

2 0 ~ A u g u s t ~ 0 9

Prayer for the Month.

Sovereign Lord, as we travel into our unknown future, help us to find our peace and security in you; help us to use our time and talents wisely, as we enjoy all the gifts which you give us; as we serve and help one another and so give service to you; as we honour you in our praise and thanksgiving; keep us travelling along in your presence; keep our hearts fixed on your love in all circumstances. Amen.

Northenden Rectory, Ford Lane,
Manchester, M 22 4 NQ
0161 – 998-2615

gsf @ stwilfridsnorthenden . org . uk

Dear Friends,

Again a rather shorter Concord this month than of late, with some snippets of news and comment from Magpie, the usual diary dates and details, as well as the pieces which follow now, ... so read on.

The phrase "don't panic" is nowadays bound to raise a laugh, thanks to Cpl. Jones and the rest of Dad's Army. Like Cpl. Jones, it seems that the health service and the government are telling everyone not to panic, and (also like Cpl. Jones) not taking their own advice. It is this Swine Flu thing. As someone said, the warnings about a pandemic should be spelled without the "-dem-" bit. Don't get me wrong. For someone who is frail any illness can be risky, whether it is an ordinary common cold, or normal seasonal flu. We are right to take reasonable precautions.

However, ~ and I don't know whether it is the way this is reported or something about the attitude of those with some responsibility ~ it seems that there is an overreaction. What does that say about our culture and society? Is the picture it paints one of a healthy culture? Is it that our media are overkeen to find a dramatic angle on any event, or to find some way of demonstrating that they are caring for their readers and extracting some action from the authorities? It woz the Post wot dun it ! Or are both we the people and they the authorities conspiring in the idea that the Government is responsible for

everything, like some super-nanny, including every sneeze and cough. Or, to take that possibility a bit further, are we going along with the myth that someone has to be responsible for everything, and we can sue them if they fail to warn us to use a handkerchief, or not to fall down the stairs.

In other cultures, which we might condescendingly call primitive, this led to a belief in witchcraft. For us the witch-finders are dressed in lawyer's wigs. I believe that this whole business is one in which we should take a reasonable responsibility for ourselves. Recognise that illnesses are part of our life and our world (that's another issue for another article some day.); look after ourselves and take care not to harm others by, say, a lack of hygiene; and not expect "them" (NHS or whoever) to solve every problem.

I think I have referred in previous issues of Concord to the way the great "Spanish Flu" outbreak of 1918-21 was reported and presumably handled in Concord's predecessor magazine. No mention at all! Notice of a couple of deaths which might be attributed to it, but were reported in the same way as any other death during that era, in the context of the war rather than of a pandemic that I suspect was only recognised after the event.

So, don't panic (if I dare use the phrase) but act wisely and accept responsibility.

Having said all that, if there is a significant outbreak of illness around here ~ and this would apply in any situation where individuals are ill, not just in this particular case ~ we will act appropriately, by cancelling or modifying events, for instance, if key personnel are out of action.

Yours faithfully,

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 Lesley Thomson (491-1323)

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

Northenden Methodist Church.

Palatine Road.

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

Sunday Services.

Aug. 2nd 11.00am Morning Worship, The Rev. Malcolm Purdy
6.30pm United Service @ Northenden Methodist ch.
The Revd. David Bown.

Aug. 9th 11.00am Mrs. Margaret Hunt

Aug. 16th 11.00am Holy Communion
The Revd. David Bown

Aug. 23rd 11.00am The Revd. David Sanders

Aug. 30th 11.00am Northenden Worship Team.

Community Lunches ...

... are not being held during August; the next one is on
Wednesday 9th September,
and then every 2nd Wednesday in the month.

Action for Children.

Last month one of our Sunday services focused on
Action for Children, a charity which many of us know better by its
old name of the National Children's Homes ~ NCH. Joyce
Burgess has contributed this piece about it.

The work for vulnerable children was started by the
Revd. Thomas Bowman Stephenson ~ who came from the North
East ~ in 1869. He had a social conscience; he saw children
homeless and hungry. He knew about the workhouses, and the
misery of such places. Therefore he and two friends set up the
first home in a stable and took in children he found on the
streets.

