

CONCORD

A P R I L 2 0 0 6

Prayer for the Month, and for Easter:

Almighty and everlasting God,
who in your tender love towards humankind
sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ
to take upon him our humanity,
and to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption;
grant that we may follow the example
of his patience and humility,
and also come to share his resurrection life;
through our Lord Jesus Christ himself. Amen.

Adapted from the collect for Palm Sunday, ASB.

**Northenden Rectory,
Ford Lane, 0161 998 – 2615**

Dear Friends,

Happy Easter, to start with. It is a time of joy and beauty by any account, as the days lengthen, the sun warms, and birds and flowers show their full glory of song, plumage and colour. Things begin to grow, and with them bring the promise of fruit and harvest to come. Life is renewed.

I remember one day going to take a funeral at the main cemetery in Bolton. The drive had recently been re-tarmac-ed, and was sharply black and harsh against the cream and russet of the chapel stonework. Smart, but stark. Then I got out of the car and walked across to the entrance. The tarmac was broken, as if small volcanoes were irrupting from it beside the doors. There had been daffodils planted there, which no-one had thought to lift when the new path was laid, and their power of life was breaking through the deathly grip of the tarmac. I suppose the managers who had decided on the new surface were annoyed, but I could not be.

On the contrary, I always remember that as a kind of parable, all the more vivid because of the location. Death may seem so strong, but life ~ the life God gives ~ is stronger. That applies in a natural situation like this, and it applies in spiritual terms too. There is hope, even when hope seems stifled. God's love and life are there, even when all seems loveless and lifeless.

When you are in the grip of trouble or illness or despair, that must be a hard truth to grasp, but I say it not because it seems a nice comforting thought, but because life and love in the face of death and despair are at the heart of the Christian faith. This is our "good news", or "gospel". Faced with scorn and opposition to his message, Jesus pressed on. Given the opportunity to back off and avoid cruel conflict, Jesus pressed on. For the hope that was set before him he endured the pain and the shame of trial, and teasing torture, and the cross. He had prayed for deliverance, and God heard his prayer, and his answer was not a slick rescue, but the vindication of the resurrection. Jesus did not sidestep the trouble but came through it victorious as our trailblazer and pioneer.

That is far easier to write than to live through, I am sure, but it is God's promise that what Christ went through was not just a one off demo, but somehow paved the way for all who trust in him, and became a means by which he can support us in trouble. Because he has faced trials, he is able to help those who face their time of trial now. Because he rose again to richer life on the third day he is able to carry us through our troubles, in time and to eternity

Yours faithfully,
Greg Forster

Magpie ...

... has been watching the traffic lights project at the corner of Church Rd. and Palatine Rd. It is quite a marathon! Three months and counting.

... was travelling peacefully along the A6 in Levenshulme the other day when two birds flashed before his eyes at head height. One was a pigeon, quite clearly, and it buzzed the windscreen of a van heading towards Manchester. The other veered up and

away to avoid a collision, and turned out to be a sparrowhawk. So forget urban foxes; we now have urban falcons.

... and on the subject of birds, it seems that Didsbury Golf Club has a problem. There are too many Canada Geese fouling their fairways and gouging up their greens. Oh dear! Magpie had thought that the object of golf was to overcome a whole range of obstacles to get the little white ball into its target hole. Obviously some obstacles count as foul, and should be avoided. So what are the less than intrepid golfers to do? Magpie has a number of (tongue in beak) suggestions. If the fairways were surfaced with Astroturf, there would be no incentive for the birds to dig them up for food. Or why not develop a whole new form of golf; instead of aiming for the hole with the flag in it, why not aim for the geese? A really successful round would stock the freezer for Christmas.

... and talking of golf, give a thought ~ slightly overawed thought, perhaps ~ for Sion Dewi Llewellyn, whose daughter lives in Northenden, and who died recently following an incident while he was on a golfing holiday in Spain. He was 103. (His age, not his handicap.)

