

May 2024

FOCUS

Issue 284



Parish Magazine of St Stephen's, Hightown



All the nations of the earth, sing to God who brings to birth, the greatest star, the smallest flower. Alleluia!

Please Support Christian Aid Week

12-18 May 2024

Editor's Note

'Change not a clout
Till May is out'



This traditional piece of country wisdom, very old but very apt, reminds us of our fickle British weather and its ability to bathe us in warmth one day and bring chilly winds the next. Sounds familiar? Always keep your coat handy!

It is commonly agreed that the 'May' in this old country proverb does not refer to the month, but to May blossom, more often called hawthorn.

I have long loved this common, overlooked, shape-shifting plant. Most people associate it with hedgerows but it grows into fine trees and can make sturdy bushes. The hawthorn blossom was first brought to my attention when, as a teenager, I read Marcel Proust's 'In Search of Lost Time'. I have never looked at hawthorn blossom in the same way since. Their blossom and scent overwhelm me, as they did the young Marcel, when out on a country walk with his family. They enter a lane of flowering hawthorn and he stops, transfixed.

'A succession of chapels... disappearing beneath the masses of flowers piled up on their altars', their 'dazzling bouquets of stamens...radiating outwards like the fine ribs of Gothic window tracery, the creamy scent filling the air and making the whole lane seem to 'bourdonner'- to buzz, to vibrate. His grandfather then invites him to take a look at the less common pink variety, ' each tiny bud like a pink marble goblet with blood-red depths'.

On your walks during May, why don't you look out for, and enjoy, the remarkable gift of the May blossom.

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,

We continue in the wonderful season of Eastertide during May. On Thursday 9th, sometimes called Holy Thursday, we celebrate our risen Lord's Ascension into heaven, forty days after Easter, the day of resurrection. We then move into a period of ten days of Ascensiontide, ending with Pentecost, fifty days after Easter. At Pentecost, we remember and give thanks for the descent of the Holy

Spirit on the apostles and other disciples.

God sent his Holy Spirit to empower the Church to perform the mission which the risen Jesus Christ has entrusted to it.

Ascension and Pentecost are closely linked. The risen Lord is no longer present to the Church in the body of his flesh; the Church is now to be the new body of Christ, filled with his life through the gift of the Holy Spirit. We are the body of Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit we are to undertake his service of love and care.

I love this prayer of St Teresa of Avila which sits on my desk in my study:

Christ has no body now

on earth but yours,

no hands but yours;

no feet but yours.

Yours are the eyes through which is to look out

Christ's compassion to the world.

Yours are the feet

with which he is

to go about doing good.

Yours are the hands

with which he is to bless us now. Amen.

The Sunday after Pentecost is Trinity Sunday, and whilst in every moment of creation, the whole Trinity is at work redeeming and sanctifying, this day gives us the opportunity to reflect on the revelation of God's self as Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We are blessed and sent out in the name and peace of Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit to love and to serve the Lord.

This month, let's keep the words of St Teresa close to our hearts and minds.

God bless,

Keith

St Stephen's Church Services— May

WED 1ST	10:30	EUCCHARIST
FRI 3RD	09:30	MORNING PRAYER
SUN 5TH	10:30	ALL AGE EUCCHARIST
	18:00	EVENING PRAYER
WED 8TH	10:30	EUCCHARIST
THU 9 TH ASCENSCION DAY	19:30	ST MICHAELS, ALTCAR
FRI 10TH	09:30	MORNING PRAYER
SUN 12TH <i>START OF WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY</i>	10:30	EUCCHARIST
	16:00	TODDLER CHURCH
	18:30	<i>NO EVENING SERVICE HERE SERVICE AT St PETER'S, FORMBY</i>
WED 15TH	10:30	EUCCHARIST
FRI 17TH	09:15	UNITED MORNING PRAYER AT ST STEPHENS
SUN 19TH	10:30	EUCCHARIST
	18:00	EVENING PRAYER
WED 22ND	10:30	EUCCHARIST
FRI 24TH	09:30	MORNING PRAYER
SUN 26TH	10:30	EUCCHARIST
	18:00	BCP HOLY COMMUNION
WED 29TH	10:30	EUCCHARIST
FRI 31ST	09:30	MORNING PRAYER

