

February 2024

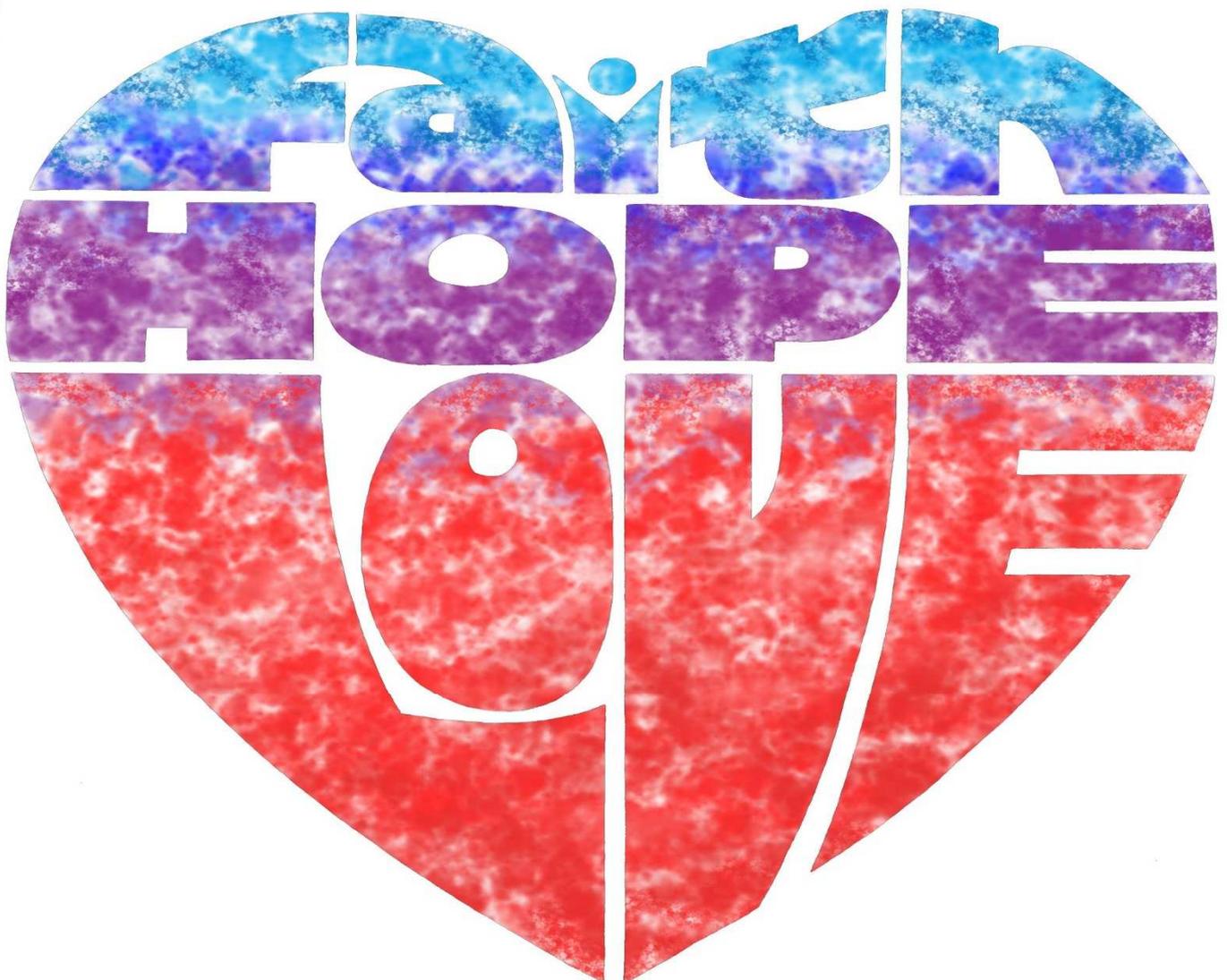
# FOCUS

Issue 281



Parish Magazine of St Stephen's, Hightown

Now these three continue . . .



