

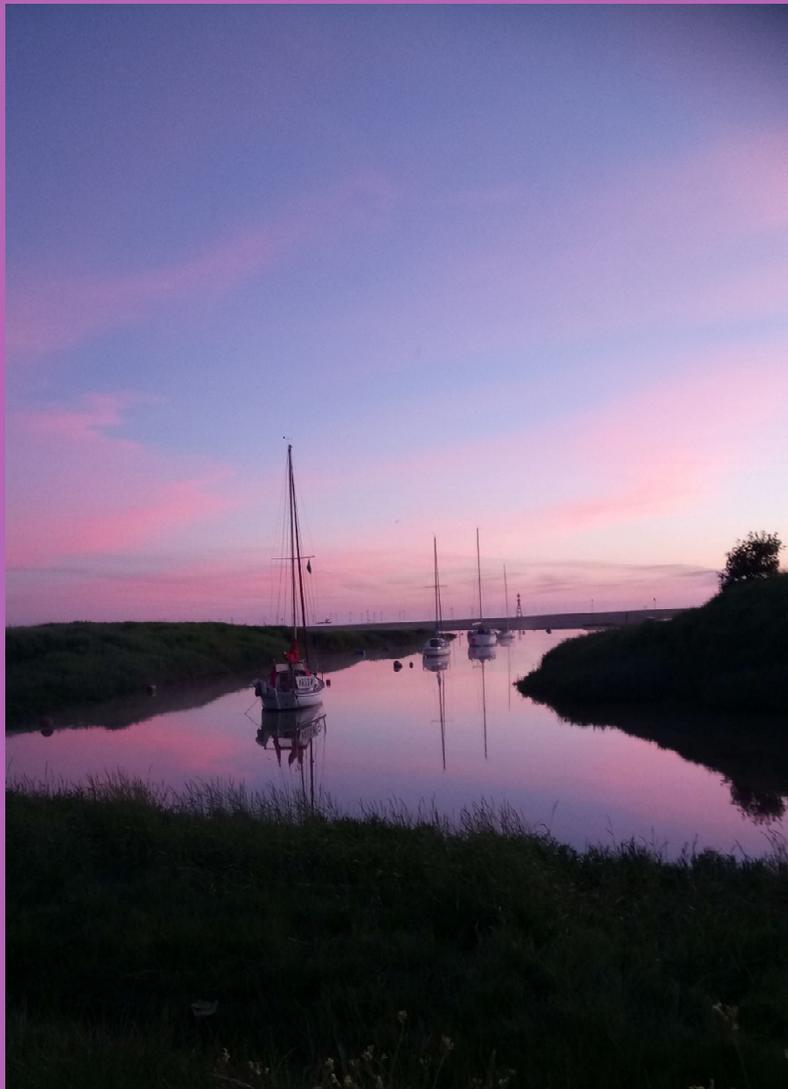
June 2023

FOCUS

Issue 277



Parish Magazine of St Stephen's, Hightown



Mid Summer Issue

Editor's Letter

As we step into the vibrant month of June, I am filled with a sense of joy and anticipation. The sun shines more brightly and nature flourishes. We are reminded of the beauty and significance of creation. The warmer weather beckons us outdoors, inviting us to marvel at the wonders of God's handiwork. It is time well spent appreciating the blossoming flowers, the lush greenery and the melodious songs of the garden birds and the calls of our coastal birds, recognising them as expressions of God's love. We take pleasure in gathering as a church family to celebrate our faith, our fellowship, and the boundless grace bestowed upon us.



In the month of June, we celebrate Father's Day—a time to honour and appreciate the fathers, grandfathers, and father figures who have guided us on our spiritual journeys. It is a beautiful occasion to express gratitude for their love, sacrifice, and unwavering support. Let us extend our heartfelt prayers and recognition to these remarkable people who have played a significant role in shaping our lives.

Furthermore, June marks the midpoint of the year—a moment for introspection and reflection. It is an opportune time to reassess our spiritual goals, recommit ourselves to acts of service, and deepen our connection with God. May we use this halfway point as a catalyst for renewed enthusiasm and dedication to living out our faith in meaningful ways.

In this edition of our church magazine, we have curated a collection of uplifting stories, enlightening reflections, thought-provoking articles and a few jokes for good measure. It is our hope that these pages will serve as a source of inspiration, encouragement, and spiritual nourishment as we journey together as a community.

Let us embrace the spirit of June, honouring our fathers and marvelling at the wonders of creation. May this month be filled with love, unity and a deepening of our faith.

Yours in Christ,
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.

From Our Church Reader: Confucius he say.....



