

December 2024/January 2025

FOCUS

Issue 290



Parish Magazine of St Stephen's, Hightown

I will tell
of the decree
of the Lord:

“You are my son;
today I have
begotten you”.

Psalm 2: 7





Editor's Note

I can't believe that in a few weeks time, I'll be climbing into the loft to bring down the Christmas decorations! It feels like five minutes since they were packed away at the beginning of the year.

One particular decoration-the Christmas cat-reminds me of the time when, in the early 1980s, I was a a girl about town and working in London. I had an extremely large, half feral, tabby cat, named Vienna. He was a lovable liability, and one year he truly earned his name on the Christmas naughty list!

All the work involved in preparing and cooking the turkey had been completed and it was out resting on the kitchen counter...or so I thought. After not being able to track down Vienna anywhere, I looked in the kitchen, only to see him tucking, with great gusto, into the beautiful, buttery turkey! Did he, shamefacedly, try to dodge out of the way of his banshee-like owner? No! He managed to grab the whole bird, jump down off the counter with it firmly wedged in his not inconsiderable jaws, and dragging it backwards across the kitchen, tried to make a quick exit with it through the cat flap. But this was where I had the last laugh, because, as he reversed out of the flap, the remains of the turkey got stuck and although he tried with all his might and main, he could not pull it through.

Christmas Day was not a disaster after all. After phoning a friend of mine and relating the woeful tale, we were invited to join her family to have the traditional festive fare with them. It was Christmas with a difference because her family are Jewish.

Wishing you all a blessed and peaceful Christmas,

Colette

Entries for future issues of Focus to be sent to

Focus.Mag.2023@StStephensHightown.org.uk

Please submit before last day of month

Dear Friends,

Advent Sunday this year is on Sunday 1st December, which is also our All-Age Eucharist and Toy and Gift Service. We shall also be dedicating a new Advent Wreath, a thanksgiving gift from Yvonne. It's going to be a busy service.... It's going to be a busy time and that's wonderful, but we also need to make sure that we take the 'time out' to pause and reflect, in expectant hope, and prepare ourselves and our homes for Christ's birth.



It can be easy to lose sight of the real meaning of Christmas with all the hustle and bustle, seeking and searching for perfect presents, this year's absolute must-haves. It's not needed. We need to remember that Christmas starts with Christ.

'Come and worship Christ the new-born King, Come and worship Christ the new-born King', is the refrain from the carol 'Angels from the Realms of Glory'.... It's the one where you need to take a deep breath before you start to sing, but it is a good one!

There are many opportunities at St Stephen's to 'come and worship', to take time out and to reflect; over Advent, Christmas and into the New Year, as detailed in this Focus magazine. You are most welcome at all our services.

Let's remember what we are celebrating.... Christmas starts with Christ!

Peace and Joy!

With every blessing for the New Year!

Keith

Eco Tip for a Greener Christmas— A Rocha

Create homemade gifts, e.g. baked goods, or buy gifts from a charity shop—you'll be amazed at what you can find! You could buy an attractive glass or vase and fill it with chocolates or flowers. Kilner jars and other glass jars, filled with small items also make attractive gifts.



St Stephen's Church Services – Dec/Jan

SUNDAY 1ST ADVENT 1	10:30	ALL-AGE EUCHARIST, TOY & GIFT SERVICE
SUNDAY 1ST	18:00	TAIZE ADVENT SERVICE
WEDNESDAY 4TH	10:30	EUCHARIST
FRIDAY 6TH	09:30	MORNING PRAYER
SUNDAY 8TH ADVENT 2	10:30	EUCHARIST
SUNDAY 8TH	16:00	TODDLER CHURCH
SUNDAY 8TH	18:00	EVENSONG
WEDNESDAY 11TH	10:30	EUCHARIST
WEDNESDAY 11TH	19:00	SANCTUARY AT SEVEN
FRIDAY 13TH	09:30	MORNING PRAYER
SUNDAY 15TH ADVENT 3	10:30	EUCHARIST
SUNDAY 15TH	18:00	CAROLS AROUND THE TREE
WEDNESDAY 18TH	10:30	EUCHARIST
FRIDAY 20TH	09:30	MORNING PRAYER
SUNDAY 22ND ADVENT 4	10:30	EUCHARIST
SUNDAY 22ND	18:00	CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT
TUES 24TH CHRISTMAS EVE	16:00	CHRISTINGLE
TUESDAY 24TH	23:15	MIDNIGHT EUCHARIST
WED 25TH CHRISTMAS DAY	10:30	EUCHARIST FOR CHRISTMAS DAY
SUNDAY 29TH (ST STEPHEN)	10:30	PATRONAL FESTIVAL EUCHARIST
SUNDAY 29TH	18:00	BCP HOLY COMMUNION
WED 1ST NEW YEARS DAY	10:30	EUCHARIST
FRIDAY 3RD	09:30	MORNING PRAYER
SUNDAY 5TH EPIPHANY	10:30	ALL- AGE EUCHARIST
SUNDAY 5TH	18:00	EVENSONG
WEDNESDAY 8TH	10:30	EUCHARIST
WEDNESDAY 8TH	19:00	SANCTUARY AT SEVEN
FRIDAY 10TH	09:30	MORNING PRAYER