Of these, the greatest is . . . 1 Cor 13:13

## ***Editor's Note***

### ***'Make Love Your Goal'***

On behalf of St Stephen's, Church, welcome to Focus 2024, and love it or hate it, Valentine's Day is upon us, along with all the commercialisation that it entails.



Shakespeare wrote:

*'If music be the food of love, play on.'*

Certainly, so many songs are written on the theme of love and so many love songs are popular. A study in the *'Psychology of Music'* determined that 67% of lyrics in every song, every decade since the '60s, were in some way about love.

Love is universal to human experience, crossing boundaries of age, gender, location and status. The human tendency to love and to crave love is undeniable and inescapable.

Love is the driving force behind great works of art and music, touching cinema and moving literature. It is a force of creation.

Many of you will recognise the song title at the top of the page. The song was originally released in 1984 by the band, *Frankie Goes To Hollywood*. Holly Johnson, who co-wrote the song, later reminisced, "There is a Biblical aspect to its spirituality and passion; the fact that love is the only thing that matters in the end."

Some of its lyrics are worthy of meditation:

*'The power of love/ A force from above'*

*'Love is the light/ Scaring darkness away'*

*'Love is pure/ The only treasure'*

Listen to it on You Tube, and I defy you to be cynical about Valentine's Day, (just for this year, anyway!)

Entries for future issues of Focus to be sent to

**[Focus.Mag.2023@StStephensHightown.org.uk](mailto:Focus.Mag.2023@StStephensHightown.org.uk)**

*Please submit before last day of month*



*Dear Friends,*

February is often known for being a month dedicated to and all about love! We have Valentine's Day on February 14th, a day universally considered as the day of lovers. February is a special month, it is the shortest of the months usually at 28 days, although this year we have a leap and an extra day, the 29th. It always seems to me to be the month when you notice the lighter evenings, especially by the end of the month.

February 14th this year is also Ash Wednesday, when we start our Lent observance, a period of 40 days during which we pray, read and study, remembering the events leading up to the death of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Yes! It is indeed all about love. The love of our Father God, sending his Son Jesus to live and die for us. The love of Jesus Christ for each and every one of us in his arms opened wide on the cross to pay the price for our wrongs. Yes! It is all about love. The Holy Bible doesn't have any specific messages about Valentines Day, but it does have a lot to say on the subject of love....

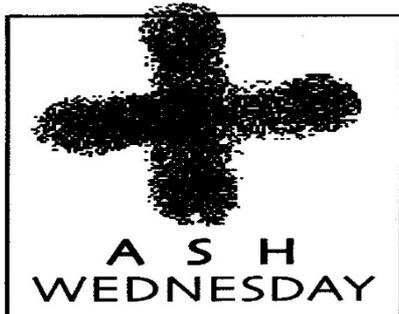
Jesus said, "I give you a new commandment: love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another". +John 13:34

We can show that love in so many ways. A phone call to ask, "How are you?". A knock on the door of a friend, a neighbour with a plant, a bunch of daffs or a couple of cakes for a brew and chat together, an offer of help with shopping, transport, a listening ear..... there is no end to the possibilities, just as there is no end to the love of our Father God and His Son Jesus Christ has for us. What can you do?

During Lent we will be meeting together on Wednesdays after the Eucharist and refreshments and share a simple soup lunch. We will spend time together in prayer, study, and fellowship. As part of our Diocesan Rule of Life, we are called to PRAY, READ and LEARN. Everyone is welcome to join with us, just let us know if you'd like to come along.