Sunday Coffee Rota

5th Jan Williams
12th Beryl Howard
19th Hilary Munro
26th Margaret Bate



Brass Rota



May
Hazel Roberts
June
Colette Hudson

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and Funerals or any
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St Stephen's Church Hall

Toddler Group

Term time

Every Friday 09:15 to 11:15

Prayer Prompts For May



- 1st. We remember the Apostles Philip and James. and pray for all church clergy and leaders.
For the people of Alt Road and Lower Alt Road.
- 2nd. May we value each person we meet today as a child of God.
For all the people of Thistledown Drive.
- 3rd. Pray for the safety of those working in public transport, and for their passengers.
For the people of North Dunes and Westway.
- 4th. Pray for all the families where children have been adopted or fostered.
For all the people of Thornbeck Avenue.
- 5th. **Sixth Sunday after Easter.** Pray for the families and children in our church congregation.
For the people of St Stephens Road and The Roundway.
- 6th. Pray for governments and rulers throughout the world that they may act wisely.
For the people of Sandhills and Blundell Grove.
- 7th. Pray for all refugees and those exiled from their countries.
For the people of Grasmere Road.
- 8th. Pray for the safety of those who bring aid in situations of conflict and disasters.
For All the people of Village Way and Hester Close.
- 9th. **Ascension Day.** We remember the ascension of Jesus.
For the people of North End Lane and local farms.
- 10th. Pray for the homeless.
For the people of Riverside and Wignall's Meadow.
- 11th. Pray for all organisations working to improve the lot of the very poor.
For the people of Marston Crescent.
- 12th. **Seventh Sunday after Easter.** Pray for worker's co-operatives in the majority world.
For the people Bankside and Withins Field
- 13th. Pray for the work of the Salvation Army with the needy, in Britain and overseas.
For the people of Moorhouses and Briary Croft.
- 14th. Pray for all seafarers and the coastguards who watch our coast.
For the people of Elvington Road.
- 15th. Pray for people and organisations engaged in fair trade.
For All the people of The Range and Altcar Camp.

Prayer prompts (contd)



- 16th. Pray for ourselves, and for our spiritual lives.
For the people of Alton Close and Blundell Avenue.
- 17th. Pray for those working in the National Health Service.
For all the people of Hightown
- 18th. Pray for all the staff and patients in local hospitals.
For the people of St. Georges Road and Langley Close.
- 19th. **Day of Pentecost (Whit Sunday).** Pray for the staff and residents of local residential and nursing homes.
For the people of Mark Road.
- 20th. Pray for all who have lost loved ones.
For the people of the Mayfield Close and Tudor Gardens.
- 21st. We remember all parts of the world where there is conflict.
For the people of the Blundell Road.
- 22nd. Pray for those who are dependent on others for their physical care.
For the people of Windermere Grove and Sandilands Grove.
- 23rd. Pray for all those who are low in spirit at this time.
For the people of Larkhill Grove.
- 24th. Pray for those who are persecuted for their faith.
For the people of Old Acre and Orrell Hill Lane.
- 25th. Pray for those who have been made homeless by war and violence or disaster.
For the people of Thirlmere Road and Thirlmere Mews.
- 26th. **Trinity Sunday.** Pray for peace in our hearts.
For the people of School Road and Rathbone Road.
- 27th. Pray for the work of Sightsavers and their partners in Africa and Asia.
For the people of Elmcroft Lane and Emerson Close.
- 28th. Pray for terrorists and all who seek to achieve their aims by violence.
For the people of Sandy Lane and Oakfield Road.
- 29th. We give thanks for the fruitfulness of the earth.
For the people of Whitfield Close and Moss Lane
- 30th. Pray for the leaders and congregations of Churches together in Formby, Altcar and Hightown.
For the people of Richmond Close and Brentwood Close.
- 31st. We remember with gratitude all those who have been good influences in our lives.
For all the people of Hightown.