Confucius was once asked,:

“Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all of one’s life?”

His reply:

“Is not **RECIPROCITY** such a word?”

Thus we have, by yet another (non-Christian) source, another formulation of the Golden Rule. *Matthew 7:12*, for instance, says: “Therefore whatever you desire for men to do to you, you shall also do to them; for this is the law and the prophets.” *Luke 6:31* also says: “Do to others as you would have them do to you.”

If you are a stoic like I am, then you would obviously agree with this concept - though Christian and Stoics – (Christian Stoics) would take it a little bit further: they would advise prayer and love for your enemies. In fact, Christians and Stoics say ,over and over again, that the idea is that we must treat other people better than they treat us. The reasons being that either they don’t mean to do wrong, or because they aren’t as informed as we are, or because they have their own problems. Christian Stoics would advocate that we treat people well, not because we ourselves would like to be treated well, but because to do anything less is a betrayal of our own values and standards.

The Golden Rule is simple and all-encompassing. It should govern how we talk to people, how we run our businesses, how we bring up our children, how we react in difficult situations. It’s also a standard. We’re never going to fully get there. We’re human. Empathy is sometimes beyond us in the moment. Which is why we need to constantly review and reflect on our own behaviour. We can then learn from it and improve on it.

If we can follow the Golden Rule and reflect honestly on our transgressions, we will get a little bit better at following it as we grow.

Kind regards

John Gibson

“The course of true love never did run smooth”
Lysander Act 1, Scene 1, *Midsummer Night’s Dream*

PRAYER PROMPTS FOR JUNE



- 1st. For any people with any kind of back pain or paralysis.
For The People of Rathbone Road.
- 2nd. For the lonely and for the housebound.
For The People of Wignalls Meadow and Moorhouses.
- 3rd. We give thanks for so much colour and beauty in our gardens and in the countryside.
For The People of Whitefield Close and Oakfield Road.
- 4th. (**Trinity Sunday**). That we come closer to the mystery of the triune God.
For The People of School Road and Gorsey Lane.
- 5th. For those with whom we don't seem to get along too well.
For The People of Moss Lane and The Local Farms.
- 6th. For the deaf and those whose hearing is failing, or who suffer from tinnitus.
For All The People of Hightown.
- 7th. For all who are confined to wheelchairs and for their carers.
For The People of Grasmere Road.
- 8th. For those to whom we have been less than courteous recently and for ourselves that we may guard our tongues.
For The People of North End Lane and Aikers Lane.
- 9th. For all who seek freedom from some addiction.
For The People of Sandhills and Briary Croft.
- 10th. We give thanks for our creation, preservation and for all the blessings of this life.
For The People of Langley Close and Richmond Close.
- 11th. (**Trinity 1**) Praise God for all His gifts.
For The People of Marston Crescent and Larkhill Grove.
- 12th. (**St Barnabas**) That like St. Barnabas we may be encouragers of others,
For The People of Mark Road and Sandy Lane.
- 13th. For immigrants and exiles who have made their home on our country.
For All The People of Hightown.
- 14th. For those who teach young children.
For The People of Tudor Gardens and Thirlmere Mews.
- 15th. For newspaper, radio and TV reporters that they may never seek profit by falsely twisting what they know to be true.
For The People of Thornbeck Avenue and Mayfair Close.
- 16th. For the hungry and those genuinely reduced to begging.
For The People of Alton Close and Blundell Avenue.

PRAYER PROMPTS FOR JUNE [ctd.]



- 17th. We give thanks for happiness within marriage and pray for married couples whose relationship is under stress.
For The People of North Dunes and Westway.
- 18th. (**Trinity 2**) That we hear more clearly God's prompting to do some work for Him.
For The People of Withins Field and Blundell Grove.
- 19th. For clergy and church leaders as they work to communicate the Gospel and for our part in the same task.
For The People of Orrell Hill Lane and Delph Lane.
- 20th. That we may reject those things we know to be wrong.
For All The People of Hightown.
- 21st. Longest Day. We give thanks for long light of day and for the eternal light of Christ.
For The People of Alt Road. Lower Alt Road and Brentwood Close
- 22nd. For all those who suffer with an impediment of speech.
For The People of Holmfield.
- 23rd. We give thanks for leisure and the chance to get away on holiday.
For The People of Windermere Road and Sandilands Grove.
- 24th. For all who lack confidence or underestimate their own worth as precious to God.
For The People of Elmcroft Lane and Moorfields.
- 25th. (**Trinity 3**) For all those who suffer from confusion of mind or who know the darkness of depression or other mental distress.
For the people of St. George's Road
- 26th. For all those who have no home and must rely on the charity of others for their accommodation tonight.
For The People of Blundell Road.
- 27th. For fishermen and all seafarers.
For All The People of Hightown.
- 28th. For couples whose marriage is going wrong.
For The People of Village Way and The Roundway.
- 29th. (**Feast of St Peter & St Paul**) For the unity of the Church.
For The People of Thirlmere Road.
- 30th. For drivers of holiday buses and trains and those who fly passenger aircraft that they may be always alert.
For The People of The Range and Altcar Camp.