God Bless,

Keith



## Ash Wednesday Services

14th February

**St Stephen's Church**

10.30am

7.30pm

# St Stephen's Church Services

## February

FRIDAY 2ND	09:30	MORNING PRAYER
<b>SUNDAY 4TH</b>	10:30	ALL- AGE EUCHARIST
<b>SUNDAY 4TH</b>	18:00	EVENING PRAYER
WEDNESDAY 7TH	10:30	EUCHARIST
FRIDAY 9TH	09:30	MORNING PRAYER
<b>SUNDAY 11TH</b>	10:30	EUCHARIST
<b>SUNDAY 11TH</b>	16.00	TODDLER CHURCH
<b>SUNDAY 11TH</b>	18:00	EVENING PRAYER
WEDNESDAY 14TH	10:30	EUCHARIST FOR ASH WEDNESDAY WITH IMPOSITION OF ASHES
WEDNESDAY 14TH	19:30	ANGLICAN CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ALTCAR, FORMBY AND HIGHTOWN: EUCHARIST WITH IMPOSITION OF ASHES AT ST STEPHEN'S
FRIDAY 16TH	09:30	MORNING PRAYER
<b>SUNDAY 18TH</b>	10:30	EUCHARIST
<b>SUNDAY 18TH</b>	18:00	EVENING PRAYER
WEDNESDAY 21ST	10:30	EUCHARIST
FRIDAY 23RD	09:30	MORNING PRAYER
<b>SUNDAY 25TH</b>	10:30	EUCHARIST
<b>SUNDAY 25TH</b>	18:00	BCP HOLY COMMUNION
WEDNESDAY 28TH	10:30	EUCHARIST

**N.B. Maundy Thursday Supper and Eucharist  
plus Stripping of the Altar, March 28th**

## Who's Who at St Stephen's

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

# Prayer Prompts For February



- 1st. Give thanks for our homes in these cold winter months.  
*For all the people of Hightown.*
- 2nd. Pray for the people who have nowhere to call home and live on the streets.  
*For the people of Marston Crescent and Mayfair Close.*
- 3rd. Pray for the volunteers who run soup kitchens and care for rough sleepers.  
*For the people of Langley Close and Richmond Close.*
- 4th. **Second Sunday before Lent.** Pray for our village and everyone in our community.  
*For the people of Blundell Road and Blundell Avenue.*
- 5th. We give thanks for our beautiful surroundings ,the sea and countryside.  
*For all the people of Hightown.*
- 6th. Remember the inhabitants of the war torn countries in the world.  
*For the people of Thistledown Drive and Bankside.*
- 7th. We pray for people with no hope and an uncertain future.  
*For the people of Orrell Hill Lane, North End Lane and Gorse Lane.*
- 8th. We pray for the elderly among us – sometimes lonely and isolated.  
*For all the people of Hightown.*
- 9th. We pray for our pets who give us companionship.  
*For the people of Delph Road.*
- 10th. Pray for those who are ill and struggle with everyday tasks.  
*For the people of North Dunes and Westway.*
- 11th. **Sunday next before Lent.** Pray for those in prison and the staff who watch over them.  
*For the people of Blundell Grove, Larkhill Grove and Withinsfield.*
- 12th. Pray for our judges who make such important decisions.  
*For the people of Old Acre and Riverside.*
- 13th. Guide our political leaders in the decisions they have to take for us.  
*For the people of, Elmcroft Lane and Sandy Lane.*
- 14th. **Ash Wednesday.** Remember that we are all very fortunate to live in a peaceful country.  
*For the people of St. George's Road and Emerson Close.*
- 15th. Pray for our local food banks and those who volunteer in them.  
*For all the people of Hightown.*

