

## Dear friends,

I can hardly believe that I am writing the letter for the September & October Focus Magazine! The year seems to be flying by! As last year, I write at the end of July and it certainly has felt cooler over these last few days and a couple of the trees at the front of the vicarage have already started to shed leaves! Let's hope for more warm, sunny days over the rest of the summer holidays!



September is, of course, a time of new beginnings, with the start of the school year, and a time when church and community activities and events resume after the summer break. I know some people will have been waiting patiently for the month to arrive as they have missed the special times together, but it is good to have a break, have a rest.

At the end of the month, on Monday 29th, we are starting a new group on Mondays: a drop-in Lunch Club, 'Souper Troopers'! An opportunity to come together over a delicious bowl of soup and bread, tea and coffee, company and chat. We will also have a prayer station set up in the hall, for any who might find this helpful. We will be open from 12 noon till 2pm and it will be a 'pay as you can' event.

Hospitality was really important to Jesus, both in his teachings and his actions, a core aspect of his ministry, so often using meals and gatherings to connect with people and show God's love, care and concern. Hospitality is also important to us here, at St Stephen's, as we offer refreshments and time together as much as we can.

Sunday 5th October will see our All-Age Eucharist for Harvest where we will give thanks for God's provision to us and have the opportunity to share what we have in supporting our local foodbank with non-perishable food items and Water Aid with our cash donations. All are very welcome at all our services.

*'All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above; then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord, for all his love'. ... the refrain from my favourite harvest hymn: We plough the fields and scatter.* For me, one of the joys of driving into Hightown is seeing all the fields in each of the seasons, watching the farmers ploughing, sowing, reaping and gathering-in.

If you are starting a new school, a new class, university, or a new job, or even starting to come to church or one of our church groups, 'May the Lord bless you and keep you and give you peace'.

**God Bless,  
Keith**