

February 2022

Issue 264

FOCUS



Parish Magazine of St. Stephen's, Hightown



The St. Valentine's Issue

Editor's letter February 2022



Hello and welcome to the St. Valentine's Issue

Valentine's day tends to focus on romantic love and that is brilliant, but love is much broader and more inclusive. than that. You may recall the expression, "I may not like you right now but I will always love you." As you process this phrase you can acknowledge that love in its purest form has no limitations. We see this most often in the love a parent has for a child and vice-versa. This type of love, known as Agape, a Greek word, is love in the highest form.

Agape love is forgiving and bountiful and Christians believe that this is the love we receive from The Father: untouchable, boundless and valued above all else. We believe that Jesus died for our sins and we are reminded throughout the Bible that His love comes without conditions and that it exists even in our days of doubt. He has taught us that we can best show our love through actions.

So how does this exist in the everyday world and what does it look like in our small Hightown community?

I regularly witness, or hear of, acts of kindness that bring joy, provide hope and give comfort in our parish:

The older lady who offered powerful encouragement to an overwhelmed mum, in the park, reminding her that she was doing a good job; the person who regularly does the shopping for an elderly neighbour; the supper made and delivered to the house of an incapacitated neighbour; the food collection at St. Stephen's for the local food bank; the volunteers who keep the community garden pristine; the beach cleaning volunteers giving their time, selflessly, to the community; the smile from a passer-by and many more examples.

We are privileged to live in such a loving village.

Love doesn't have to look like a Valentine card or a bouquet of roses, although they are always a pleasure to receive. In the words of Saint Mother Teresa

"It is not how much you give but how much heart you put into giving."

With very best wishes for February, Colette

Entries for future issues of Focus to be sent to:

Focus.Magazine@StStephensHightown.org.uk

Please submit before the last day of the month.

Hi All,



On Sunday 13th February at 10.30am in our Valentine's Service we will be celebrating 'Love' and 'Relationships'. In our church wedding service each person says: 'Will you love her/him, comfort her/him, honour and protect her/him, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her/him as long as you both shall live?' Although many couples no longer marry, this desire to be in a faithful and loving relationship still applies.

Marriage is a sacrament (something that reveals to us the nature of God) and just as God loves us for who we are, the best marriages also show this constant loving despite the ups and downs of life.

I interviewed Colin and Margaret Bate, who live in Hightown. They are celebrating their Golden Wedding (50 years) next year. They are a couple who always seem to enjoy being together and I asked them about their life together. Colin and Margaret met in A and E of all places! Colin had cut his hand using a chisel and Margaret was a nurse working there. He saw her in a pub two weeks later and went over and thanked Margaret for doing 'a good job' and offered to buy her a drink - they were married two years later!

I asked them what has held them together. Colin said he respects Margaret and despite hard times they do enjoy each other's company and do things together. 'She's my wife and my friend' he said. One such hard time was in 1983 when the building trade was in a lull, so Colin found work in the Falkland Islands, leaving Margaret with three young children for 6 months. Margaret said they both have a good sense of humour and they are jolly together. Also, having three boys and all the memories of holidays and their growing up has 'glued' them together.

How good it was to interview a couple still enjoying being together.!

I next interviewed Helen and Sam who were married in St Stephen's Church 3 years ago this year. The photos show their joy on that day.

Helen and Sam met at a party she gave for her birthday. Her friend Tom was invited and, without her knowing, he invited Sam. By the end of the evening they were together.



They, too, have experienced hard times. For Helen, the death of her dad, who lived in France, was difficult - the feelings of loss were almost overwhelming. She said that Sam was her 'rock' during this time. He was calm and listened to her over and over wanting to talk about her dad. He 'kept her going' and was 'respectful' of her feelings. One of the things he did for her at this sad time, and which she said really helped, was to light a candle in their hurricane lamp, so when she came back from work she saw it.

Sam also talked about how, recently, he was unemployed for a year and how hard it was to be positive. Month after month, he applied for hundreds of jobs and rarely heard back from any of them. He said Helen encouraged him and believed in him and this kept him believing he had worth. At last he found a job which he's happy in and he's been there a year now.

God loves us and wants to be with us, in the good times and also in the bad. When marriages work well, we encourage and care for each other and so grow to be the people God calls us to be.

In this service we will pray and ask God to bless our relationships so that we can work at maintaining this cherishing of each other.

Jan - Revd Jan Ashton



Love is composed of a single soul inhabiting two bodies....

Rumi

St Stephen's Church.

