December 22 / January 23





Parish Magazine of St. Stephen's, Hightown



Happy Christmas to Hightown



In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and without Him not one thing

came into being. What has come into being in Him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. (John 1.1-5)



These are the momentous words I have listened to, each Christmas, since I was a child. Even as a rebellious teenager, these powerful words, without fail, sent shivers down my spine. Each year, they retain their ancient ability to startle me

and invoke in me a new sense of awe and wonder; each year, humbling me and affecting me most profoundly. In these poetic words, John, the author of the fourth gospel of the New Testament, is recording a world– shaking shift in the human conception of how things came about and who Jesus really is. They are deliberately precise and to the point, and immerse the mind in the cosmic, the mystical and our evolutionary beginnings. And there, in the immensity of it all, is Jesus, scattering universes, the light in the darkness. We need to give ourselves time to allow these words to haunt our imaginations. In these sublime words John testifies to the truth that something of monumental significance has occurred amongst us. Then, and only then are we able to see, with new eyes, the baby Jesus born in a stable in Bethlehem. At once, our creator, saviour and brother. What better reason to joyfully celebrate at Christmas!

Wishing you all a happy and blessed Christmas,

Colette



With many thanks to Chris Cresswell for the photographs on the front cover

Entries for future issues of Focus to be sent to

Focus.Magazine@StStephensHightown.org.uk

Please submit before the last day of the month.

Letter from Michael Cudby, Church Warden

The winter season is now upon us. Seems not that long ago we were collecting pumpkins from the fields in Hightown. Now we turn our attention to the season of giving but where do we start?



Every year we start a little earlier. Christmas shop displays start in September and Christmas present lists are never quite finished until the last item is bought on Christmas Eve. For one reason or another most of us get it wrong. The Bible sets the marker for the birth of Jesus; we are told that shepherds protecting their flocks saw angels in the sky summoning them to Bethlehem, and we are told that three wise men were travelling in the desert, following a star, in order to find Him and present Him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Jesus' birth is understated, his mum and dad were poor, and could not find accommodation, except an offer from a peasant to share a stable with his animals. And yet these portentous, celestial signs would seem to point to a much grander birth than that of Jesus. God's gift to humanity: Jesus. Coming back to Christmas and our love of giving; Do remember in your prayers, this season, the beauty of our planet and those who are less fortunate than ourselves.

Children are our legacy of love and we must protect their innocence and virtue. May this year, when all around us is in universal challenge; we pray for love and peace in the world.

Don't forget you are all loved and may God protect you all.

So much to look forward to, so little time to value the good things we have now. God bless you all and a Happy Christmas everyone.



Our Grateful Thanks



To

The team who deliver the Focus magazine to our doorsteps each month

St Stephen's Church Sunday Rota for December 22 / January 23

Sunday Rota for December 22 / January 23		
December		
Sunday 4th	10.30am 6.00pm	Eucharist and Toy Service - Rev. Sue Smith Evening Prayer John Gibson
Wed 7th	10.30am	Morning Prayer - Geoff Bailey
Sunday 11th	10.30am 6.00pm	Eucharist - Rev. Canon Janet Eastwood Evening Prayer - John Gibson
Wed 14th	10.30am	Eucharist - Rev. Nathan Thorpe
Sunday 18th	10.30am 6.00pm	Eucharist - Rev. Canon Anne Taylor Carol Service
Wed 21st	10.30am	Morning Prayer - Hazel Roberts
Saturday 24th	4.00pm 8.00pm	Christingle Service - Berenice Gibson Christmas Eve Eucharist - Rev. Kath Rogers
Sunday 25th	10.30am	Christmas Day Eucharist - Rev. Canon Janet Eastwood
Wed 28th	10.30am	Morning Prayer - Judith Welch
January		
Sunday 1st	10.30am 6.00pm	Eucharist - Rev Canon Janet Eastwood Evening Prayer - John Gibson
Wed 4th	10.30am	Morning Prayer - Geoff Bailey
Sunday 8th	10.30 am 6.00pm	Eucharist -TBA Evening Prayer - John Gibson
Wed 11th	10.30am	Morning Prayer - Judith Welch
Sunday 15th	10.30am 6.00pm	Eucharist - Rev. Sue Smith Evening Prayer - John Gibson
Wed 18th	10.30am	Eucharist - Rev Sue Smith
Sunday 22nd	10.30 am 6.00pm	Eucharist – Rev Keith Thornborough Evening Prayer - Colin Goodyear
Wed 25th	10.30am	Morning Prayer - Hazel Roberts
Sunday 29th	10.30am 6.00pm	Eucharist TBA Evening Prayer - John Gibson