The next development involved women who had the
same concerns for those children, and they became a sisterhood.
They had one year's training ~ to work in the orphanages in
many parts of England, and by 1892 there were 140 sisters
working in the homes.

It is amazing how the work extended and grew ~ not just homes but then they included an adoption agency by 1926, placing children carefully in loving homes.

The next move was in education: Special schools for children with special educational needs like autism, or for slow learners and the like. This was enlightened work, very different from the simple idea one has of an orphanage, and different too from the awful things that have happened in some orphanages..

The reason for the change in the title of the organisation, from NCH to "Action for Children" is because of all the social changes that have taken place over the past 20 years, so that ideas about child care and social work have changed dramatically too.

St. Wilfrid's Church,

Ford Lane. (Off Church Rd.)

Rector: Greg Forster (998-2615)

Organist: Arthur Mellor (928-0472)

www . stwilfridsnorthenden . org . uk

Services:

Communion on Sundays at 8.00am (except 23rd August)
and on Thursdays at 10.00am

There is usually a "Sunday Club" for 7 – 11+ year olds meeting in the Rectory at 10.30am, for about an hour, but ...

... please note that Sunday Club is closed until October 11th. There are no meetings during August or September because leaders are away. So have a lovely summer, everyone! Note that there are Family Services in church on 2nd August, 6th September and (for Harvest) 4th October.

And "Scramblers", for children from 3½ to 6+, meets in the Church Hall from 10.30 till about 11.30am., breaking for the August holiday, but starting again from 13th September.

Aug. 2nd 10.30am Family Communion
 6.30pm United Service at Northenden Methodist Ch.
Aug. 9th 10.30am Holy Communion
 6.30pm Evening Worship



16th, 30th
23rd

As 9th

10.30am Morning worship

6.30pm Holy Communion

Sept. 6th

10.30am Family Communion

6.30pm United Service @ St.Wilfrid's

Drop in ... 2 - 5pm.

St.Wilfrid's church is open each Sunday

from 2.00 – 5pm,

for prayer, visiting and just looking round, enquiries about
baptisms, weddings, ancestor hunting, ... &c.

It's All Happening ..., for your diaries ...

... or to be fair, not a great deal is happening over August.

Mon. 3rd. 7.00pm Women's Group Barbecue at the Rectory.

And watch out for that Cream Tea on the 15th August.

In the Church Hall ~ at tea time, of course (2.00pm ...)

To help you get over the cream tea there will be no coffee
morning during August.

Open days ...

Note the next open week-end, which is Saturday 12th &
Sunday 13th of September, coinciding with the national Heritage
Open Days. Details next month. We understand that something
is also being planned for the Riverside Park that week-end.

FROM THE REGISTERS;

IN MEMORIAM ...

Lola Smyllie (Kemble Ave), Graham Hunston, .

Baptised, ... on Sun. 5th July

Gabriel Falcon Smith & Olivia Kendall Smith

And on Sun. 19th July ...

Amy Louise Habershon and Grace Elizabeth M^cCormack

Christian Aid Week ...

We now have a final figure, £1,938 this year. It is a
worthwhile effort. Looking ahead to next year ... ~ any
volunteers to take on some more streets? G.S.F.

Love in Person...

by Greg Forster

In St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians (ch.2 v5) there is a key slogan; by grace you have been saved ~ or avoiding words that have become churchy jargon, "thanks to God's generous attitude you have been rescued." He has explained that what we need to be rescued from is consequence of the sin, the broken relationships and broken faith, in our lives which have left us as good as dead in moral and spiritual terms. He then goes on to explain the basis of God's generosity. Why does he take this attitude towards us? Paul's explanation is disarmingly simple: God is rich in mercy, which stems from the great love he loved us with.

We tend to take it for granted that God is love ~ that's what he's there for, isn't it? I suspect that in the first century that wasn't quite so self evident as we take it to be, either to the pagan inhabitants of Ephesus, or Paul's Jewish contemporaries, despite ample Old Testament affirmation of God's love.

So what made Paul so convinced of this? Was it just his clear theoretical grasp of some Old Testament texts? I suspect not. Was it just his own experience of being rescued, in spite of himself, from a rather guilt-ridden form of Judaism? Perhaps. But I think it was more than that.