Aline's Story for Christian Aid Week

In Burundi, a country in East Africa, malnourishment and poverty affect more than 70% of the population, making survival a daily struggle. Jobs and food are hard to come by, and those who have homes often have no electricity or running water.

For Aline, life was a constant struggle. She was married young and gave birth to her eldest son, Fisto, when she was just 14 years old. Aline experienced constant abuse at the hands of her violent husband.

A few years later, Aline faced even more devastation. Her husband married another woman, forcing Aline to flee. He prevented her from taking their children with her, and in a further act of cruelty, told the local community that Aline was mentally ill and unable to care for her children. She wandered the streets, asking anyone for a place to sleep. Hungry, scorned and alone, Aline took her first step towards her new life. She started by participating in a transformative three-day community workshop, funded by Christian Aid.

" I came out with amazing knowledge and skills. The trainer restored a sense of hope and energy in me" says Aline.

She was taught how to form a Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) and establish a steady income. VSLAs mean people can save for their future and borrow money to kickstart small rural businesses. With all she had learned, Aline's dream of getting her children back finally felt possible.

With a small start-up loan, Aline started trading avocados and peanuts locally. With her profits, she bought a bicycle so she could transport greater quantities of goods to markets further afield. Eventually, her hard work had finally paid off, and she had earned the money she needed to rent a house.

Once Aline secured a home for herself, her three eldest sons were able to escape their father and join her. They told Aline that their father had abused them and sent their three young siblings to live with different members of his family.

Aline still hopes that she'll be reunited with her youngest children in time.

Today, Aline lives peacefully on her own plot of land in a remote village in the Kayogoro Commune in Makamba Province. She's baked her own bricks and is building a strong home for her and her children in every sense.

Now Aline can afford food, clothes and essential healthcare for her family. She's also purchased solar panels so her children can do their evening homework by electric light.

" I like to feed my family with the produce that I grow, such as beans, vegetables and corn. I am so happy that we are together. Now my children feel supported as they have a parent who can meet their needs" she says.

Please will you support Christian Aid to help others, like Aline, push back against poverty. Your envelope, which is in this magazine, can be left at the Village Store or in St Stephen's Church letter box.

Thank you.



Toddlers and mums/carers having fun, every Friday during term time, at

09.15-11.15

St Stephen's Hall.



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	TBA
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

We Are The Easter People



We started preparing for Easter with Bible study, every Wednesday, at St Stephen's Vicarage with Reverend Keith. We shared lunch beforehand, which was mainly a homemade soup with a roll, followed by homemade cake. Maundy Thursday supper and service was followed on Good Friday by our Walk of Witness with Our Lady of Victories Church. Hot cross buns were enjoyed beforehand at St Stephen's, and afterwards Our Lady's Church kindly provided lunch.





As we commenced our Saturday Easter Vigil,
gathered around the firepit,



Hightown looked particularly peaceful under a
luminous, dusk sky.



Alleluia, Alleluia!
The Lord is risen!
We are assured of
eternal life.
Go out and spread
The Good News
amongst all nations.



Calling All Gardeners

John Gibson is calling on all gardeners in Hightown to take about 20 cuttings each, of any native tree they like, and have them ready for him to plant in October. John has kindly undertaken to fill in any gaps in the hedges around Hightown. Over the years, gaps have been created by drivers losing control of their vehicles, coming off the road and crashing through the once solid hedgerow. The landowner has given John his full permission to do this work.



Any questions regarding the project can be emailed to John: john@ica-ltd.org or message him on WhatsApp: 07890 196358.

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Rohan Pickard - Commodore
Rohan.Pickard@Gmail.com

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to find out more ?