SUNDAY 12TH EPIPHANY 2	10:30	EUCCHARIST
SUNDAY 12TH	16:00	TODDLER CHURCH
SUNDAY 12TH	18:00	EVENSONG
WEDNESDAY 15TH	10:30	EUCCHARIST
FRIDAY 17TH	09:30	MORNING PRAYER
SUNDAY 19TH EPIPHANY 3	10:30	EUCCHARIST
SUNDAY 19TH	18:00	EVENSONG
WEDNESDAY 22ND	10:30	EUCCHARIST
FRIDAY 24TH	09:30	MORNING PRAYER
SUNDAY 26TH EPIPHANY 4	10:30	EUCCHARIST
SUNDAY 26TH	18:00	BCP HOLY COMMUNION
WEDNESDAY 29TH	10:30	EUCCHARIST



Village



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Formby Christmas Windows Challenge
Can you Spot the Star hiding in Christmas Window displays in Formby village during December?





**You are warmly invited to our 2024
Christmas Services & Events
at
St Stephen's**

Sun:1st Dec 10:30am All-Age Toy & Gift Service

Sun:1st Dec 6pm Taize Advent Service

Sat:14th Dec 11am Churches Together NATIVITY

Sun:15th Dec 3:30pm Festive Afternoon Tea, Ticket only. £2.00

Sun:15th Dec 6pm Carols around the Tree

Sat:21st Dec 9am Breakfast with Santa, booking required

Sun:22nd Dec 6pm 'Carols by Candlelight'

Tue:24th Dec 4pm Christingle Service

Tue:24th Dec 11.15pm Midnight Eucharist

Wed:25th Dec 10:30am Christmas Day Eucharist

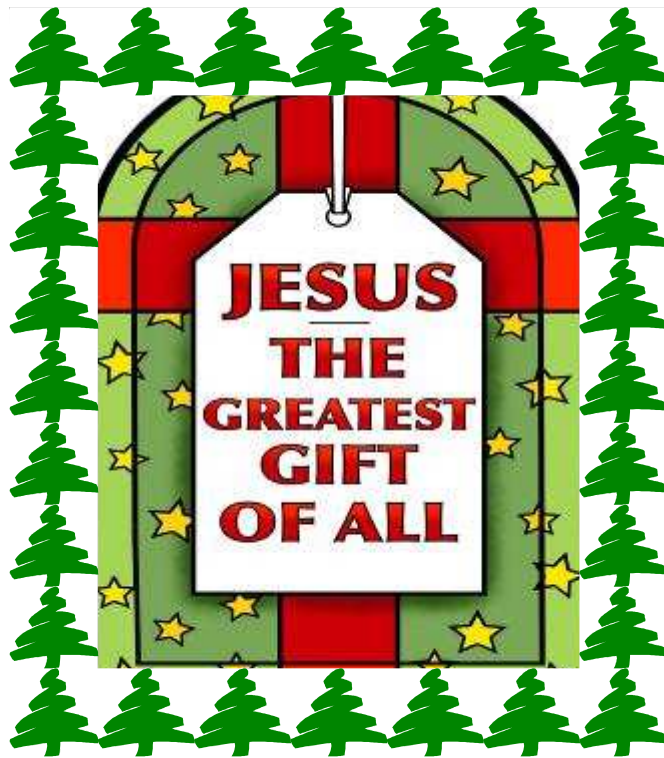
**Sun: 29th Dec 10:30am Festival Eucharist for St Stephen's Day
followed by Seasonal Refreshments**

Wed: 1st Jan 10:30 New Years Day Eucharist



**Wishing Everyone in Hightown a Blessed
Christmas from St Stephen's Church
And Our Lady of Victories Church**





Our Lady of Victories and Holy Family Special Celebrations

Sunday 1st December: 1st Sunday of Advent Masses:

9:00 am in Ince Blundell
11:15 am Hightown

Saturday 7th December:

11:00 am Penitential Celebration with personal confessions in Hightown
12:00 noon: Mass

Sunday 8th December: The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Masses:

9:00 am Ince Blundell
11:15 am Hightown
3:00 pm Mass in Spanish in Hightown

Tuesday 24th December Christmas Vigil Masses:

3:00 pm: Hightown in Spanish
7:00 pm: Ince Blundell in English

25th December: Christmas Day Masses:

9:00 am Ince Blundell
11:15 am Hightown

Finding calm at Christmas

Are you calm? We live in tense, anxious times, worried about global conflict, climate change, the cost of living the increased tensions and divisions in society. When we retreat into our church communities, we become anxious about numbers, finance, and buildings. As a church, we stress about the theological and doctrinal divisions that we strive to avoid tearing us apart.