There is another catch phrase in this particular bit of Ephesians; one which Paul uses again and again throughout his letters. It is "in Christ Jesus". We are caught up "in Christ" to share the benefits God offers us, but also God works out his overwhelming generosity to us in Christ. That is how he works and where we see it.

And for Paul to say this is not just a theoretical affirmation, I believe. In July we twice had set readings in church from Mark's gospel in which the feedings of the 4,000 and then the 5,000 were recounted. In both a word is used which is very vivid to describe Jesus' attitude. In Mark's narrative, or in Jesus own words, it says that Jesus' heart went out to the crowds, or to get the idiom more vividly, he was gutted for them. As a result he put aside his own tiredness and desire for a break to teach them extensively, and then to feed them. We can read between the lines too, and see that the love was not just for a crowd, en masse, almost in the abstract, who needed to learn and be fed, but for individuals. He tells his disciples "some of them have come a long way." How was he to know that, except by having

gone the rounds, talking to each group, not just shouting at them from a convenient rock, but listening to each party and teaching face to face? When Paul, and the other apostles speak about the love of God they are not talking in the abstract. They had seen and experienced that love in the person of Jesus, in his actions, generosity and practical care. It was that experience which changed their attitudes towards God, and changed their understanding of his generous love. That is the love extends towards us and invites our love too in response to his.

Magpie ...

... trailed the results of the survey in Northenden about the proposed civil Parish Council in last month's issue. The result was about two to one in favour of the Parish Council among those who expressed an opinion, though to be fair, only about 10% of the electorate responded. That, however, is a fairly good response for this kind of survey.

Magpie is interested in birds, and so cocked his head when he heard the Rector talking about a flying visit to Gilsland and Thirlwall, both places where swifts abound. Yes, one of the delights of summer is to hear aerial gangs of swifts wheeling through streets and round crags and ruins, shrieking at the tops of their shrill voices. They have been thin on the ground (or rather in the air) in Northenden this year, and the same proved true of those other places. What has become of them? Have two mediocre summers in Britain the last two years spoiled their breeding? Or has something going on elsewhere, in Africa or over an extra hot Sahara messed up their migration?

There was some talk earlier in the year about things going wrong for our honey bees. Magpie has, to be fair, not seen that many in and around Northenden this year, though there have been some rather nice white tailed bumble bees buzzing around. A local bee-keeper has assured him, however, that his hives are behaving properly, and the Rectory crab apple tree, a good guide for bee pollinated crops, is well laden. (No doubt the squirrels will get at the fruit first, though!)

Magpie is half afraid that he will get into hot water if he comments about Afghanistan. As John Donne wrote, "any man's death diminishes me." Any soldier's death there is tragic, especially if there was a way of offering greater protection without negating the point of being there. But, as the Rector has

written in connection with the flu, are we victims of media hype, or the attitude that the authorities must cushion us from everything? Henry Allingham died a week or so ago, the last survivor of the battle of Jutland, among other achievements. The casualty list there was 9,000 in the one day, I think, and that was low by the standards of the era. Magpie's point is not to say that one soldier's death does not matter; rather it is to ask for a sense of proportion. The media, or opposition politicians, are serving their own interests (readership numbers, or votes) by trying to start a debate as to why we are there on the basis of a few deaths. We should be there (or not) on the basis that it is right strategically that we should be there (or not), not on the basis of casualty lists. (But that is too big a question for magpies at the moment.)

Northenden Civic Society ~ a "Village Plan". G.S.Forster

The Civic Society has been working on proposals to influence development in the village over the next twenty years. These are now ready, and should be in the library, and to the council, soon.

Northenden Players.

In September the players start their schedule for the new season with "The Cemetery Club" by Ivan Mershell, on Sun.6th, and then 8th – 12th in the Hall at Northenden Methodist Church.

CHAPTERS

Another date for your diary ... on Saturday 5th Sept. and every following Saturday from 10am till noon we will be selling second hand books in the Church Hall to raise money for St.Wilfrid's church. We need books to sell, and people to come and buy them, so please tell your friends and ask them to tell their friends about us. If anyone would like us to pick up books, please call Sandy or David Latham on 946 1377. See you on Sept 5th at CHAPTERS !