Sun 31st	6.00pm	BCP Holy Communion

We would like to express our sincere thanks to Barrington's Funeral Directors for their donation of 100 oranges for our Christingle Service

St Stephen's Church Services
January 2024

January 2024					
Wed 3rd	10:30am	Eucharist			
Fri 5th	09:30am	Morning Prayer			
Sun 7th	10:30am	All Age Eucharist			
Sun 7th	6.00pm	Evening Prayer			
Wed 10th	10:30am	Eucharist			
Fri 12th	09:30am	Morning Prayer			
Sun 14th	10:30am	Eucharist			
Sun 14th	5.00pm	Toddler Church			
Sun 14th	6.00pm	Evening Prayer			
Wed 17th	10:30am	Eucharist			
Fri 19th	09:30am	Morning Prayer			
Sun 21st	10:30am	Eucharist			
Sun 21st	6.00pm	Evening Prayer			
Wed 24th	10:30am	Eucharist			
Fri 26th	09:30am	Morning Prayer			
Sun 28th	10:30am	Eucharist			
Sun 28th	6.00pm	BCP Holy Communion			
Wed 31st	10:30am	Eucharist			

With my grateful thanks to all who give their time freely to get the Focus magazine through your doors and on your screens:

Martin Butcher, especially, for his invaluable technological expertise.

The kind volunteers who deliver the Focus.

Shelagh and Kevin who sort the magazines.

Beth, Hazel and Pauline, whose advice is always welcome.



Prayer Prompts For December



- 1st. Pray for Israel and Palestine, that people will find peace as people of God. *For all the people of Hightown.*
- 2nd. Pray for Ukraine and Russia, and for peace in these lands. For the people of Marston Crescent and Mayfair Close.
- 3rd. **1st Sunday of Advent**. Pray for the world, that we may live together in peace. For the people of Langley Close and Richmond Close.
- 4th. Pray for harmony between different faiths.

 For the people of Blundell Road and Blundell Avenue.
- 5th. Pray for alleviation of poverty in the world. For all the people of Hightown.
- 6th. Pray for people affected by storm, famines and natural disasters. For the people of Thistledown Drive and Bankside.
- 7th. Pray for the earth that brings us sustenance, that we can live in harmony with nature.
 - For the people of Orrell Hill Lane, North End Lane and Gorsey Lane.
- 8th. Pray for displaced peoples around the world and the refugees. For all the people of Hightown.
- 9th. Pray for the poor in our own region. For the people of Delph Road.
- 10th.**2nd Sunday of Advent**. Pray for the homeless and those without shelter. *For the people of North Dunes and Westway.*
- 11th.Pray for the people of Hightown, a community that cares for its neighbours. For the people of Blundell Grove, Larkhill Grove and Withinsfield.
- 12th.Pray for the churches in Hightown and for a coming together of all faiths. For the people Of Old Acre and Riverside.
- 13th.Pray for the Army base; for all the young people who train and work there. For the people of Elmcroft Lane and Sandy Lane.
- 14th.We pray that all our young people may fulfil their dreams and reach their potential. For the people of St. George's Road and Emerson Close.
- 15th.Pray for the elderly, for their comfort, wellbeing and companionship. For all the people of Hightown.
- 16th.Pray for local families, that they support one another, within and between. For the people of Sandhills and Briary Croft.

Prayer prompts (contd)