It is hard to find calm. In church life, finding calm at Christmas is nearly impossible. It is the season where the work seems to increase: Christmas fairs, carol concerts, extra services all great in themselves yet all increasing the busyness and stress. Then there is the getting ready for the festivities, shopping, cooking, decorating – all things to aid our enjoyment but all adding to the pressure, the stress, the noise.

We need calm. We cannot live our lives at full pace, hurling ourselves from one thing to the other. That's why we have the sabbath, made for humanity by an omnipresent God, A God who does not need to rest but recognised at the moment of creation that the world would need peace. At least for a moment.

Silent Night, Gruber's famous carol first performed on Christmas Eve, has formed the inspiration for the Church of England's Advent and Christmas campaign 2024. It offers a note of calm often in the midst of a rousing carol service or concert. It is, in itself, a simple quiet carol that contrasts with most of the others we sing and provides a moment to quietly reflect on the beautiful moment of God's incarnation. Through the inevitable trauma of labour and childbirth, comes the time when all is still and we can sleep in heavenly peace. While the shepherds are quaking and the choirs of angels are singing, at the centre is the calming presence of Jesus. Jesus, who later would calm the storm, would model times for prayer and solitude in the midst of his busy ministry, and would stand calmly defiant in the face of the persecution that led to his victory on the cross.

We all have storms in our lives and we all need to recognise, for the people and communities we serve, that Christmas is not always a time of joy and celebration, but can be an occasion when the storms in their lives reach a crescendo and they need calm.

This advent, this Christmas, I pray that your church can be for you and for your community a place of calm. That you can bring yourselves and others to stand before the Prince of Peace to find the peace, the calm, that you need this Christmas.

Bishop John

Sunday Coffee Rota Dec.

1st Jane Copeland
8th Shirley Burns
15th Christine Grocott
22nd Di Aldis
29th Jayne Cudby

Sunday Coffee Rota Jan.

5th Beth Cresswell
12th Sue Taylor
19th Pam Bessant
26th Beryl Howard

Brass Rota

December
Colette Hudson



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Breakfast with Santa



December 21st at 9am
Booking required
Please text Jane on
07776 305 660

Afternoon Tea

Sunday 15th Dec

3.30pm

Entertainment

Ticket £2

Please contact Rev. Keith



Who's Who at St Stephen's

Vicar	Revd Keith Thornborough
Warden	Judith Welch
PCC Secretary	Beryl Howard
PCC Treasurer	Keith Aldis
Gift Aid Secretary	Brian Taylor
Safeguarding	Cath Marshall cathmarshall47@yahoo.co.uk
Electoral Roll	Beth Cresswell
Sacristan Team	Hazel Roberts
Health and Safety	<i>TBA</i>
Flower Rota	Sue Taylor
CMS Secretary	Beryl Howard
St Stephen's Youth Club	Jane Croxton
Church Hall Bookings	Sally Fraser
Focus Editor	Colette Hudson: Focus.Mag.2023@StStephensHightown.org.uk
Focus Adverts	Colette Hudson Adverts@StStephensHightown.org.uk
Focus Distribution	Mr and Mrs K Bradshaw
St Stephen's Church Website	StStephensHightown.org.uk

Prayer prompts December

Wk 1. 'The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has shined.' *Isaiah 9:2*

Wk.2. 'For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.' *Isaiah 9:6*

Wk 3. 'The angel went to her and said "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you.'" *Luke 1:28*

Wk 4. Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests. *Luke 2:14*

Wk 5. 'Every good gift , every perfect gift, comes from God' James 1:17

For the people of:

St Stephen's Rd, Hester Close, Briary Croft, Windermere Rd and Elmcroft Lane

Prayer prompts January

Wk. 1. 'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.' *Corinthians 5: 17*

Wk. 2. 'For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.' *Jeremiah 29;11*

Wk. 3 ' Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.' *Proverbs 3: 5-6*

Wk. 4 ' And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.'" *Revelation 21:5*

For the people of:

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N.B. All roads will be mentioned during the course of the year



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Hightown Club	Chris Scrine
Blundellsands Sailing Club	Rohan Pickard— RohanPickard@gmail.com Deryk Johnson— DerykJ@gmail.com
Yoga Classes, Hightown Club	Rose Billinge
Flower Show	Debbie Underhill— underhillsathome@aol.com
Open Mic Poetry Group 3rd Thursday 7.30pm St Stephen's Church hall	Sally Anne— tapiabowes@gmail.com Alex
Craft Group, Every Thursdays 1.30-3.30pm, St Stephen's Hall	Sue Taylor
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 plus, Mondays 9.45-10.30, St Stephen's Hall	Nicky Garsforth
Creo Dance Company Mon Tues Wed Thurs Sat Children 3 to 18 years	Georgia Cardwell

Shanty Kings Evening St Stephen's Church Hall



A great time was had by all.

People in our Parish

We extend our congratulations to Commander Cedric Loughran, who was recently presented with his Honorary Fellows Degree by Liverpool John Moores University. Cedric learned all of his early seamanship through the 19th Crosby Sea Scouts.

Following an engineering apprenticeship at Tate and

Lyle and management training at Marks and Spencer, he “ran away to sea” with Sugar Line and then Mobil Shipping, where he sailed some of the largest vessels in the world. He was an Auxiliary Coastguard during his leave periods. He gained his Chief Engineer Unlimited Steam and Motor Certificate, studying at Liverpool Polytechnic, now LJMU.

A maritime shore career followed, leading ultimately to the Department for Transport, Surveyor General's Department – now the MCA, working in numerous mercantile marine offices. Surveying the Anglo Spanish and Anglo Dutch fishing fleets involved much overseas travel. Gaining his MSc at Liverpool JMU, he became the Senior Examiner of Engineers at Liverpool and received promotion to be Head of Fishing Safety for the United Kingdom, the Falkland Islands and South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands –working towards consistent safety and living conditions for fishing vessels under our Flag – and subsequently foreign vessels fishing in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean.

He represented the United Kingdom at the International Maritime Organisation in London, the International Labour Organisation in Geneva and the European Council Committee of Safe Seas in Brussels.

He has been actively involved with LJMU for some decades, as an industrial advisor to the staff and PhD students, facilitating their academic liaison with industry. He is engaged with Learned Body Affairs and is committed to life long learning.

He was awarded the Merchant Navy Medal for services to the MCA and the Fishing Industry Safety Group. He is a Younger Brother of Trinity House.



Concurrently, he completed a parallel career in the Royal Navy and Royal Naval Reserve completing staff courses at Britannia Royal Naval College, Greenwich Royal Naval College, The United Kingdom Defence Academy Shrivenham and the NATO Staff College in Rome. He was the Commanding Officer of HMS Eaglet and Officer in Charge of Royal Naval Headquarters, Merseyside, immediately before becoming the United Kingdom Director of Amphibious Warfare and embarking as part of the UK Maritime Battle Staff on Flagship HMS Ark Royal as Ships Taken Up from Trade Officer for Operation Telic. He was in his element: Complex multi-faceted decisions, requiring incisive social and emotional intelligence fascinated him. The interface where technology and humans meet , under extreme prejudice, kept him busy 18 hours a day and he was awarded the Reserve Decoration.

Many service-related appointments have been completed: President of Liverpool Sea Cadets, Naval Liaison Officer to the CCF at Merchant Taylors School, President of the Anglesey Royal Naval Association to name but a few.

Currently, he is Vice Chairman Navy for the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association of the North West of England and the Isle of Man, a post he has held for over two decades and is also Chairman of the Altcar Camp Committee. He remains active in numerous maritime charities. He is an Engineer European, a Chartered Engineer, a Chartered Marine Engineer, a Fellow of the Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology and a Fellow of the Society of Consulting Marine Engineers and Ship Surveyors.

He is devoted to his wife and family, who sometimes only see him fleetingly, but are supportive in all he does to try to make the world a better place.

He has a lifelong passion for sailing yachts and dinghies and is never happier than being afloat, especially in salt water.

Always a sailor and a proud son of our magnificent City of Liverpool.

Congratulations Cedric!

Coffee Morning **St Stephen's Church Hall**

January 4th

10:00 am till 12:0 noon

**Come and enjoy a bacon or sausage
barm and a cup of tea or coffee**



The Great Borrini & friends



A magic
and
mentalism
show



Saturday 7th of December

8.00 pm (doors open 7.30 pm)

Saint Stephen's Church Hall, Hightown L38 0BL

TICKET HERE

part of the profits will be donated to the local St Stephen's Church