Who's Who at St. Stephen's

Vicar To be appointed

Reader Mr. John Gibson

Wardens Mr. Michael Cudby & 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 To be appointed

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.Magazine@StStephensHightown.org.uk

Focus Advertisements Colette Grove

Focus Distribution Mr. and Mrs. K Bradshaw

St. Stephen's Church Website https://StStephensHightown.org.uk

PRAYER PROMPTS FOR DECEMBER



- 1st. Pray for the poor and all those in need of a helping hand. For all the people of Hightown.
- 2nd. Pray for the lonely, that they may find a friend. For the people of Marston Crescent and Mayfair Close.
- 3rd. Pray for the sick, that they may receive God's healing. For the people of Langley Close and Richmond Close.
- 4th. **2nd Sunday of Advent.** Pray for the homeless, that they find shelter and a life fulfilled.

 For the people of Blundell Road and Blundell Avenue.
- 5th. Pray for families and friendships, that we try to understand each other and love life together.

 For all the people of Hightown.
- 6th. Pray for peace in the world, that conflicts will be resolved. For the people of Thistledown Drive and Bankside.
- 7th. Pray for Ukraine, for the end of suffering and for a peaceful and just solution. For the people of Orrell Hill Lane, North End Lane and Gorsey Lane.
- 8th. Pray for mothers around the world, on the day of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

 For all the people of Hightown.
- 9th. Pray for the people of Hightown, for community solidarity where we help one another whenever we can.

 For the people of Delph Road.
- 10th. Pray for our Liverpool City region, for people less fortunate than ourselves. Pray that people who have more will help people who have less.

 For the people of North Dunes and Westway.
- 11th. **3rd Sunday of Advent**. Pray for our country, that in these difficult times leaders can find the best way forward for all of us.

 For the people of Blundell Grove, Larkhill Grove and Withinsfield.
- 12th. Pray for our continent of Europe, for peace, and for understanding between peoples. For the people of Old Acre and Riverside.
- 13th. Pray that different peoples around the world will learn to live together. For the people of Elmcroft Lane and Sandy Lane.
- 14th. Pray that different religions can learn to respect each other, and that religious conflict around the world is ended.

 For the people of St. George's Road and Emerson Close.
- 15th. Pray for people living in countries where they are oppressed, and that they may live in peace and justice.

 For all the people of Hightown.
- 16th. Pray for those with problems affecting their mental health, that their problems are relieved and they find support.

 For the people of Sandhills and Briary Croft.

PRAYER PROMPTS FOR DECEMBER (CONTINUED)



- 17th. Pray for understanding of those who are different to us, for people who are neuro-diverse and those whose sexuality or gender identification varies from any perceived 'norms'.

 For the people of Village Way and the Roundway.
- 18th. **4th Sunday of Advent**. As the festive season approaches we pray our faith is strengthened in ways that enable us to follow Jesus more closely. *For the people of Elvington Road*.
- 19th. We pray that our faith will be felt in our families, in our community, and with all those with whom we meet, in a way that truly reflects the way of Christ. For the people of Alt Road and Lower Alt Road.
- We pray that the true spirit of Christmas shines brighter than the Christmas lights, and that people who have less are not 'pressurised' to spend what they don't have. For the people of the Range and Altcar Camp.
- 21st. Pray for solidarity between people and communities during this festive season and that we can find ways to help each other.

 For the people of Whitefield Close and Oakfield Road.
- 22nd. As Christmas draws near, we pay for all our loved ones, that we can heal any relationships that have gone awry and do our best for them.

 For the people of Wignalls Meadow and Moorhouses.
- 23rd. Pray for an open and generous heart.

 For the people of Grasmere, Windermere and Thirlmere Roads and Thirlmere Mews.
- 24th. **Christmas Eve**. We pray for people travelling to see others. May their journeys be safe, and their missions fulfilled.

 For the people of School Road and Rathbone Road.
- 25th. **Christmas Day**. Pray that Christ's love reaches all, wherever they live. For all the people of Hightown.
- 26th. **St. Stephen's Day**. Pray for our church in Hightown this day. For the people of St. Stephen's Road and Hester Close.
- 27th. **John the Evangelist** Pray that we can maintain the 'Spirit of Christmas' and be filled with goodwill towards all we meet.

 For the people of Thornbeck Avenue.
- 28th. We thank God for all the gifts we have received, and for the goodness around us. For the people of Mark Road.
- 29th. Pray for guidance, that our new year will be filled with good works For all the people of Hightown.
- 30th. Pray that the new year will bring to all we know a sense of peace. For the people of Holmfield, Moss Lane and Local Farms.
- Pray for peace and understanding across the globe throughout the whole of mankind

 For the people of Sandilands Grove and Tudor Gardens.