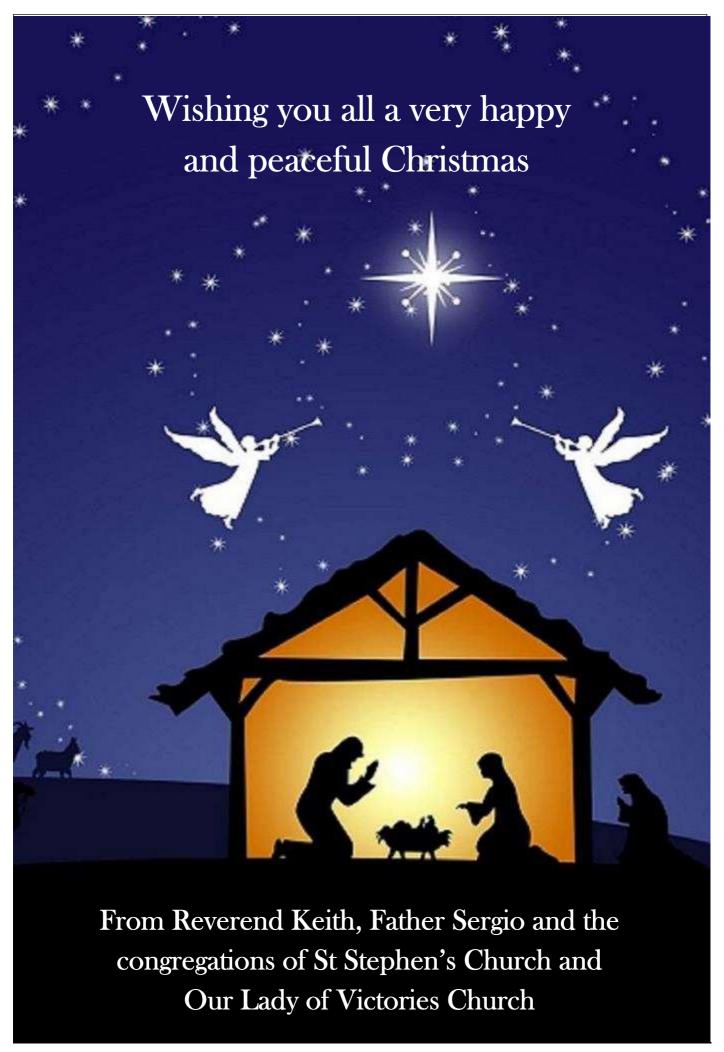
- 17th.3rd Sunday of Advent. Pray for friendships, for their support.
 - For the people of Village Way and the Roundway.
- 18th.Pray for those who are suffering from the many travails of life. *For the people of Elvington Road.*
- 19th.We pray for the joy of creation and the opportunities of life.

 For the people of Alt Road and Lower Alt Road.
- 20th.We pray for all minorities and or people who face discrimination. For the people of the Range and Altcar Camp.
- 21st.As Christmas approaches, we pray for all those with responsibilities. For the people of Whitefield Close and Oakfield Road.
- 22nd.Pray that our hearts may be touched by the Christmas spirit.

 For the people of Wignalls Meadow and Moorhouses.
- 23rd.Pray for distant relatives and those we no longer see.

 For the people of Grasmere, Windermere, Thirlmere Road and Thirlmere Mews.
- 24th.**4th Sunday of Advent Christmas Eve**. May we reach out our hearts to all. *For the people of School Road and Rathbone Road.*
- 25th. **Christmas Day**. May the joy and peace of Christmas fill our hearts. *Fall the people of Hightown*.
- 26th.**St. Stephen's Day**. Pray for the various communities to which we belong. *For the people of St. Stephen's Road and Hester Close*.
- 27th.**St John the Evangelist** . Pray for peace in the hearts of all mankind. *For the people of Thornbeck Avenue.*
- 28th.Pray that the love of God is felt by all peoples. For the people of Mark Road.
- 29th.Pray for new beginnings; that we can see new ways to make a difference. For all the people of Hightown.
- 30th.Pray that God shows us this way, as a new year approaches. For the people of Holmfield, Moss Lane and local farms.
- 31st. **1st Sunday of Christmas**. On this New Year's Eve we pray again for our world; for peace amongst peoples and for harmony and sustainability on Earth.

 For the people of Sandilands Grove and Tudor Gardens.



Our Lady	Of Victories and Holy Family
	Christmas Services

		30111d3 301 V1003		
Sat 16th	11.ooam	OLOV Penitential Service Sacrament of Reconciliation, individual Confessions.		
		OLOV Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament Adoration and Benediction.		
		OLOV Holy Rosary and Divine Mercy Prayers.		
Sat 16th	12 noon	OLOV Holy Mass		
Sun 24th	9.00am	Mass, Holy Family Church, Ince Blundell		
Sun 24th	11.15 am	Mass, Our Lady of Victories, Hightown		
Sun 24th	3.00 pm	Christmas Vigil Mass in Spanish, OLOV		
Mon 25th	9.00am	Christmas Day Mass, Holy Family		
Mon 25th	11.15 am	Christmas Day Mass, OLOV		
St Stephen's Christmas Services				
Sun 3rd	10.30am	All Age Eucharist, Toy and Gift Service		
Sun 3rd	5.00pm	Toddler Church Nativity		
Sun 10th	6.00pm	Carols Round the Christmas Tree		
Sun17th	6.00pm	Carols By Candlelight		
Sun 24th	4.00pm	Christingle Service		
Sun 24th	11.15pm	Midnight Eucharist		