## Prayer prompts (contd)



- 16th. Pray for our families and the love that surrounds us.  
*For the people of Sandhills and Briary Croft.*
- 17th. For our schools and teachers who have the future of our children in their hands.  
*For the people of Village Way and the Roundway.*
- 18th. **First Sunday of Lent.** Pray for those who give the time to run foodbanks to help those struggling.  
*For the people of Elvington Road.*
- 19th. Pray for those who come here as refugees needing our help.  
*For the people of Alt Road and Lower Alt Road.*
- 20th. Pray for our new King , who really has the interests of us all at heart and who has done so much for environmental awareness.  
*For the people of the Range and Altcar Camp.*
- 21st. We give thanks for the animal charities and the work they do.  
*For the people of Whitefield Close and Oakfield Road.*
- 22nd. Pray for children living in unhappy homes.  
*For the people of Wignalls Meadow and Moorhouses.*
- 23rd. Pray for those who work to protect vulnerable children.  
*For the people of Grasmere, Windermere and Thirlmere Roads and Thirlmere Mews.*
- 24th. Pray for those in financial difficulty, anxious and worried.  
*For the people of School Road and Rathbone Road.*
- 25th. **Second Sunday of Lent.** Pray for those in the care sector.  
*For all the people of Hightown.*
- 26th. Pray for those working towards a greener world. Let us give them our support.  
*For the people of St. Stephen's Road and Hester Close.*
- 27th. Pray for our church community extending a welcome to all.  
*For the people of Thornbeck Avenue.*
- 28th. Pray for Keith, our vicar, as we are very lucky to have him with us at St. Stephens and as part of our wider community.  
*For the people of Mark Road.*
- 29th. We pray for a solution to the problems faced by asylum seekers  
*For the people of Elvington Road*

# The gardener and the Vine



JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS



ONCE HE TOLD HIS FRIENDS ALL ABOUT A GARDENER.

THE GARDENER'S JOB WAS TO CARE FOR THE VINES



HE WOULD LOOK AT EACH BRANCH CAREFULLY..

... AND IF IT WAS PRODUCING GOOD FRUIT, HE WOULD CARE FOR IT AND NOURISH IT.



IF IT WAS PRODUCING BAD FRUIT...



...OR NO FRUIT AT ALL...

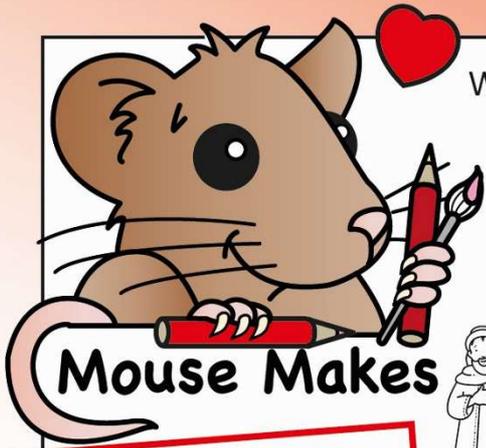


... THEN THE GARDENER WOULD CHOP IT OFF, AND BURN IT IN THE FIRE!!

JESUS WANTED HIS FRIENDS TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS - THAT'S LIKE THE VINE BEARING GOOD FRUIT.



YOU CAN READ THIS SPECIAL PARABLE IN JOHN'S GOSPEL, CHAPTER 15.



# Mouse Makes

Who were the first couple?

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Genesis 2:22-25

Who's wife became a pillar of salt because she disobeyed the angel's warning?

\_\_\_\_\_ Genesis 19:26



Which of Laban's daughters did Jacob love?

\_\_\_\_\_ Genesis 29:18

Who was Moses' wife?

\_\_\_\_\_ Exodus 2:21

Who married Boaz to become King David's great-grandmother and a distant relative of Jesus?

\_\_\_\_\_ Matthew 1:5

Which couple helped the Apostle Paul in his ministry?

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ Romans 16:3

## FIND THE BIBLE VERSE

Change each letter in this bible verse to the letter **before** it in the alphabet.

XIBU HPE IBT  
KPJOFE UPHFUIFS,  
MFU OPU NBO  
TFQBSBUF.

NBSL  
UFO WFSTF  
OJOF

## CONNECT THE BIBLE COUPLES

- |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| ADAM      | ELIZABETH |
| ABRAHAM   | MARY      |
| ISAAC     | HANNAH    |
| JACOB     | PRISCILLA |
| BOAZ      | EVE       |
| ZECHARIAH | RUTH      |
| ELKANAH   | REBEKAH   |
| AQUILA    | RACHEL    |
| JOSEPH    | SARAH     |

## DID YOU KNOW?

King Solomon had **700** wives! They were princesses of royal birth and he loved them all, but his wives caused him to turn away from God  
See 1 Kings 11:1-3

