

# CONCORD ~ April 2014

## Prayer for the Month

Almighty and everlasting God,  
who in your tender love towards mankind  
sent your Son our saviour Jesus Christ  
to take upon him our human nature to the full,  
and to suffer death upon the cross ~  
grant that we may follow the example  
of his patience and humility  
and also come to share in his resurrection;  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord himself.  
Amen.

*Based on the prayer for Palm Sunday in our prayer books.*

Northenden Rectory, Ford Lane.  
0161 998 2615

Dear Friends,

As Magpie reports, there seem to be people who do not make the connection between Easter and Christianity. I suppose it is not immediately obvious if you were brought up on chocolate eggs and bunnies, but it ought to be, since Easter is *the* key Christian celebration ~ more so than Christmas in fact. For readers of Concord that will not be a problem, I know, but two of our articles look into some of the events and meaning of Easter.

There are new opportunities to get involved with the civic and public life of Northenden, as the Neighbourhood Forum gets fully under weigh. Anyone living or working in the Area can contribute, at no cost, to discussions about specific developments and about a Neighbourhood Plan, which if approved by popular vote will have legal force in connection with the future of the Area. People living in the relevant area will be receiving publicity and invitation leaflets in late March and April. Watch out for them. If you do not get these I should be interested to know.

St.Wilfrid's Annual Meeting takes place at the end of April. Please note the date and come if you can; and please also note the second part of my piece about it below. The Church's finances are not in a good state. It is up to all stakeholders in St.Wilfrid's to remedy this, one way or another. Let me dispel a couple of myths about church funding. We do **not** receive any

government or local authority funding for routine running costs (only occasional grants restricted for specific projects like repairs to our Grade 2\* listed building) And secondly, though the Church Commissioners may have "millions" they are committed up to the hilt already on clergy pensions and some support to the poorer dioceses in England. They are in no position to bail out a parish in trouble, and it is not their role anyway. So it is up to us local stakeholders.

Our "Great War" project continues. It is not alone. I was able to have a brief look at a similar book, produced by St. Paul's church in Withington, which has gone into the story, so far as they can, of everyone from that parish who died in the war, together with some background pieces. It has given me some ideas. I have also been in touch with the local British Legion branch, and we may well have a special service on August 3<sup>rd</sup> in the morning. (There is to be one for the City in the Cathedral in the afternoon.) I hope to have the booklet made up of these Concord articles available for that date.

So now read on.

***Greg Forster***

## The Curious Case of the Sleeping Witnesses

In one of the incidents in the story of Jesus which Matthew alone tells us, we learn that there was a story put about by the Jewish authorities to explain away his resurrection. (ch.28 v11-15) When Matthew wrote it was still going the rounds. It says some-thing for Matthew's confidence in the truth of the resurrection that he feels able to repeat the counter-story. It has curious twists.

While the women were on their way from the grave to tell the disciples, some of the guards who had been set around the grave, who had been paralysed with fear as the stone was rolled back, went and told the priestly leadership all that had happened. They held a crisis conference, and gave these soldiers a fair sum of money telling them to put about the story that Jesus' disciples had come at night and stolen the body while they ~ the guards ~ were asleep. "If the governor gets to know," they promised, "we'll have a word with him and see you alright." So they spread that story.

Well might the leadership have to promise to see things alright with the governor, even if the guards were Jewish not Roman. Sleeping on active duty was a capital offence. But we can read between the lines. This story was second best ~ there was no body for the Jewish authorities to produce, from the actual grave or from somewhere else (where the disciples ~ or Roman or Jewish authorities themselves ~ had taken it) to give the lie to the Christian's account of a resurrection. Given that none of the disciples admitted the theft (and no story to that effect is to be found in Jewish literature) despite the pressure they were put under, this is a back-handed testimony to the truth of the resurrection. Incidentally an inscription has been dug up, at Nazareth I think, warning that grave robbing was a crime.

But what might Brother Cadfael or some other famous sleuth ask these poor guards if he got his sights on them? "And tell me, what was it you saw when you were asleep, then?" I suppose a quick-witted guard might say, "We woke up to see them just making off with him," but even drowsy guards, caught napping, would run faster than disciples carrying a dead body, and to get at that body they would have had to drag back ~ silently ~ a stone weighing several hundredweight at least, which had been sealed, and was known to be guarded against this very possibility. (ch.27 v62-66). What did come out was the guards terror at what they did see (ch.28 v4). No, this evidence simply does not stack up, though even so some modern critics have tried to argue that theft was, in one way or other, the 'real' explanation of the resurrection.