**Snowdrops in Church to celebrate
Candlemas.**

Jesus, aged 40 days, is brought to the temple and is recognised as 'the light of the world.'

Sunday 30th January at 10.30am

All the candles used this year will be blessed at this service.



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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

Love recognizes no barriers....

Maya Angelou

St. Stephen's Church Services

February

Wednesday 2nd February 10.30am - Eucharist + Extended Prayer Time

Sunday 6th February 10.30am - All Age Eucharist
6pm Evensong

Wednesday 9th February Eucharist 10.30am + Extended Prayer Time

Sunday 13th February 10.30am - Valentine's Service and the
celebration of our loving relationships
6pm Evensong

Wednesday 16th February 10.30am - Morning Prayer

Sunday 20th February 10.30am- Morning Praise
6pm Evensong

Wednesday 23rd February 10.30am Eucharist + Extended Prayer Time

Sunday 27th February 10.30am- Eucharist
6pm Evensong

Ash Wednesday 2nd March 10.30am + 7.30pm Eucharist + Ashing

Where there is love there is life

Mahatma Gandhi

Sanctuary Flowers

6th Feb Beryl Howard

13/20/27th Feb Hilary Munro

Brass Cleaning February

Shirley Burns

Sunday Coffee Rota

6th Feb Jane Coxton

13th Feb V.Clark and Shirley Burns

20th Feb Gaylin Edwards

27th Feb Hazel Roberts

St Stephen's Church

is starting a

**Toddler/Young Children's Group
and needs more toys.**

Have you toys you need no longer, suitable for 1-3 year olds in good condition? We will collect. Thank you.



St. Stephen's Coffee Morning

In aid of PODS

Saturday 5th February

10am to 11.30pm



Baptisms

Jazmine Michelle Jackson

18th February 2018



Your task is not to seek for love,
but merely to seek and find all the
barriers within yourself that you
have built against it.

Rumi

PRAYER PROMPTS FOR FEBRUARY



- 1st.** Give thanks for our village community.
For All the People of Hightown.
- 2nd.** Pray for the beautiful coast and landscape that surrounds us.
For the People of Marston Crescent and Mayfair Close.
- 3rd.** Pray for our animals that have kept us company in the lock-down.
For the People of Langley Close and Richmond Close.
- 4th.** Give thanks for the teachers who kept working and caring for vulnerable children.
For the People of Blundell Road and Blundell Avenue.
- 5th.** Pray for the staff and inmates of the Helen Keller unit at Styal prison.
For All the People of Hightown.
- 6th.** **4th Sunday before Lent.** We pray for the people of Afghanistan enduring such terrible times.
For the People of Thistledown Drive and Bankside.
- 7th.** We pray for people driven from their homes and risking their lives to get a better life.
For the People of Orrell Hill Lane, North End Lane and Gorsey Lane.
- 8th.** Pray for the workers in the front line charities in areas of conflict.
For All the People of Hightown.
- 9th.** Pray for our families.
For the People of Delph Road and Ackers Lane.
- 10th.** Pray for those who have lost loved ones in the covid pandemic.
For the People of North Dunes and Westway.
- 11th.** Pray for those under stress who are trying to keep businesses afloat in these difficult times.
For the People of Blundell Grove, Larkhill Grove and Withinsfield.
- 12th.** Pray for the homeless particularly in the winter.
For the People of Old Acre and Riverside.
- 13th.** **3rd Sunday before Lent.** Pray for those addicted to drugs.
For the People of Elmcroft Lane and Sandy Lane.
- 14th.** We pray that those who lead us will take the steps we need to combat climate change.
For the People of St. George's Road and Emerson Close.
- 15th.** Pray for our homes places of comfort and safety.
For All the People of Hightown.

- 16th.** Pray for our church community in Hightown and those who lead us.
For the People of Sandhills and Briary Croft.
- 17th.** Pray for our children and grandchildren.
For the People of Village Way and the Roundway.
- 18th.** We give thanks and pray for those who have worked to give us a vaccine against covid.
For the People of Elvington Road.
- 19th.** Pray for all those who have given their time and energy to get everyone vaccinated.
For the People of Alt Road and Lower Alt Road.
- 20th.** **2nd Sunday before Lent.** Pray for our NHS staff who have worked tirelessly on our behalf.
For the People of the Range and Altcar Camp.
- 21st.** Pray for children in care and those who work in the care system..
For the People of Whitefield Close and Oakfield Road.
- 22nd.** Pray for the children at school and facing exams in these difficult and uncertain times.
For the People of Wignalls Meadow and Moorhouses.
- 23rd.** Pray for those who have been hard hit by loss of income.
For the People of Grasmere, Windermere, Thirlmere Roads and Thirlmere Mews.
- 24th.** We give thanks for the volunteers who run the food banks and those who donate.
For the People of School Road and Rathbone Road.
- 25th.** Pray for those who are seriously ill.
For All the People of Hightown.
- 26th.** Pray for the nursing homes and their staff working and caring at a difficult time.
For the People of St. Stephen's Road and Hester Close.
- 27th.** **Sunday next before Lent.** Pray for those who supply our food - our farmers and truck drivers who keep us in stocks.
For the People of Thornbeck Avenue.
- 28th.** Pray for those who care for someone who cannot cope alone.
For the People of Mark Road.