... and have any readers noticed what Magpie has (he's an old bird, you see) about the weather? Not the weather itself, but the way it is reported and forecast. Weather language is suffering from "inflation" he believes. What used to be "a bit of a blow" now merits "a severe weather warning". Maybe it's because of the measurements. Eleven centimetres of snow does sound more daunting than four inches. -1° sounds worse than 30° . Or maybe it's because of the hurricane of 1987. Having failed to warn people then, the Met Office can hardly taken to task if they over-warn people now. But what would they do if we had some real severe weather lined up? Do you remember the "cry wolf" story?

Northenden Methodist Church.

Palatine Road.

**Minister: the Revd. David Bown,
5 Kenworthy Lane, Northenden, M 22 4 JF
0161 998 – 2158**

Sunday Services.

- 2nd April. 11.00am Preacher to be decided
 6.30pm United Service. The Rev. D. Bown.
- 9th 11.00am **Palm Sunday:** Mrs. Margaret Hunt
- 13th **Maundy Thursday.** 7.30pm . Joint Service at St.Wilfrid's
- 14th **Good Friday** 10.30am Joyce Burgess
- 16th Easter Sunday
 11.00am Holy Communion. The Rev. David Bown.
- 23rd 11.00am Duncan Rutter
- 30th 11.00am David Hillary
- 7th May 11.00am Morning Service
 6.30pm United Service at St.Wilfrid's.

COMMUNITY LUNCH ... on Wed...12th April
12.00 noon to 1.30pm at the "Eatery". Victoria Rd.

AFTERNOON TEA ... Wed. 26th April, 3 – 4 pm.

NORTHENDEN MILL ~ AGAIN!

Meetings took place in March which confirmed that there will be another season of digging on the site of the old mill on Mill Lane. This will be from June 5th for a month, and will involve local schools, and adult volunteers as last year. Publicity will go out in due course inviting people to contact the organisers in order to volunteer – but not just yet, please.

The children's digging area will again cover parts of the Miller's house, alongside Mill Lane. The deeper, adult area will delve into parts of the mill complex which were not exposed last year, and also go deeper into some of the parts which were investigated.

The most obvious structures revealed in 2005 were late 18th or early 19th century onwards, but some earlier work was found, including a mediaeval archway over one of the two mill races.

As last year, there will be open days and displays, and perhaps other activities. So watch this space, and others, for details.

NEW DAWN COUNSELLING.

Free, professional counselling
at the New Dawn Community Centre,
Button Lane, Northen Moor.
Tel. 0161 – 962-8100.

This service offers person-centred counselling in a Christian context, for people of any belief or none, under the auspices of the British Assoc. of Counselling and Psychotherapy, and the Assoc. of Christian Counsellors, in partnership with the New Dawn Community Assoc. and Wythenshawe Oasis.
The service is free, though donations towards the costs are welcome.

St. Wilfrid's Church,

Ford Lane. (Off Church Rd.)

Rector: Greg Forster (998-2615)

Organist: Arthur Mellor (928-0472)

www . stwilfridsnorthenden . org . uk

Services:



On Sundays at 8.00am and on Thursdays at 10.00am there is a Communion service (using the old Prayer Book).

There is a "Sunday Club" for 7 – 11+ year olds in the Rectory at 10.30am, for about an hour, except when there is a Family Service (for parents and children together) in Church. A Sunday School, for children from 3½ to 6+, meets in the Church Hall from 10.30 till about 11.30am.

Apr. 2nd 10.30am Holy Communion ("Standard")

6.30pm United Evening Worship.

9th Palm Sunday

10.30am Holy Communion

6.30pm Evening Worship

- 13th Maundy Thursday. The Lord's Supper, 7.30pm
 14th Good Friday Readings and Hymns, 10.30am
 16th Easter Day
 10.30am Family Communion
 6.30pm Evening Worship.
 23rd 10.30am Holy Communion
 6.30pm Evening Worship
 30th 10.30am Holy Communion (Shortened.**)
 6.30pm Holy Communion (1662)

Please note too that the church is open each Sunday afternoon from 1.45 – approx. 5.15pm, for prayer, visiting, enquiries, &c.