### ***"We will remember them" 1914-1919***

In Northenden we have 23 graves from WW1. Some are burials here; others simply say "buried in France." There are graves too of those who did come home. Thanks to those of you who have shared relatives' stories. They will appear later. GSF.

#### **4. R.Q.M.S. John Henry Code, D.C.M., 1869 – 1934 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Harold Code, 1897 – 1918**

An old churchyard like Northenden's attracts many searchers after their family trees. It was one of these who first drew my attention to J.H.Code, and his son. He was a nephew, I think, or cousin by one or two removes. We found the grave and though John Henry's inscription carries no indication of rank, the D.C.M.

showed that he had seen exemplary war service, though he had died in his sixties in Northenden. His relative had already done a fair amount of research, and explained what he knew. J.H. had been a regular before the war, a warrant officer attached to the Manchester Regiment Territorial Army barracks at Ardwick. He was also a champion marksman at Bisley.

After mobilisation the 1/8<sup>th</sup> battalion was sent to Egypt, and then to Gallipoli in May 1915. That campaign was a bit of a fiasco,

and after several abortive actions the battalion was withdrawn back to Egypt. His nephew reported that he was one of only half a dozen who survived one battalion advance (if some years ago you saw the TV programmes, *All the King's Men*, you will know what I mean!) but I wonder. By 1917 the battalion was moved to France, where it again took part in many fierce actions, before being in a larger formation withdrawn from the line in April 1918 at 1/3<sup>rd</sup> its nominal strength, because of casualties. It was in mid-April 1918 that his medal was gazetted, "for conspicuous gallantry devotion to duty, and continuous good service. His courage and skill have been most marked." So was it in France in 1918 that Regimental Quartermaster-Sergeant Code survived the suicidal attack, and was decorated for it? The citation could refer to either situation, or both, since it talks of "*continuous* good service." The DCM was regarded as second only to the VC in prestige for other ranks.

I asked about his son, who is also commemorated on the Northenden headstone, but was killed in France. He had been promoted from the ranks, and had also been in the Manchester Regiment, though at the time of his death, according to his cousin, he had been with Canadian forces, resisting the last big German push. He is buried at a cemetery in Mireaumont, that goes by the name of Adanac ~ not a French name for all its sound, but Canada backwards! It is just in the Somme Département.

The family address in the war was in Clayton, relatively near Ardwick barracks, and they moved to Northenden later. R.Q.M.S. Code must have been in his late 40s when decorated in 1918.

## **Why?**

I think it was after one of the school Easter events in church last year that one of the children, an eight or nine year old, asked me why Jesus had to die. A big enough question for anyone to ask, or to answer ~ but to do so in less than a minute before the school crocodile left for Patterdale Rd., in terms a youngster would understand, called for quick thinking. I forget what I actually said to him then, but I have been thinking about it, on and off, since then. There are in fact so many answers. Ask the squaddies at the cross, and they'd say, "Orders is orders. The Governor says so." Ask the Governor, and he'd say it wasn't his fault; he'd washed his hands of it all. In any case the Empire

couldn't tolerate a potential rebel. Privately to his wife he would have made the excuse that the priestly leadership had him over a barrel, so he could not respond to her plea for clemency. It was all high politics, and if you asked the high priest, he reckoned it was better to get rid of one individual than for the whole nation to go under.

Ask Judas ~ perhaps he would say he'd given Jesus the chance to come out as Messiah, and he'd bottled it. Ask Peter, and immediately afterwards he would have said he'd let him down. Some of these answers are reading between the lines, others are based on the Gospel texts. And ask Jesus himself: he spoke of loving so much that he gave his life for his friends; somehow his death liberated his disciples, and all who came after them, from death and wrongdoing, and rebuilt their relationship with God their heavenly Father ~ his death meant their - our - life and hope of resurrection: "I am the resurrection and the life."

Those last points come from John's Gospel. In Mark's gospel we have the incident where disciples ask for the plum jobs when Jesus is crowned king, and are told that "the Son of Man came not to be served, ... but to give his life as a ransom for many." His death meant a release from some kind of slavery, to sin, or evil in the world, freeing us to live for God. Understanding that has taken better minds - and hearts - than mine 2000 years, but that's why.

Look out for ***The Gardener's Tale***,  
a between the lines account of how things might have looked  
to one of the minor characters  
in the story of the empty tomb.

Available at St.Wilfrid's Church as a *samizdat* publication  
by the Rector. £1.50 to church funds,  
and it's a good read, though he says it himself!