Who's Who at St. Stephen's

Vicar	<i>To be appointed</i>
Reader	Mr. John Gibson
Wardens	Mr. Geoff Bailey
PCC Secretary	Mrs. Beryl Howard
PCC Treasurer	Mr. Keith Aldis
Gift Aid Secretary	Mr. Brian Taylor
Safeguarding	Mrs. Sonia Bunyard
Wills and Legacies	<i>To be appointed</i>
Electoral Roll Officer	Mrs. Beth Cresswell
Sacristan Team	Miss Hazel Roberts
Health and Safety	Mr. Stanley Alty
Flower Rota	Mrs. Hilary Munro
CMS Secretary	Mrs. Beryl Howard
St. Stephen's Youth Club	Jane Croxton
Church Hall Bookings	Mrs. Sally Fraser
Focus Editor	Colette Grove Focus.Mag.2023@StStephensHightown.org.uk
Focus Advertisements	Colette Grove Adverts@StStephensHightown.org.uk
Focus Distribution	Mr. and Mrs. K Bradshaw
St. Stephen's Church Website	StStephensHightown.org.uk

Baptisms

Jessica Howard
Joel Shelbourne



Birthdays

Grace Harrison



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Sanctuary Flowers

7th Hilary Munro
14th Elizabeth Richardson
21st Judith Welsh
28th Margaret Wear

St Stephen's Church Hall

TODDLER GROUP

Term time
Every Friday 9.30 to 11.30am

Brass Cleaning

Colette Grove

Sunday Coffee Rota

7th Beth Cresswell
14th Judith Welsh
21st Val Bailey
& Beryl Howard
28th Sue Taylor

St Stephen's Church

Sunday Rota for June 2023

Sunday 4th 10.30 Eucharist Rev Canon Janet Eastwood
6.00 Evening Prayer John Gibson

Wed 7th 10.30 Morning Prayer Geoff Bailey

Sunday 11th 10.30 Eucharist Rev Natalie West
6.00 Evening Prayer John Gibson

Wed 14th 10.30 Eucharist Rev Sue Smith

Sunday 18th 10.30 Eucharist Rev Sue Smith
6.00 Evening Prayer Colin Goodyear

Wed 21st 1 0.30 Morning Prayer Judith Welch

Sunday 25th 10.30 Eucharist Rev Ted Woods

**6.00 Collation of Revd Keith Thornborough
by + John, Bishop of Liverpool**

Wed 28th 10.30 Morning Prayer Revd Keith Thornborough

*"I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk roses and with eglantine:
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lulled in these flowers with dances and delight."*

(Oberon, Midsummer Night's Dream)



People In Our Parish



This month Sue Taylor meets Margaret Wear. Margaret is the Chair of the Hightown Friendship Group, just one of her many interests. Margaret and her husband Ian moved to Hightown in 1988. An only child, Margaret was born in Halifax, Yorkshire and lived in a village. She was a nurse by profession.

Margaret and Ian are parents to Caroline and Helen and have two grandchildren. After moving home several times because of Ian's work they ended up in Hightown, living firstly in Mayfair Close and then moving to Sandhills.

After her daughters were born, Margaret became a teaching assistant at an infant school in Lindley, Huddersfield, then worked in a day nursery for four to five years.

In 1988 Margaret joined the Townswomen Guild, Hightown and in 1990 became a member of the Executive Committee. She acted as Minutes Secretary, then became Vice-Chairperson, and eventually took on the role of Chairperson. The Hightown branch was also affiliated to the West Lancs Federation and Margaret became music chairperson for the federation.

As time went by, the Hightown group decided to become a stand alone group, known as The Hightown Friendship Group, operating in a similar manner to the Guild. The Group meets once monthly, on the second Wednesday, at 8 pm in St Stephen's Church Hall.

They organise a varied programme of entertainments: guests to give talks, coffee evenings, quizzes, meals and trips. Something for everyone! New members are always welcomed.

Margaret has many interests. She loves the arts, especially classical music and the theatre. She also finds time to be a committee member of the Hightown Gardening Club and sings with the Hightown Village Singers. Her interest in antiques has been passed down from her mother, who was an antiques dealer.