Prayer Prompts January 2023



- 1st. **Second Sunday of Christmas**. The naming of Jesus . Guide us, O Lord, through the coming year. For the people of Tudor Gardens and Thirlmere Mews.
- 2nd. We pray for those who govern countries, may they have wisdom and integrity. For all the people of Hightown.
- 3rd. Help us Lord to see the beauty of the world around us, and in the goodness people we meet.

 For the people of North Dunes and Westway.
- 4th. We pray for the people in war torn areas, and to give them hope and strength for the dangers they face.

 For the people of Elmcroft Lane and North End Lane.
- 5th. For an understanding of all faiths and our working together. For the people of Alt Road and Lower Alt Road.
- 6th. We give thanks to all who have tirelessly looked after the sick and the elderly, For the people of Windermere Road and Sandy Lane.
- 7th. Help us, O Lord, to be patient with ourselves. For the people of Bankside and Holmfield.
- 8th. **The Baptism of Christ**. **First Sunday of Epiphany**. May God bless us all. For the people of Withins Field and Blundell Grove.
- 9th. We pray for courage and understanding of what is right and just. For all the people of Hightown.
- 10th. Help us to see and support the needs of those around us. For the people of Thornbeck Avenue
- 11th. Guide us, Lord, to look after our world and its climate. For the people of Old Acre and Mayfair Close.
- 12th. We pray for all who are affected by earthquakes, hurricanes, floods and famine. For the people of Sandhills and Briary Croft.
- 13th. Pray for the strength and comfort for those mourning the loss of loved ones. For the people of the Range and Altcar Camp.
- 14th. We pray for all who give service to the community. For the people of St George's Road and Gorsey Lane.
- **Second Sunday of Epiphany**. We pray for those without faith or hope. For the people of Hester Close and St. Stephen's Road.
- 16th. For those who are ill or struggling amongst us. We ask for God's help with their difficulties.

 For all the people of Hightown.
- 17th. Pray for those who are lonely. May they feel your love. For the people of Elvington Road.
- 18th. For God's glory to be shown through our unity with one another. For the people of Riverside and Larkhill Grove.

- 19th. For those who serve in the armed forces, both at home and abroad. For the people of Wignalls Meadow and Moorhouses.
- 20th. For all the emergency service workers. May they continue their good work.
 - For the people of Grasmere Road and Thirlmere Road.
- 21st. For forgiveness for our failings and sins.

 For the people of Whitefield Close and Oakfield Road.
- 22nd. **Third Sunday of Epiphany**. We thank you for the devotion of our ministry team, church wardens and their supporters.

 For the people of School Road and Sandilands Grove.
- 23rd. We pray for the bereaved and those who carry great sadness. *For all the people of Hightown.*
- 24th. Help us Lord to make time for others in our busy lives.

 For the people of Langley Close, Richmond Close and Emerson Close.
- 25th. We pray for all who work in the Altcar Camp.

 For the people of Rathbone Road and Thistledown Drive.
- 26th. For all children, that they may fulfil their potential. For the people of Blundell Road and Blundell Avenue.
- 27th. For teachers, that they have patience, understanding and wisdom in their teachings.

 For the people of Mark Road.
- 28th. We give thanks for all volunteers in their good work.

 For the people of Orrell Hill Lane, Moss Lane and local farms.
- 29th. **Fourth Sunday of Epiphany**. We thank you Lord for the opportunity of being together in prayer.

 For the people of Marston Crescent, Brentwood Close and Alton Close.
- 30th. We pray for all who find it difficult to keep warm in the cold months. For all the people of Hightown.
- 31st. For peace and harmony, and the end of violence in its many forms throughout the world.
 - For the people of Village Way and Round Way.



Birthdays in December/January

Chloe Page Wormald
31st January



Brass Cleaning

December Hazel Roberts

January Beth Cresswell



Nathaniel Patrick Douglas Wood Isla Lucy Green

Baptisms January

Abigail Pamela Edisbury Eleanor Grace Burrows Rebecca Ann Budd Emma Esther Budd







St Stephen's Church Hall

TODDLER GROUP

Term time

Every Friday 9.30 to 11.30am



Christenings for children of all ages

St Stephen's Church

Ring our church warden Michael to book

0151 929 3915



The Hightown Pub and Kitchen

Let's make a difference

This year, the staff at **The Hightown Pub and Kitchen** would like to do something to help those in need during these difficult winter months. However, with times being tough on everyone this year, instead of monetary donations we would like to run a "Clothes and Goods Drive" for the Whitechapel Centre in Liverpool.