## **NORTHENDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM**

The inaugural annual meeting of our Neighbourhood Forum will take place in St.Wilfrid's **School** Hall on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May, starting at 7.30pm. Book the date: plan to be part of it ~ more publicity will be going everyone living and working in the Area.

Magpie ...

... takes a keen, though non-partisan interest in politics. He was interested in our election back in February. Take the Monster Raving Loony Party, for instance. The Official version! (Can there be an unofficial version, or more worryingly a Provisional version?) They came last, with 288 votes, and were very pleased with their result! Why? you may ask. It's simple: it was a record. Yes, a record. They have never before had such a high percentage of the poll, at 1.9%. Well done Chappo, old fellow!

... doesn't know, or particularly care, what the BNP thought of their result. They produced some peculiar policies, as heard over their tannoy system at Civic Centre the Saturday before polling: they were going to save the NHS (the one policy which you can guarantee is shared by every party standing.) And in the next breath they were going to stop immigration and no doubt send immigrants home. There is just one problem here: our beloved NHS depends on immigrants, from cleaners to consultants, who come from overseas. In some units up to 80% of staff are immigrants of one nationality or another. Implement one policy, and they will scupper not only the other policy, but our whole health service.

... has found some new perches in the last week or so. Yes, it's happening, after so long! Scaffolding has gone up around the Green Dalek on the Church Rd. corner, and the building will be top-sliced. The offending top storey, and the too high lift shaft, are finally being cut down to size. Some would say not cut down enough, but cut down it is.

... but he has lost some other roosts. The trees and timber buildings of Camperlands are no more. The site is almost flattened and we can look forward to an assortment of 39 houses rising in their place. What a big area it is, and what an awkward shape, and what sought-after residences they will surely be, with a waterfront setting. Magpie can feel his inner Estate Agent bubbling out.

... and there are other buildings where there is possible action. The Church Inn site has permission for the work to go ahead for a dozen houses. The developers seem keen to get

going on it. At the old British Legion someone in a yellow jacket has been seen with a bricklayers' trowel. Was he acting on the council's ultimatum to sort out the site, or had he simply taken a wrong turning from the house next door? There are problems there over the ownership and responsibility, but here's hoping! And Cragg's corner, on Church Rd.? Well, it has new planning consent for conversion to flats, but it had that three or more years ago and nothing happened. So perhaps don't hold your breath.

Just a thought: did the thieves who tunnelled into Tesco's cashpoint in Irlam nick more than £5.60 an hour for their labour?

... Magpie is just a little bit worried. It's the buzzards, you see. Big birds, buzzards, and they don't take kindly to being told to go away. They've been flying around and displaying over the Mersey, and around the area. Are they planning to move in and settle down? Now that's a thought, isn't it?

... asked the Rector about the flags that appeared on the church tower in March. What were they? Well, St. Patrick was one of them ~ obvious I suppose on the 17<sup>th</sup>, and there's some would argue he was a local lad made good, but that's probably just local patriotism. Best candidate for his home town is in Cumberland, not Lancashire or Cheshire. But anyway, remember it is not Ireland's flag but St.Patrick's, so don't complain about it not being English. And that should give a clue for the one on 1<sup>st</sup> Mar. Dewi Sant, of course; the yellow cross on black. "And what about the flags in April?" Magpie asked. "Ah," said the Rector, "I can't tell. Easter will be the big St.George's cross ~ what else? And since St.George's day is within Easter week I suppose people will think it's up there for England and not for Easter. And All Fool's day? I've got to be careful there! What if I flew St.George specially then? I know some people clamour to see it up all the year round, but it might be taken the wrong way on that day. Mmm?"

... hears some odd stories from time to time ~ sad reflections sometimes on how people understand the Christian faith. For instance, this year The Real Easter Egg radio ad was rejected by the radio authority. They seemed unsure if Easter was Christian and so wanted our ad to say that our eggs had a copy of the 'Easter Christian story' in the box'. The Real Easter Egg

people argued the point and they decided that 'on balance' it is a well-known Christian festival. Every year brings surprises, apparently. When they first revealed the Real Easter Egg a journalist asked 'What's Easter got to do with the church?'. They had to explain that it is in fact a religious festival and not owned by Cadbury.

What a lot of weather we have had this year ~ but very little of it has (so far ~ to mid-March) been very cold. Magpie's outdoor thermometer has gone into negative figures only twice this winter, so despite the wind and despite the rain and murk it has been fairly warm. Not nice for sleeping rough, some of Magpie's friends tell him, but at least not freezing.