E E Z R E E L I Z A B E T H R  
S V Q S L R Z J I B O A D A M  
R E B E K A H O J R A O Q N O  
U I S A A C A S A A Z P R N S  
T H A Q N H Z E C H A R I A H  
H R U T A E V P O A I E B H I  
S A R A H L T H B M A R Y S D  
P R I S C I L L A Q U I L A

- ABRAHAM
- ADAM • AQUILA
- BOAZ • ELKANAH
- ELIZABETH
- EVE • HANNAH
- ISAAC • JACOB
- JOSEPH • MARY
- PRISCILLA
- RACHEL
- REBEKAH • RUTH
- SARAH
- ZECHARIAH



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**[Rohan.Pickard@Gmail.com](mailto:Rohan.Pickard@Gmail.com)**

**Deryk Johnson - Vice Commodore**  
**[DerykJ@Gmail.com](mailto:DerykJ@Gmail.com)**



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# An Afternoon At The Cut

by Chris Cresswell, 15th September 2023

Official summer holidays being over, the weather has turned glorious, and I have made the five-minute drive from Hightown to a spot on the side of one of the irrigation channels that run into the Alt. Someone, (whose mother must love them), has dumped some old wood at the parking spot, but I have been here before, and know not to be put off.

Immediately, I spot a buzzard overhead. I grab my binoculars, but it is “mewing” so there is no doubt. My next “find”, hiding among the grass at my feet, are my spectacles. At the first glimpse of the buzzard, I had hooked them behind my top shirt button, which would be a good idea if they ever stayed hooked!



I was hoping for damselflies, which were fluttering around the water lilies the last time I was here. On that occasion, while I was watching them, I had been joined by a father and son who started pond-dipping. The son, (of about 8 years), impressively declared the damselflies to be demoiselles, which they were indeed, and banded, I think. This time, a red-veined darter (pictured) poses conveniently for a picture.

A white van draws up, and any anti-white-van prejudice I might have had, evaporates when the driver gets out and says, “I love this place; I have been coming here for thirty years.” He shows me the viewpoint from where he has seen chubb: on one occasion, about ten together. After a brief chat, he goes to cool his feet in the cut, and I walk on upstream.

In the cut there are juvenile coot (not to be confused with the “deaf old coot” , which is what I get called, if I fail to respond to a marital instruction.) I am already content with the outing, when a flash of bright blue flies past, up the cut. “A KINGFISHER!” I shout. I have only seen about six in my life, and never this close to home. I saw one once, while on a canal in France. Having checked the translation, I proceeded to tell all the boats passing that “J’ai vu un matin-pêcheur!”, to their bemusement and to the embarrassment of my wife and son. The joy that the sight of a kingfisher brings me, is out of all proportion with the four seconds it is actually in view.

A crane-fly (aka daddy-long-legs) lands in front of me. As I walk alongside the cut, blue dragonflies patrol their sections, never seemingly to stop flying. I am 90% sure they are common hawkers but there is no chance of a photo.

Wild flowers used to seem too varied and numerous for me to start identifying, but I have discovered a free phone app called "Seek", which, when you point the phone camera at plants, will identify them most of the time. It also works on amphibians, fungi, fish, reptiles, arachnids, birds, insects, molluscs & mammals. (Other such apps are available.)

I know that during the next winter I will be thinking of the summer to come. The image foremost in my mind will not be that of lying on a beach, or trips to stately homes, or travelling. Instead, the image will be of strolling in the countryside in the sunshine, encountering the flora and fauna, and rejoicing in their existence.

Simply.....days like today.



**Coffee Morning**  
**Saturday February 3rd**  
**St Stephen's Hall**  
**Everybody Welcome**  
**Why not bring a friend?**



## **Sherry, Soup and Sweet Dessert**

**Wednesday 7th February 1.00pm-3.00 pm**  
**St Stephen's Church Hall**

*Admission by ticket only.*

**Contact Di Aldis 0151 929 3612**



## **The Hightown Gardening Club**

Our guest speaker on 12th February is Margaret Hughes, who is very experienced in the care of roses: climbers, bushes and ramblers. Do you need to know how to prune your roses to get the very best flowers this coming year? Or which is the best way to feed a rose bush? Or even, the best sites in your garden for a rose bush?