A full list of donations they are in need of can be found at:

www.whitechapelcentre.co.uk/donate-goods.html

The Whitechapel Centre is the leading homeless and housing charity for the Liverpool region. It works with people who are sleeping rough, living in hostels and those suffering from poverty related problems.

It is an independent charity which works to improve the health and social wellbeing of communities they serve and to make a positive impact through the employment and volunteering opportunities they provide.

Donations of good quality clothing, shoes, accessories, new underwear, new towels, new bedding and unused toiletries are all needed for the Centre users.

The Hightown Hotel has kindly offered to accept these donations on behalf of the Centre and items can be dropped off between 11 am and 4 pm, until the end of December.

The Whitechapel Centre Langsdale Street, Liverpool L3 8DT

Tel: 0151-207-7617



Coffee Morning in aid of Altcar Pods

Saturday January 7th

10-12

St Stephen's Hall

All Welcome!



The Churches of St Stephen's and Our Lady of Victories wish everyone in Hightown a very happy and blessed Christmas



Please come to any of our services and join with us in celebrating Christmas 2022



St Stephen's Church



Sunday 4th 10.30am Eucharist and Toy Service .

During this service you may donate toys and gifts. These will be distributed to less fortunate children and teenagers in the locality.

Sunday 18th 6.00pm Carol Service.

All your favourite carols followed by mince pies and mulled wine.

Saturday 24th. 4pm Christmas Eve Christingle Service

8pm Christmas Eve Eucharist

Sunday 25th 10.30am Christmas Day Eucharist



Our Lady of Victories, Hightown and Holy Family, Ince Blundell:

Friday December 2nd: Sacrament of Confession as preparation for Christmas

7.30 pm at Our Lady of Victories

Thursday December 8th: Feast of the Immaculate Conception: Blessings of Baby Jesus and Family Cribs in our Churches during the Masses. Bring your Family Crib or Baby Jesus image.

9.00 am Mass at Holy Family

7.30 pm Mass at Our Lady of Victories

Sunday December 18th

Christmas Fayre

Tuck Shop

Chocolate Tombola

Santa's Grotto

Plus many more stalls

Our Lady of Victories Parish Hall In the Presbytery garden

Saturday 24th December: Christmas Eve:

8.00 pm: Holy Family Church: Christmas Eve Mass

11.00 pm: Our Lady of Victories: Carols followed by Mass

Sunday 25th December: Christmas Day

9.00 am: Mass in Holy Family

11.15 am: Mass in Our Lady of Victories









November '22 Fairtrade Coffee Morning

















Sunday Coffee Rota December / January

December 4th Jane Croxton

December 11th Christina Grocott

December 18th Margaret Bate

December 25th Beryl Howard

January 1st Jan Williams
January 8th Kevin Howard
January 15th Beth Cresswell
January 20th Judith Welch
January 27th

Sanctuary Flowers December / January

December 4th Advent greenery
December 11th Advent greenery
December 18th Advent greenery
December 25th Christmas Flowers

January 1st Christmas Flowers
January 8th Hilary Munro
January 15th Colette Grove
January 20th Hilary Munro
January 27th Hilary Munro

People In Our Parish

Suzanne lives with her dad, Steve, in Northdunes and, after taking early retirement from a teaching career, now works for The Brain Charity, headquartered in Liverpool. Suzanne clearly loves her work. The Brain Charity offers emotional support, practical help and social activities to anyone with a neurological condition and to their family, friends and carers.

There are more than 600 different neurological conditions: from more common and well known ones like stroke, brain injury and dementia to very rare ones like Alice in Wonderland syndrome.

The charity is the only one in the UK to cater for every one of them. They have been supporting people with neurological conditions for nearly 30 years, since 1993 and are now a national charity.

They help deal with all the questions people might have about living with a neurological condition.

These might include:

- Employment issues and unemployment
- Applying for welfare benefits
- Housing ads & adaptations
- Legal advice
- Advocacy
- Practical information on a new diagnosis or how to live well with their condition

They also have physical libraries, open to the public and staff, based in multiple hospitals across Merseyside.

Having a neurological condition can highly increase the chances of also developing a mental health condition. The majority of their service users also face things like depression, anxiety, loneliness and social isolation.

They provide free counselling to anyone affected by a neurological condition, including CBT and Person-Centred Therapy. This is currently taking place via phone or video call.

In addition, they run group therapy sessions, confidence coaching, phone befriending and host a range of different support groups.