The Rector is usually on hand if you want to talk or ask about anything, or to pray for health and wholeness.

For your Diaries

** Please note that the Annual Parochial Church Meeting will take place on Sunday 30th April after the morning service – at approx 11.30am – in church, and the service itself will be curtailed to allow for this and, as in previous years, will include the Rector's report as the sermon.

Sat. 1st Apr. 10.00am ... **Coffee Morning**, Church Hall.

Mon. 3rd Apr. 7.45 for 8.00pm Women's Group. Rectory.

Also School Governors at 6.30pm

Wed. 5th 8.00pm Bible Study, Rectory (Also on 12th)

Thu. 13th 9.15am (ish) School Easter Service

Note too the communion at 7.30pm for Maundy Thursday.

Sat. 15th ***The Church will be Open from 11am till 5pm***

Wed. 26th 8.00pm Bible Study, Rectory.

Sun. 30th 11.30am (ish) Annual Church Meeting & Vestry
 In Church – see panel.

Mon. 1st May Women's Group, Rectory, 7.45 for 8.00pm

Sat. 6th May Coffee Morning. Church Hall, 10 – 11.30am.

And advance notice of a folk music concert, Thu. 1st Jun., 7.30pm

WOMEN'S GROUP ...

... meets on Mon. April 3rd. The speaker this month is Andrew Leach, a local businessman. He wrote a piece for January's Concord about "Lifeshare" at Christmas, and will be speaking in more detail about that.

As usual, you are most welcome even if you have not come before, and if you need a lift, contact me on 998-2615.

The speaker on 1st. May is Jackie Walker, on Adult Learning. We will be meeting, despite the Bank Holiday..

Sue Forster

CUBS, BROWNIES; A Church supported Cub group (for girls as well as boys) has re-started, using St.Wilfrid's School on Tuesday evenings, 6.00 – 8.00pm. *For details, contact Mike Clegg on 0161 998 – 4143.*

There is, of course, also a Brownies' group, in the Church Hall on Mondays from 6.00pm.

From the Registers ... In Memoriam ...

Jean Brough (West View Rd.), Leslie Cooke (Homewood Rd.), Brian Wass (Robert Owen Gdns), Frances Lister (Orchard Rd.)

Baptised in the parish church on ...

19th March: **Ethan Lewis Dillon.**

And I find that (presumably in the Christmas rush) I omitted to record in Concord the baptisms that took place on Dec. 18th last year,

Victoria Margaret McPherson and Tayla-Rose Kilcourse.

My apologies to them.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting and Vestry.

As noted above this will take place after the morning service on **Sunday 30th April, at about 11.30am in Church.**

The "Vestry" will consist of the election of Churchwardens. Nominations are invited, and anyone resident in Northenden may vote.

The Annual Church Meeting will follow, at which members of the Church Council will be elected (again, nominations are invited), Sidesmen appointed, and there will be reports on the activities and finances of the Church during 2005, and on the state of our buildings.

Anyone is welcome to attend and observe these meetings. In order to vote at the Church Meeting you need to be on the "Electoral Roll", and application forms for this are available in church, or from Mrs. Morfydd Eglan or the Rector.

This is the legal membership list of the church, and you need either to live within the parish, or to have attended the church regularly over six months, in order to qualify.

This roll is formally revised in the month before the Annual Meeting, so please sign on quickly if you wish to take a full part in the Church's democracy.

Confirmation.

Greg Forster.

There will be a Confirmation Service at St. Wilfrid's on June 25th this year, at 3.00pm. This is the regular service for this part of Manchester, which comes round to us every five or six years.