You are welcome to join the garden club for £15 for the whole year or just £3 per visit. Our meetings start at 7.30pm in St Stephens Church Hall.

## Our Eco Friendly Church

Eco Church is a scheme for churches in England and Wales, launched in 2016 and supported by A Rocha UK.

It encourages churches to think about how they are caring for God's earth in different areas of their life and work.



By filling in an online survey, a church will collect points towards a Bronze, Silver or Gold Church Award. To date, over 3000 churches have achieved awards. The survey covers 5 key areas of church life:

- *Worship and teaching*
- *Management of church buildings*
- *Management of church land*
- *Community and global engagement*
- *Lifestyle*

St Stephen's Church formed a small eco group, and achieved its Bronze Award in November 2019. This gave us a boost to undertake our community garden project in 2020 (National Lottery funded). After Covid and a period of interregnum-a period without our own vicar-we are now working towards our Silver Award.

The simple, yet impactful, Eco Tips from A Rocha, are intended to inspire us to make positive changes that will benefit our planet and future generations and draw us closer to God.

### **FEBRUARY**-A Rocha UK's Easy Eco Tips

Go green for Lent. The weeks leading up to Easter are a time for self reflection, repentance and emulating Jesus' obedience to the Father. Is there something you'd like to give up or take up during Lent that will enable you to reflect on God, contribute to our planet's well-being and enhance others' lives through sustainable, ecofriendly living? Explore some of these changes at [arocha.org.uk/go-greenfor-lent/](https://arocha.org.uk/go-greenfor-lent/)



## What's New At St Stephen's?

We have much to be thankful for at St Stephen's. In the last eight months, not only have we acquired a new vicar, but through several generous donations we now have new hymn books, a new pulpit fall, a new notice board, and a beautiful, new sanctuary lamp, a symbol of the presence of Christ. We also have new liturgy (forms of worship): All age Eucharist, Toddler Church, and every Sunday Revd Keith live streams night prayer (compline) on our website. This is a beautiful way to end your Sunday. We are very grateful to D.T. Hughes, the company who, last year, carried out the upgrade to the village electricity supply. They supplied and fitted a defibrillator to the outside of St Stephen's Church Hall, for community use.



### PUMPKIN OR BUTTERNUT SQUASH RISOTTO

This is a quick and easy dish for this time of year. It will remind you of sunny days in Italy and help you dream of holidays yet to come. The stock is traditionally added to risotto rice in ladlesful, one at a time. In this recipe, the stock is added all at once and the rice cooked for 15-20 minutes. It works well!

75g unsalted butter

1 tablespoon olive oil

6 shallots, peeled and finely chopped into

250g pumpkin or butternut squash flesh cut small cubes

sea salt and ground black pepper

350 arborio risotto rice

1 litre vegetable stock

3-4 tablespoons dry white wine

50g grated Parmesan cheese

Melt the butter and oil in a medium saucepan, add the shallots and some pepper and fry for 5 minutes until softened. Add the pumpkin or butternut squash and fry for a further 2-3 minutes.

Add the rice and stir to coat in oil and butter. Add the stock in one go, cover and simmer until the rice is tender but firm. All the stock should be used up which should take 15-20 minutes.

When the rice is creamy, stir in the wine, salt and pepper and the Parmesan.

Cover and leave to rest for 1 minute before serving on hot plates with green salad and crusty bread.

Serves 4



## St Oswald of Worcester: A Saint For The Leap Year

Whoever knew that there is a saint for the Leap Year? He is St Oswald of Worcester, who died on 29th February 992. His family story was extraordinary, and full of some surprising 'leaps', all by itself. It provides a tantalising glimpse of what happened to at least one of those pagan Viking warriors who settled in Anglo-Saxon Britain.