Her dad, Steve, is a volunteer phone befriender and tells me that he loves the work. He

recently presented the charity with a cheque. The Brain Charity are always looking for volunteers to do the same as Steve, so if you feel you may enjoy it, Suzanne suggests getting in touch with them. Likewise, Suzanne says, if you feel you may benefit from advice or help, then please do not hesitate to contact them.









From Beth's Kitchen

MUSHROOM STROGANOFF

This is a quick easy dish which makes a delicious supper or light winter lunch. You can use ordinary closed cup or chestnut mushrooms or a variety of bought woodland ones which give a different texture to the meal.



200-300g mushrooms, quartered 1 shallot, finely chopped

1 clove of garlic, finely chopped 30g butter

1 heaped tsp Dijon mustard 1 good slurp of cider vinegar

1 tsp thyme leaves 2 tbsp crème fraiche

Salt and freshly ground black pepper, parsley, basil or rocket (as garnish)

125g basmati rice or quinoa, freshly cooked or ready cooked from a packet. This is definitely not cheating – thank you, Jamie Oliver!

Set the rice or quinoa to cook whilst you make the stroganoff.

Melt the butter in a large, flat frying pan with a lid. Fry the shallot and garlic for about 5 minutes until they begin to soften. Add the mushrooms and thyme and stir well until coated with the butter. Cover and cook on a low heat for about 8 minutes.

Add the mustard, vinegar and crème fraiche. Stir well and add seasoning to taste. Cook for a few more minutes to ensure that all the flavours are combined.

When the rice or quinoa is cooked serve on individual, warmed plates topped with the mushroom mixture and garnished with the green herb of your choice.

Serves 2

Village Organisations and Activities

Tuesday Group, St Stephen's Hall	Beryl Howard & Jan Branigan
Tuesday morning 10am 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	lan 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 Gaudi

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS/WEBSITES

Hightown Doctor's Surgery— 0151 929 3603

Hightown Railway Station—Merseyrail.org

Hightown Hotel—0151 929 2492

Blundellsands Sailing Club—Cwill1951@virginmedia.com

Hightown Club—07884 491 806 (Chris Scrine)

Local taxi—Formby Village Radio Cars 01704 877777

Police (Non-Emergency) – 101

NHS (Non-Emergency) – 111

Sefton Council Main Number – 0345 140 0845

Adult Social Care – 01704 704389 (North) / 0151 529 3761 (South)

Children's Social Care - 0151 934 3114

Children's Safeguarding Concerns – 0345 140 0845 (8am-6pm)

Sefton Council Emergency Duty Team (weekends) 0151 934 3555

Sefton Council for Voluntary Service – 0151 920 0726

Healthwatch Sefton - 0800 206 1304

Sefton Security – 0151 934 4746

NHS Southport and Formby CCG: 01704 395 785

Sefton Carers Centre (helpline) – 0151 288 6060

Stop Hate UK - 0800 138 1625

Sefton Women's & Children's Aid - 0151 922 8606

National Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808 2000 247

Dear Editor,

I have been greatly upset, of late, to see people dumping bags full of rubbish at the side of the bin in front of the Hightown Village Store. This bin is clearly marked 'Litter and Dog Waste'. Hightown is such a clean and tidy village, why spoil it for others by treating it in this way? Looking after the environment for future generations starts at home. Now is a good time to consider our New Year resolutions.

From an upset member of our community.

Winter Warmers

On *Thursday 1st December* you are invited to join our regular attendees at 1.00 - 3.30 pm in St Stephen's Church Hall.

You will enjoy a warming bowl of soup and a roll, hot drinks and biscuits in our newly refurbished hall.

Come and be warm and waited on and catch up with friends.



Enquiries: Di Aldis 929-3612 Sue Taylor **929-2720**



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Julie Hopkins Branch Director



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Blundellsands Sailing Club

Established 1907 Hightown



New sailing members welcome!

Whether you are a complete novice to sailing and want to give sailing a try or are an experienced ocean dweller you are more than welcome at BSC.

No boat required!

We sail all manner of yachts up to 30ft in length from moorings in the Alt between April and October. During the winter we fit out our boats in the boat yard with lots of socialising and events throughout the year at our club house overlooking the shore.

If you are interested in joining the club or trying some sailing with existing members, please contact:

Rohan Pickard – Sailing Secretary rohan.pickard@gmail.com

Chris Williams – Rear Commodore Cwill1951@virginmedia.com



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The Hightown Club

Thirlmere Road, Hightown, L38 3RQ

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For details, Please contact:

Brian Taylor: 0151 929 2720

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St Stephen's Church

Every Sunday at the back of church before / after 10.30am service

Tins and packets welcome

Village Store

General Convenience Store

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