When asked what she liked most about Hightown, Margaret said that the village community is what she values and that the people here are so friendly.

We appreciate the time that Margaret gives to the life of the village of Hightown.

"What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?"
Titania, Act 3, Scene 1, *Midsummer Night's Dream*

FROM BETH'S KITCHEN

NETTLE AND DANDELION OMELETTE

Recently at the Gardening Club we had a talk on the culinary and medicinal use of herbs and their cultivation. I then found this recipe which ties in very well with the idea of utilising “weeds” as foraged meal ingredients. One should be careful where one picks the wild plants – not near roads or where dogs roam – to avoid contamination but garden weeds are perfect. We have tried this recipe which is delicious and easy to make. We are still here to tell the tale!



Ingredients

20g butter	1 clove garlic, peeled
¼ white onion, finely chopped	30g nettle tops
1 large dandelion leaf	a pinch of salt
3 large eggs	10g grated Parmesan cheese

Method

Place the butter and the clove of garlic in a heavy-based frying pan and gently warm until the butter has melted. After a couple of minutes, remove the garlic, add the chopped onion and cook until the onion is softened but not browned.

Place the washed nettle tops and dandelion leaf into the pan, sprinkle with salt, cover with a lid and leave for a couple of minutes until the leaves have wilted.

Take off the heat and place buttery leaves on a chopping board, leaving as much butter in the pan as possible. Chop the dandelion, nettle and onion into very small pieces.

Crack the eggs into a bowl and beat with the grated cheese. Return the buttery pan to the heat, pour in the egg and once the bottom of the omelette is cooked, pour on the chopped leaves. Keep on the heat until the omelette becomes opaque. Flip the omelette in half to seal in the nettle and dandelion mixture and serve at once.

Serves 1/2

When picking nettles, it is absolutely essential to wear kitchen gloves or thick gardening gloves.

Once cooked the nettles lose their sting and will not harm or damage your mouth. (Editor's note)

Robots

by *The Reverend Canon Dr Rod Garner*



I've been giving quite a lot of thought recently to artificial intelligence (AI) and the extent to which computer 'superintelligence ' will dominate or threaten our future as humans. The coming takeover by machines is of course already here, performing a fantastic range of things that once belonged exclusively to human hands and minds. The signs are everywhere: in hospitals, factories, shops and supermarkets, and our forms of travel, we rely increasingly on software that mimics human skills. This might not actually be me typing these words now – you could be reading what I fed into a computer and asked it to come up with something sounding like me. I'll let you decide.

What we are slowly realising or choosing deliberately to ignore is the extraordinary speed at which all this is happening. A new age of robots or cyborgs of an electronic sort, thinking thousands of times faster than humans and potentially teaching themselves and their descendants in ways far beyond human comprehension, is no longer the stuff of science fiction. It's here. However clever and good at chess you are, I wouldn't necessarily back you against the Alpha Zero 'deep learning' system that can take on the best players and win.

It's not silly or far-fetched to consider what might happen if a godlike AI escaped human control and took over energy or life-saving systems, transport, and even weapons that could effectively destroy the planet. And what sort of relationship would be formed with us, the complex, carbon-based life forms that have emerged slowly over an unbelievably long stretch of time and have until now lorded it over all things living and walked on the moon? A generation ago, an American writer suggested that in such a future we would all 'be watched over by machines of loving grace'. Currently, not everyone taking this matter seriously inclines to such rosy optimism.

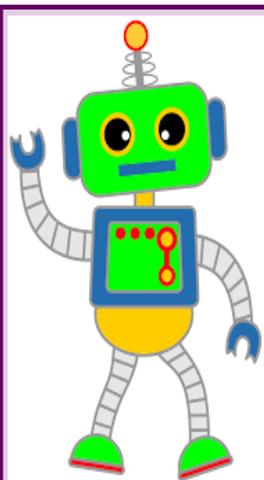
There are no guarantees that machine intelligence would be considerate or kind. It might even regard us as a threat to be eliminated as it became more powerful. A friend of mine, well up in science, recently claimed over lunch that either outcome is possible within the next hundred years, the probable

lifespan of children being born today. Suddenly, the unforeseeable and unimaginable future doesn't feel so far away and new questions are emerging.

There is the ethical issue of regulation and control; of what we should be doing now to avoid 'worst case scenarios'. Most of us have memories from books or films of Dr Frankenstein who created a monster, both unhappy and ill-suited to a world of humans, and was then horrified at what he had made but, regrettably, all too late.