As that famous advertising slogan tells us: 'every little helps'.

A Good Read by Colette Hudson

Continuing our exploration of Hightown in past times
courtesy of Miss Chris Scott's book



Shops in Hightown

According to Mrs Gaffney, who provided Miss Scott with much information, The Hightown Stores, (now the doctor's surgery), were established in 1892 by the father of Mr William Gaffney. The small post office and exchange was housed on the premises. In the summer, tents were put up in the garden of the house to accommodate the telegraph boys, so that they were readily available if they were required for the delivery of telegrams. Some years later, alterations were made and part of the house was made into a bread and cake shop.

During WW1 the shop was used as the post office and the telephone exchange was behind the counter with one operator.

The store room for sacks of flour was upstairs on the south side of the house. The sacks were pulled up by pulley and taken through a door. The floor of the room had to be strengthened to bear the weight.

From Beth's Kitchen

KEDGEREE



So many people are holidaying in India this year, that I thought that a taste of the place would be good to try. This may not be an authentic version but is one which we often have and enjoy. It is frequently found on breakfast menus alongside eggs Benedict and omelette Arnold Bennet to balance the ubiquitous appearance of the “full English”. It makes a good midweek supper dish.

Ingredients

350g smoked haddock fillet, skinned, poached and flaked
3 hard-boiled eggs, chopped into rounds
2 tblsp chopped fresh parsley
40g butter
1 clove
275g long-grain rice
½ tsp salt
large pinch of turmeric
1 cardamom
600ml fish stock

Method

Sweat the butter, turmeric, clove and cardamom together in a flameproof pan. Stir in the rice and cook for 1 minute, then pour in the stock. Add the salt and bring to the boil.

Cover and simmer until the stock is absorbed and the rice tender, about 30 minutes.

Mix in the fish and the eggs and reheat to make sure it is warm throughout. I often add a handful of thawed frozen prawns and a portion of cooked frozen peas to the finished dish. Check the seasoning and serve, garnished with the chopped parsley.



Serves 4



**Coffee Morning
in aid of the PODS**



St Stephen's Church Hall

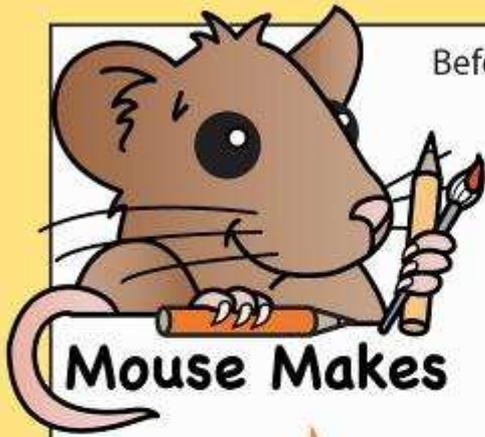
Saturday 4th May 10:00am to 12:00 noon

Stalls in aid of church

Everybody Welcome

Village Organisations and Activities

Tuesday Group, St Stephen's Hall Tuesday morning 10am	Beryl Howard Jan Branigan
Hightown Friendship Group 1st Wednesday at 8pm St Stephen's Hall	Margaret Wear
Gardening Club 2nd Monday 8pm St Stephen's Hall	Hilary Munro
Bowling Club, Sandy Lane	Diana Killen
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— Debbie.underhill@cloud.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,	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 Co Mon Tues Wed Thurs Sat Children 3 to 18 years	Georgia Gaudi