Confirmation is a chance for people, from eleven year upwards, to affirm for themselves the promises made at their baptism. There is no upper age limit; I think the oldest person I have prepared was a 78 year old, in Bolton almost 30 years ago. It gives a chance to think about what we believe, and to ratify (confirm!) our commitment to God through Christ. There are some things which need explaining, and I would hope, in the preparation sessions beginning after Easter, to try to answer some of the awkward questions about Christianity which people have. And it is the chance for the church to welcome you ~ confirm you ~ into fuller membership so that you can share regularly in the communion service and express in that way how God strengthens you in your life week by week.

Some people have already expressed interest; if you want to join them, please contact me as soon as you can.

Churchyard ...

No gripes this month; just an encouragement to look around and enjoy the springtime flowers.

Cards ~ some with prayers for the sick or bereaved, some with pictures of the church, and some (by Roni Armstrong) with elaborate designs for very special events, are available in St. Wilfrid's church. Can you use them, for your own prayers or for a friend, or for special times?

If you believe that ... Greg Forster

Early in April there will be the publication of, and (if you have the right channels) the broadcast of a programme about, a so called "Gospel of Judas". There will be a great deal of hype about this. It is the week before Easter, and the Da Vinci Code film is just one month off release. The newspapers are already trying to get the Vatican to denounce it, or embrace it, or do something controversial about it. Forgive the cynicism, but there will be a lot of money in this for someone. So point one: forget the hype, and the exaggerated language. Take a deep breath, and weigh up the facts.

So, point two, what are the facts? In the 1970s some Egyptian farm workers found a manuscript in a cave. That is a relatively common occurrence in Egypt, but they took it to a dealer, who sold it on. It seems to have passed through many hands, not always legally, before a Swiss art foundation acquired it, and struck a deal with the National Geographic to publish it. (If Dan Brown is short of a plot for his next thriller, he could do worse than look into the travels of this document.)

The manuscript has been dated, apparently, to about 400AD. It is in Coptic, the ancient language of Egypt, but is a translation of a Greek text from two hundred or so years earlier. From excerpts that have been leaked or otherwise discovered, it is clearly the product of a group known as "Gnostics" ~ they thought they were "in the know", possessing some secret and

special teaching of Jesus denied to common mortals. As such it is one of a fairly large assortment of documents, some of them claiming the title “gospel”. Some are interesting and useful to scholars of the bible ~ perhaps this one will be ~ but that is not true of them all. My professor when I was at Oxford, who had (I think) written a book about them, called them in general “rather unsavoury”.

It also seems that the existence of a “Gospel of Judas” has been known from references in early Christian writers; now the text has come to light. But the name does not mean Judas had anything to do with it. There were a whole range of “gospels of ...” being touted around in the second and third centuries, including the well known and useful Gospel of Thomas, and one allegedly by Pilate. They are “historical” documents in the sense that they tell us something of the religious milieu against which the Christian church had to teach the true Gospel in the third century (Just as Dan Brown’s Da Vinci Code tells us the sort of fancies that were flying around at the end of the 20th century). They are generally not historical in the sense that they tell us anything about Jesus, or even about Judas or Pilate the imagined authors or heroes, in the early first century. As one scholar has put it, it is like finding a speech supposed to be by Queen Victoria (died 1901), describing how amused she has been by The Lord of The Rings (Published in the 1950s).

So, if scholars and churchmen are braced for anything it will be for a flood of misinformation, and if they are quaking, it will be with laughter, not fear of what shockhorror revelations may come out. Whatever else you may say about this document, it hardly merits the Mail on Sunday headline, “The greatest archaeological discovery of all time”, “threat to 2000 years of church teaching”! If you believe that, you’ll believe anything.

**NORTHENDEN CIVIC SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING,
ON TUESDAY 11TH APR., AT 7.45PM IN THE METHODIST HALL.**
Speaker: John Steedman, on Wythenshawe Park and Gardens.