From a religious perspective, I want to ask whether such advanced machines would have the capacity to do more than think. Would they be able to care, feel, weep over careless or hurtful mistakes, cry over the starving millions, worry about the lost or loveless, forgive when they are abused or humiliated or organise charity relief for the victims of earthquakes? Would they, in other words, possess that mysterious and profound dimension of the human that is more than our brains and nervous system and is traditionally associated with what Christianity refers to as the 'soul'?

Not least, would they recognise any binding obligation to a spiritual or moral force greater than themselves that turned them away from the dark side or destructive impulses? In this respect, our own track record as a species is not brilliant, not even when collectively we profess a belief in a good and generous God. Our remarkable achievements in many fields continue to be marred by our talent for coercion, slaughter, and unbridled violence on an industrial scale. Wild places, wild things, and the lives of so many innocent fellow travellers have been sacrificed to our will or dominion. We still have much to learn, not least a proper humility, in terms of our place as a species in the next, and undoubtedly different, stage of evolution. AI will be there – hopefully, as partner and, who knows, perhaps even guide?



Robot Jokes

Qu: What's a robot's favourite food?

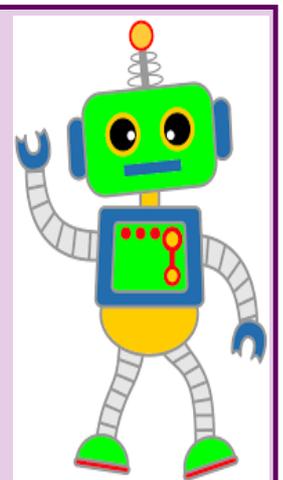
A: Microchips

Qu: Why shouldn't you pat a robot dog?

A: It might byte.

Qu: How did the robot get across the river?

A: In a ro-boat.



Blossoming Beauty:

The Hightown Village Flower Show Unveils Nature's Delights on Saturday, July 15th, 2023



Nature's colourful tapestry will come alive as our village prepares to host its much-anticipated annual Flower Show on Saturday, July 15th, 2023. This vibrant celebration promises to be a sensory feast for flower enthusiasts, gardeners, bakers, photographers and crafters alike with an array of captivating displays and delightful aromas.

Entries are always encouraged from our younger residents and there are plenty of prizes on offer including silver trophies.

The Flower Show, however, is much more than just a display of botanical beauty and careful crafting; it serves as a testament to the strong sense of community and togetherness within our village. The event brings residents, visitors, and gardening enthusiasts from neighbouring communities together, fostering connections and nurturing a shared love for nature's wonders.

The show on Saturday, July 15th, 2023, promises to be a day of fun with a category for everyone to enter. So mark your calendars and watch out for the schedule dropping through your letterbox any time soon. Prepare to be enthralled as Hightown showcases the resplendent wonders of its gardens and kitchens, a testament to the remarkable talents of its residents and the enduring allure of Mother Nature herself.

See you there!



*"I must go seek some dewdrops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear"*

(Fairy, Act 2, Scene 1 Midsummer Night's Dream)



Village Organisations and Activities

Tuesday Group, St Stephen's Hall Tuesday morning 10am	Beryl Howard Jan Branigan
Hightown Friendship Group 2nd Wednesday at 8pm, St Stephen's Hall	Margaret Wear
Gardening Club 2nd Monday St Stephen's Hall 8pm	Hilary Munro
Bowling Club, Sandy Lane	Diana Killen
Hightown Club	Chris Scrine
Blundellsands Sailing Club	Rohan Pickard—rohan.pickard@gmail.com Chris Williams—Cwill1951@virginmedia.com
Yoga Classes, Hightown Club	Rose Billinge
Flower Show	Ian Wear
Open Mic Poetry Group 3rd Thursday 7.30pm, St Stephen's Church Hall	Tony Higginson—tonythebook@live.co.uk Sally Anne—tapiabowes@gmail.com
'Drop In', Thursdays, 1.30—3.30pm St Stephen's Hall	Sue Taylor
Village Singers, Our Lady of Victories Hall, Mondays 1.30—3pm	Chris Payne—payne-c@sky.com
Hightown Parish Council	Jenny Farrar—clerk@hightownparishcouncil.uk www.hightownparishcouncil.uk
Community Library, Alt Centre, Lower Alt Rd, Mon 12-2, Tues 1-3, Weds 1- 4, Fri 10 -12	Linda Munro—lindamunro@hotmail.com
Zumba Gold, Dance for all aged 55+, Mondays 9.45-10.30 St Stephen's Hall	Nicky Garsforth
Creo Dance Co, Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs, Sat Children 3-18 years	Georgia Gaudie

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