10.30am

10.30am

Mon 25th

Wed 27th

Christmas Day Eucharist

Festival Eucharist for St Stephen's Day



St. Stephen's Church- Hightown

You are warmly invited to our

Festive Afternoon Tea

on Sunday 10th December at 4pm

in the Church Hall, followed by Carols Around the Tree in Church

An afternoon of festive fun, food & singing!

This is a free event, but tickets are required for catering purposes and are available from Church.



Christingle Service 24th December

4.00pm

St Stephen's Church

Please come and join us





Breakfast with Santa

Saturday 16th December 9.00am



St Stephen's Hall



Letter From Bishop John, Bishop of Liverpool

This will be my first Christmas among you in Liverpool and I am looking forward to experiencing how you do Christmas in Liverpool. Over many years in many places, I notice how churches build their own fabulous traditions around Advent and Christmas and I am excited to see how you mark this great festival.

But I am reminded that in our extravaganza and paraphernalia of festivities, we can lose sight of the harsh realities of the nativity story: a stable, the cold night, the Inn's closed door, refugees fleeing to Egypt, the brutal slaughter of the innocent.

These harsh realities mirror the harsh realities of the world we live in. We see war, natural disasters, chronic anxiety, and poverty all around us. God embraced this world when sending Jesus at Christmas and God asks us as a church, who face challenges of our own, to lift our heads and show love to the world. To be encouraged by the nativity story and encourage others because of it.

As in previous years, the Church of England tries to come together with a campaign for Advent and Christmas. This year's theme – Follow the Star: Join the Song – highlights how singing can help draw us closer to God and each other through the journey from Advent to Epiphany. I encourage you to use their resources and take part in their invitation to sing the First Nowell as part of a way of bringing people to church.

And then together we are singing a song of God's hope for God's world. A hope that can only come through our belief in Jesus and Jesus' story from Christmas to Easter.

So sing this song of hope as you celebrate Christmas in your place. And renew in yourself a commitment to being that light of hope in God's world.

Have a blessed, peaceful, hope-filled Christmas.

Sunday Coffee Rota

December

3rd Margaret Bate
10th Hilary Munro
17 Jane Croxton
24th Christine Grocott
31st Shirley Burn





January

7th Beryl Howard
14th Di Aldis
21st Jan Williams
25th Jayne Cudby

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St Stephen's Church

Ring Rev. Keith on 0151 929 3097

Brass Rota

December

Colette Hudson

January

Beth Cresswell



Flower Rota

December

Advent Greenery

<u>January</u>

7th Colette Hudson

14th Hilary Munro

21st Colette Hudson

28th Margaret Wear



Hightown Friendship Group

Please note:

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Group will meet on the 1st
Wednesday of every month at
8pm



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Julie Hopkins Branch Director



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Rohan Pickard - Commodore Rohan.Pickard@Gmail.com

Deryk Johnson - Vice Commodore DerykJ@Gmail.com



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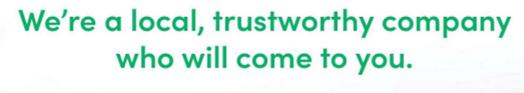
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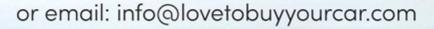


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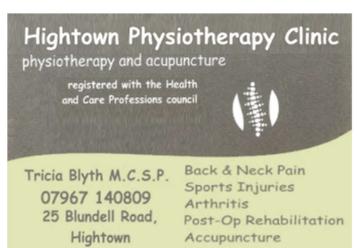
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Toddler Church

Δt

St. Stephen's- Hightown Sunday3rd Dec and Sunday14th Jan 5pm

A service for pre-schoolers and their families
with lots of fun, songs, a bible story, a simple
craft and refreshments

All Welcome!