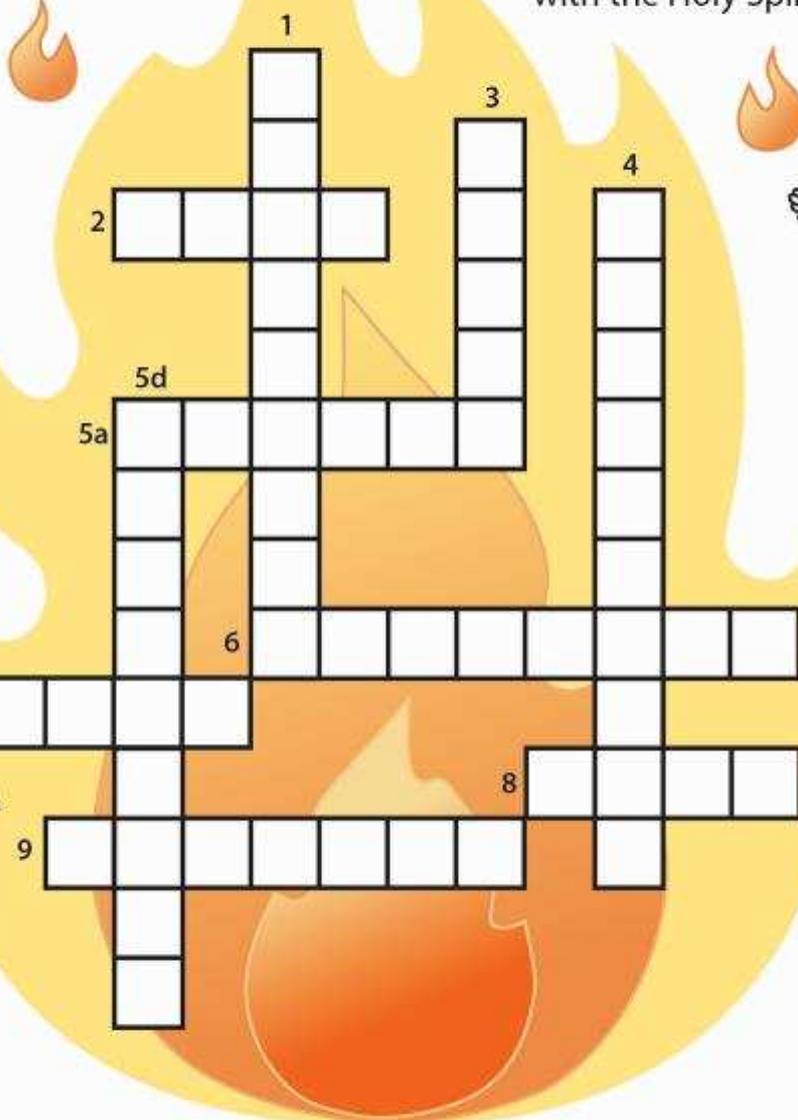
Before Jesus ascended to heaven he told his disciples
*"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit
 has come upon you, and you will be my
 witness in Jerusalem and in all Judea
 and Samaria, and to the end of the earth"...*

*...When the day of Pentecost arrived,
 they were all together in one place,
 and they were all filled
 with the Holy Spirit."*



READ the story
 of Pentecost
 in Acts 1-2
 Look up the Bible
 verses to find
 the answers to the
 crossword clues.

How many
 words can you
 make from
 the letters of:
 DAY OF
 PENTECOST

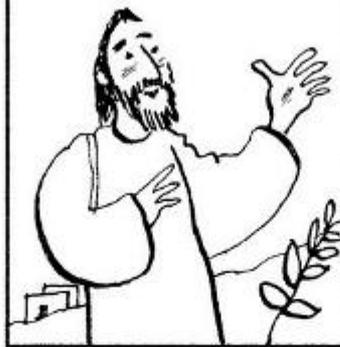


- 1 After Jesus ascended into heaven, which city did the Apostles return to? *Acts 1:12*
- 2 What appeared? Tongues of ...? *Acts 2:3*
- 3a What did the Apostles devote themselves to? *Acts 1:14*
- 3b Who was chosen to replace Judas? *Acts 1:26*
- 3c Which special day was it? *Acts 2:1*