To feel the love of people whom we love is a fire that feeds our life.

Pablo Neruda.

St. Stephen's Church Hall Ceiling Update

Last year, we unfortunately found out that we needed to replace the ceiling in the church hall, at an estimated cost of £20,000. The hall is used for many church and community events e.g. wedding receptions, dance groups, Beaver Scouts and The Hightown Flower Show, to mention just a few. Although we have only been fundraising for a few months, we've raised more than £11,000 towards our target.

We would like to **thank everyone** who has contributed towards this marvellous sum, whether by Gift Day donations, attendance at fundraising events, specific gifts or contributions via our collection boxes.

St Stephen's Church, Hightown

Christingle

Did you come to the Christingle service on Christmas Eve at 3pm or 5pm?

If so, we'd like some feedback please...

What did you enjoy?

What could we have done better?

Please message Rev Jan on 07734927575



Goodbye Ellis and Fleur,

You will be sadly missed.

You made a big difference in the community, nothing was too much trouble and you went the extra mile to help the sick and elderly in Hightown. St. Stephen's Church, in particular, will always be grateful for your kind help over the years. All in Hightown and the church wish you well for the future.

You have left the pharmacy in good hands and we look forward to supporting Danny, the new owner, and the existing staff.

You can't blame gravity for falling in love. Albert Einstein

Open Mic Poetry Group

The poetry group meet on the third Thursday of every month at 7.30pm in the Hightown Hotel, for the love of words

They were founded a few years ago by residents Sally Anne Tapia-Bowes and Colette Grove. Sally Anne and Tony Higginson now run the group and it is thriving. Participants come from all over the Merseyside region: some are published poets, some professional, some amateur. You may read a favourite poem aloud or read one you have written or if you just want to sit and listen, well that's fine too. There is often a guest musician and always a friendly atmosphere.

There is no membership required, just the desire to share poetry.

At the touch of love everyone becomes a poet....Plato



The Gift of Grace by Michael Cudby, Church Warden

During the first Sunday service of the year, Rev Jan asked the congregation a simple question:

‘Who can say grace has entered their lives?’.

As was explained by Rev Jan, grace is something given, unexpected and free. Many of the answers neatly fitted those requirements. But then, after much persuasion, Hazel told us that her great niece, Debbie Stephens, is going to be awarded a Queen’s honour for voluntary services to the deprived community. What a wonderful manifestation of grace. We are reminded of all those wonderful souls who volunteer their time to help others in need. The medical workers, the care home workers, the food bank helpers and many others who deserve our praise and thanks.

Sitting at the back of the church on my wardens’ ‘throne’, my eyes suddenly focused on how beautiful our church is. Dressed in Christmas regalia and floral artistry, we are blessed that we can indulge in worship in such a place. It was not a true example of grace but it is where I can silently reach out to God.



Ash Wednesday Services

Wednesday 2nd March

at 10.30am and 7.30pm

Eucharist with Ashing

During services on Ash Wednesday we use ashes made from the burned palm branches blessed on the Palm Sunday of the previous year. The priest blesses the ashes and places them on the foreheads of the faithful, making a cross and saying, “Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return.” or, “Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel.” We remember the significance of the ashes we have received: We mourn and do penance for our sins. We again turn our hearts to the Lord, who suffered, died and rose for our salvation. We renew the promises made at our baptism, when we died to an old life and rose to a new life with Christ. Finally, mindful that this world passes away, we strive to live the kingdom of God now and look forward to its fulfillment in Heaven.

The Birds in our Gardens *by Val Bailey*

During the winter months there are few flowers to see in our gardens, but plenty of interest with the visiting birds. Most of us gaze with curiosity, wondering just how they knew you had sprinkled crumbs on the garden in the last half hour. Are the two blackbirds who follow each other around actually Mr and Mrs? Is that the right place for the bird box? This is a photograph of a green parrot that visited a garden in Alton Close last year. Perhaps you saw it as well?