**Tuesday Tots** ~ a mother & toddler group,  
meeting during term time in **St. Wilfrid's hall**, Ford La.  
between 9.15 and 11.15am. £1.50 + 50p per extra child.  
Coffee, cake, and a civilised chat; toys and activities.

## Northenden Methodist Church

Minister: The Revd. Tim Nicholls,  
5 Kenworthy Lane, Northenden, M 22  
0161 **945-6600**

### Sunday Services.

***Usually# 1st Sunday every month***

**MESSY CHURCH** ~ Family worship ~ Sunday breakfast club

All start off with breakfast\*\* together at 9.00am, then do activities with your child(ren) followed by a story, songs, and prayer based on the activities ~ finishes about 10.30am.

\*\*Currently £1.50p per person.

For details contact Amy Carline, 07816 888 704

**Apr. 6<sup>th</sup>** **No** Messy Church (School Holidays for some)  
*Probably* 11.00am Holy Communion, The Rev. Tim Nicholls  
6.30pm United Service @ St. Wilfrid's

13<sup>th</sup> 11.00am Morning Worship The Rev. David Clowes  
6.30pm United Service with Lawton Moor.

~Taizé/Iona

Maundy Thursday 7.00pm United Service at Baguley Hall  
Good Friday 9.00am – Noon; United Service at Northenden  
Easter Day **7.45am “Sunrise Service”** in Wythenshawe  
Park.

11.00am Holy Communion. The Rev. Margaret Hall  
6.30pm United Communion (Baguley, Lawton Moor  
and Northenden) at Northenden. The Rev. Tim Nicholls.

Apr. 27<sup>th</sup> 11.00am Mrs. Chris Goddard  
6.30pm Circuit Service at Bramhall.

May 4<sup>th</sup>. 11.00am Holy Communion. The Rev. Tim Nicholls  
6.30pm United Service at Northenden

Messy Church in May and June is a week late to avoid holidays.

11<sup>th</sup> 9.00am Messy Church  
11.00am The Rev. Malcolm Purdy

### **Community Lunches**

Wed. Apr. 9<sup>th</sup>. ~ 12 noon till 1.30pm  
And then Wed. 8<sup>th</sup> May.

St. Wilfrid's Church,  
Northenden.

Ford Lane, M22 4WE

Rector ~ the Revd. Greg Forster,  
Northenden Rectory, Ford La., M 22 4NQ  
Tel. 0161 998 – 2615

Email; [gfs @ stwilfridsnorthenden . org . uk](mailto:gfs@stwilfridsnorthenden.org.uk)

Services :

On Sundays there will be a communion service at 8.00am.

On Thursdays also, at 10am, there is a communion service.

**The Nigerian Anglican “Restoration” Congregation** meets  
weekly at **12.30pm** for about 1½ hours in St. Wilfrid's Church.  
The service includes traditional and modern music.  
This includes teaching sessions for children too.

**Apr. 6<sup>th</sup>** 10.30am “Standard” Holy Communion service.  
6.30pm United Service at St. Wilfrid's

13<sup>th</sup> 10.30am Holy Communion ~ Palm Sunday.  
6.30pm Evening Worship.

Maundy Thursday, 7.30pm. The Lord's Supper

Good Friday, 10.30am Hymns, Readings and Prayers.

Easter Day 8.00am Holy Communion.  
10.30am Family Communion  
6.30pm Evening Worship.

27<sup>th</sup> 10.30am Morning Prayer (Curtailed)  
... **followed by the church's annual meeting and elections.**  
6.30pm Holy Communion.

May 4<sup>th</sup> 10.30am Family Communion  
6.30pm United Evening Service, at Methodist Church.

11<sup>th</sup> 10.30am Holy Communion  
6.30pm Evening Worship.

**Scramblers**, for 3½ to 6 year olds, and "**Sunday Club**" ~ for age 7 upwards ~ meet in the Church Hall, between 10.30 and 11.30am on Sundays unless there is a Family Service. Contact details, 998-3304.

Dates for your Diary ~ it's all

happening!



**Farmers' Street Market, on Sat. 5<sup>th</sup> Apr. & 3<sup>rd</sup> May 10am .....**

**Women's Group** in the Rectory on Mon. 7<sup>th</sup> April, 7.45 for 8pm  
Tim Young will be showing more of The Visit To India.

There will be **Bible Studies** on Wed. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> April  
at 8.00pm in the Rectory, and also on May 7<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>.