- 4 What rushing sound came from heaven? *Acts 2:2*
- 5 What appeared? Tongues of ...? *Acts 2:3*
- 6 What were the disciples filled with? *Acts 2:4*
- 7 What did they start speaking in? *Acts 2:4*
- 8 Who spoke to the crowd? *Acts 2:14*
- 9 Who had prophesied this? *Acts 2:16*

The tale of the Mustard Seed & the tale of the Yeast

JESUS OFTEN TOLD
STORIES WITH
HIDDEN MEANINGS

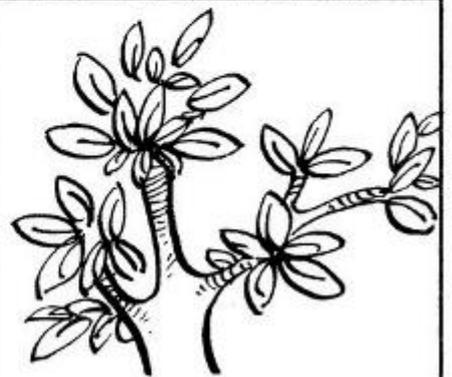


SOME OF HIS STORIES WERE
VERY SHORT, BUT THEY MEANT
A GREAT DEAL

ONCE JESUS EXPLAINED HOW
THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
WAS LIKE A MUSTARD SEED

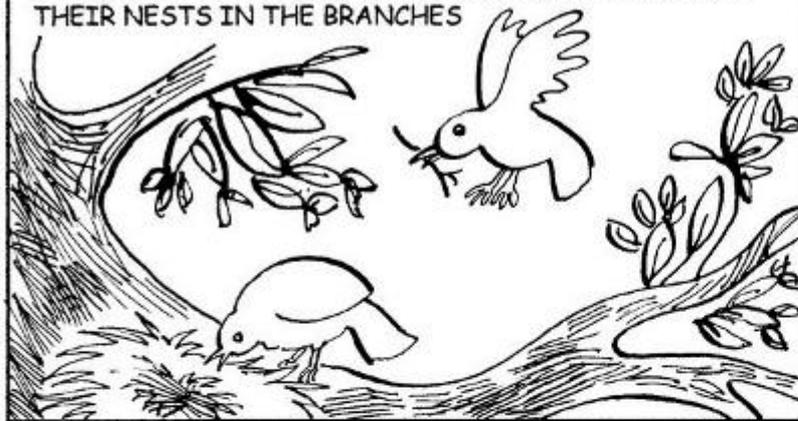


IT IS ONE OF THE SMALLEST
OF SEEDS....



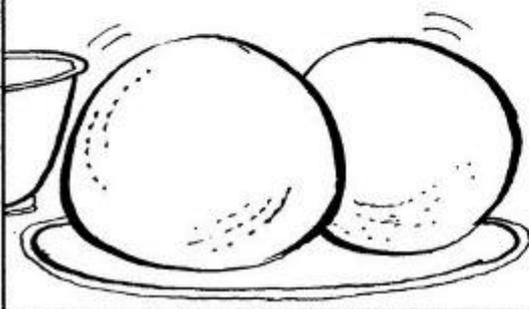
BUT WHEN IT GROWS UP IT IS
THE BIGGEST OF ALL PLANTS

IT BECOMES A TREE, SO THAT BIRDS COME AND MAKE
THEIR NESTS IN THE BRANCHES



JESUS ALSO EXPLAINED THAT THE
KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE YEAST.

EVEN THOUGH IT'S A TINY INGREDIENT,
WHEN IT'S MIXED WITH THE FLOUR,
THE WHOLE BATCH OF DOUGH RISES



THIS WAS JESUS' WAY OF SAYING THAT EVEN IF WE
HAVE A SMALL AMOUNT OF FAITH... IT CAN MAKE A
HUGE DIFFERENCE TO OUR LIVES, AND TO THE LIVES
OF OTHERS.



Toddler Church

At

St. Stephen's-Hightown

Sunday 12th May

4pm

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

All Welcome!

Magazine part-sponsored by John Gibson-notary services