All these questions and more can be answered in the first meeting of the Hightown Gardening Club in February – 14th February to be precise – and no need to be disappointed if you are not a member, because you can come as a guest for the small sum of £3 per visit. No need to book either, although we do anticipate a lot of interest in this talk because Ian Wolfenden is a local person, who has had an interest in our local birds for over 20 years. He can tell us all about robins, blue tits, blackbirds and many other birds, including those around our shore line. He is also most knowledgeable about skylarks, a bird which we used to hear frequently around Hightown, but maybe not so often now. If you have a particular question about birds please bring it along with you.



Hightown Gardening Club meets once a month on the 2nd Monday evening of each month. The charge per year to be a member is £15 but you can attend any of the talks for just £3 per visit. We have lots of interesting evenings arranged for the coming year including a talk on Fuchsias, another one on Heucheras and, later in the year, a talk on the use of herbs: growing them and using them both for cooking and medicinal purposes. Most of the speakers bring some of their own particular flowers or products to sell and so a chance to buy a special plant is possible. A small calendar of the talks is available when you join the club.

*When I saw you I fell in love, and you smiled
because you knew....William Shakespeare*

Who's Who at St. Stephen's

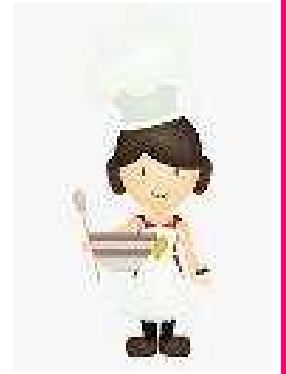
Vicar	Rev. Jan Ashton (Jan) Jan.Ashton@StStephensHightown.org.uk
Reader	Mr. John Gibson
Wardens	Mr. Michael Cudby Mr. Geoff Bailey
PCC Secretary	Mrs. Beryl Howard
PCC Treasurer	Mr. Keith Aldis
Gift Aid Secretary	Mr. Brian Taylor
Safeguarding	Mrs. Sonia Bunyard
Wills and Legacies	To be appointed
Electoral 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	Rev. Jan Ashton
Church Hall Bookings	Mrs. Sally Fraser
Focus Editor	Colette Grove Focus.Magazine@StStephensHightown.org.uk
Focus Advertisements	Val Monchar
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St. Stephen's Church Website	https://StStephensHightown.org.uk

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 Chris Williams
Probus Club	Clive Rowley
Yoga Classes, Hightown Club	Rose Billinge
Flower Show	Ian Wear
Open Mic Poetry Group 3rd Thursday 7.30pm, Hightown Hotel	Tony Higginson Sally Anne
Craft Group, Thursdays, 1.30—3.30pm	Sue Taylor
Village Singers, Our Lady of Victories Hall, Mondays 1.30—3pm	Chris Payne
Hightown Parish Council	Jenny Farrar
Chair Fitness for health and balance Wednesdays 11.30—12.30, St Stephen's Hall	Gaynor Mc Hugh

From Beth's Kitchen

MINISTRONE-STYLE SOUP



I was given a book on veganism for Christmas. This may be a step too far for us at Cresswell Towers but there are many ideas which vegans espouse which need to be considered when we choose what we eat and how it effects our health and that of our planet. The recipe below comes from the book and is a start on our way to an animal product-free future, not forgetting non-edible products such as wool, leather and silk.

Ingredients

Olive oil (for frying)	1 large onion, finely chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced	1 red pepper, diced
1 courgette, chopped into small pieces	5-8 mushrooms, sliced or quartered
1 can chopped tomatoes	1 litre vegetable stock
Black pepper to taste	1 can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
Mixed herbs (to taste)	Chilli flakes (to taste)
102 handfuls small pasta eg conchigliette	

Method

Heat the olive oil in a large saucepan. Fry the onion until soft and then add the garlic. Add the pepper, courgette and mushrooms and cook until soft. Add the tin of tomatoes, the beans and the stock. Season to taste and let it simmer for 10 minutes.

Next, add the pasta. Continue to simmer, stirring regularly, until the pasta is soft.

Serve in large bowls with Garlicky bread. Serves 4

The greatest happiness of life is the conviction
that we are loved; loved for ourselves, or
rather loved in spite of ourselves.

Victor Hugo

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Rohan Pickard – Sailing Secretary
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Chris Williams – Rear Commodore
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