On 16th April I anticipate re-running the Experience Easter meditation event in Church; 7.30pm start in Church ~ a walk around the events of Holy Week, from Palm Sunday to the Resurrection. A slightly different format this year

**Coffee Morning**, Sat. 26<sup>th</sup> Apr. 10.00am ... in the Church Hall.

The **Church's Annual Meeting** will take place on the Sunday after Easter, **April 27<sup>th</sup>**. at about 11.30am., after a shortened morning service. Book the date now! We elect members to the PCC, &c., and hear reports on the church activities, premises and finances. To vote or be elected, check that you are on the church's Electoral Roll (membership list) and sign up ~ in church. May's **Women's Group** will be at the usual time on Mon. 12<sup>th</sup>, to avoid the Bank Holiday.

**CHRISTIAN AID WEEK runs from 11<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> May.** House to house collection will be limited this year, but envelopes will be available in our churches. More details next month.

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 7.30pm **Archdeacon's Visitation**  
at St. Matthew's Stretford ~ sidesmen and wardens expected to swear themselves in for the coming year.

And note the Annual Meeting of **Northenden Civic Society** in St. Wilfrid's Church Hall on Tues. **8<sup>th</sup> April**, at 7.30pm ~ with a guest speaker ~ Graham Phythian, talking about Manchester in Wartime; he has recently published a book of people's memories.

Drop in on St. Wilfrid's ...  
**On Sundays from 2.30 till 5.00pm)**  
**the church is open**  
**for private prayer, for enquiries, or just to look around.**  
To visit at other times, please contact the Rector.

Registers ...

In Memoriam;

Joyce Hanson (77) Lovett Walk, Joseph Fearnley (75) Alderue Ave.

**... and a Tribute.**

At Joe Fearnley's funeral his son-in-law from America, Louis Jarvis, spoke, paying tribute to a very loving husband and father, who had many friends and was well respected ~ for hard work and hard enjoyment alike. The turnout at the service bore him out, but in addition to paying tribute to his father-in-law he also spoke of how he had found a very real and strong friendship ~ care and love ~ for Joe and for himself for Joe's sake in the

village and its bars. He saw something Christlike about this. So as we remember, ... Northenden, take a bow too! Thanks, Louis.

### **ST.WILFRID'S ANNUAL MEETING, 27<sup>th</sup> April.**

Please come to this; it gives you a chance to hear about the business of running our church, and to take part in its governance. We elect up to 21 members of the PCC, and three representatives for the Deanery Synod ~ or mini-parliament ~ as well as electing sidesmen and churchwardens. There will be a report on the finances of the church, and the state of our buildings and activities. I know it will not seem entertaining, but it is important for us all.

#### **... AND FINANCES, 2013.**

One of the most important features of the AGM is the report on the finances. We should all take note that they are not healthy, and that we are only solvent because of historic reserves. Though we have spent less than we expected in 2013, we still end up with a shortfall of £4,600 or so. Income during the year was about £39,000, but outgoings were about £43,600. That is the best presentation of the figures: if you take payments relating to that year but paid before or after it, the shortfall would be nearer £10,000. So let me issue a formal risk warning, that your church is in danger of defaulting on its bills ~ not perhaps next year, but not too long in the future.

Our income from your planned giving and loose gifts was more or less unchanged from 2012, but what received from renting out the hall fell significantly as two regular users dropped out during the year (and will be even less now in a full year). Though casual use ~ parties and meetings ~ has grown a bit, that has not made up the shortfall, and involves more of someone's time in opening up and preparing. The answer is not, I believe, more efforts. The church does not exist to have fundraisers in order to maintain the buildings it uses for fundraising ~ but to worship and honour God. Part of the answer is generosity, in cash or in kind, part is in care over what we spend ... but over to you.

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But not all is doom and gloom. One of the other things I shall be highlighting at the meeting is the way in which a number of people have been working in the church and the hall, either solo or in a team, to clean, decorate and refurnish. It has been fun, and you will have seen the difference it makes both to the

appearance and the warmth of the two buildings. (I actually had a complaint during the year that the hall was too warm!)

There are still a few things to be done, some dependent on good weather outside, but a big thank you to everyone involved.

In that connection, can I highlight the availability of the hall for parties, receptions and other festivities, for children and grown-ups alike. Contact me for costs and bookings.

***Greg Forster***

**The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)**  
**South Manchester Meeting**

**There is a meeting for worship**

**at the Friends' Meeting House, Wythenshawe Rd.,  
at 10.30am every Sunday.**

Children welcome. \*\* Details from Enid Pinch, 445 6778

The main hall and smaller rooms are available for hire;  
~ contact Peter Todhunter (Meeting House Warden) 834-5797