For Oswald's great-uncle had come to England c 865, as part of the 'Great Heathen Army' of Viking invaders. But his son, Oswald's uncle, Oda, forsook paganism, and not only converted to Christianity, but actually ended up as Archbishop of Canterbury. From there, Oda was in a position to help his nephew, Oswald, which he did.

Oda sent young Oswald to be educated at the abbey of Fleury, then a great centre of learning. There Oswald absorbed the Benedictine ideals which would guide his later life and work. Back in England, he became bishop of Worcester in 961, and with the support of King Edgar, eagerly joined in major reforms of the Anglo-Saxon church. In 972 Oswald was made Archbishop of York, and seems to have taken a great interest in renewing the church in the Danelaw. He founded Ramsey Abbey, which became one of the great Fenland monasteries.



Oswald was popular as an archbishop, and always washed the feet of the poor every Lent. On 29th February 992 he had just completed this service at Worcester when he collapsed and died. In later years, Worcester adopted both him and Wulfstan to be its two chief saints: they flank the tomb of King John, which is before the high altar in Worcester Cathedral.



2024



Hightown Club Tennis Section Welcome in 2024 in Style



## Sunday Coffee Rota

February

4th Val Bailey

11th Sue Taylor

18th Margaret Bate

25th Hilary Munro



## Brass Rota

February

Shirley Burns

March

Kevin Bradshaw



*Prices for advertising per annum:*

**Full page: £550**

**Half page: £275**

**Quarter page: £135**

**One eighth page: £70**

**Contact:**

[Adverts@StStephensHightown.org.uk](mailto:Adverts@StStephensHightown.org.uk)

## Flower Rota

February

TBA

Please see

Hilary Munro



**For Baptisms, Weddings  
and Funerals or any  
pastoral need, please  
contact the Vicar,  
Revd Keith Thornborough**

at

**St Stephen's**

On

**0151 929 3097**

## All Age Eucharist

**1st Sunday of Every Month**

**10.30 at St Stephen's**

**Appropriate for all age groups  
from the old to the very  
young**

**Readings, prayers, hymns,  
folk group and a  
celebration of the  
Eucharist**

**A less formal service with  
the Eucharist at the heart**

## Village Organisations and Activities

<b>Tuesday Group</b> , St Stephen's Hall Tuesday morning 10am	Beryl Howard Jan Branigan
<b>Hightown Friendship Group</b> 1st Wednesday at 8pm St Stephen's Hall	Margaret Wear
<b>Gardening Club</b> 2nd Monday 8pm St Stephen's Hall	Hilary Munro
<b>Bowling Club</b> , Sandy Lane	Diana Killen
<b>Hightown Club</b>	Chris Scrine
<b>Blundellsands Sailing Club</b>	Rohan Pickard—RohanPickard@gmail.com Deryk Johnson—DerykJ@gmail.com
<b>Yoga Classes</b> , Hightown Club	Rose Billinge
<b>Flower Show</b>	Debbie Underhill—Debbie.underhill@cloud.com
<b>Open Mic Poetry Group</b> 3rd Thursday 7.30pm St Stephen's Church hall	Sally Anne—tapiabowes@gmail.com Alex
<b>Craft Group</b> , Every Thursdays 1.30-3.30pm, St Stephen's Hall	Sue Taylor
<b>Hightown Parish Council</b>	Jenny Farrar—clerk@hightownparishcouncil.uk Www.hightownparishcouncil.uk
<b>Community Library</b> , Alt Centre, Lower Alt Rd. Mon 12-2, Tues 1-3, Weds 1-4, Fri 10-12	Linda Munro—lindamunro@hotmail.com
<b>Zumba Gold</b> , Dance for all aged 55 plus, Mondays 9.45-10.30, St Stephen's Hall	Nicky Garsforth
<b>Creo Dance Co</b> Mon Tues Wed Thurs Sat Children 3 to 18 years	Georgia Gaudi



# Toddler Church

**At**

**St. Stephen's-Hightown**

**Sunday 4th February**

**4pm**

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

***All Welcome!***

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