

CONCORD ~ August 2010

Prayer for the Month ...

Father, you know us by name, and call us to serve you; our course in life is shaped by your love and supported by your care.

Help us to realise your presence in hard times, when we feel low, and not to forget your generous touch when times are good and we feel at ease.

And help us too to see your reflection in the lives and actions of those around us, and your goodness in the ordinary course of your creation. *Amen.*

Northenden Rectory, Ford Lane,
0161 998 2615

Dear Friends,

If you manage to get away for a break this month I hope you have a good time, and that the weather is kind to you.

This month's Concord is a rather churchy affair, with pieces about the Lord's Supper, or holy Communion, about the Anglican parish set up and probable changes in it hereabouts, about an ordination, and some thoughts on women as bishops. I hope this does not seem too introverted to you all ~ but actually each of these things touches on the way we all relate to God.

Whether we recognise it or not, that is actually the most important thing in our lives, and so the way we support each other in that relationship through the Christian community is important, even if that relationship then inspires us (as I believe it should) to serve the wider communities of our families, friends and neighbourhood better. So read on ...

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 Roger Hensman, 980-5158.

The main hall and smaller rooms are available for hire;

~ contact Peter Todhunter (Meeting House Warden) 834-5797,

Northenden Methodist Church

Palatine Rd.

Minister, the Revd. David Bown
5 Kenworthy Lane, Northenden, M22 4JF
tel. 0161 998-2158

Sunday Services;

Aug. 1st 11.00am The Revd. David Sanders
 6.30pm United Service, The Revd. D. Bown.

8th 11.00am Mr. D. Rutter

15th 11.00am Mr. T. Fawthrop

22nd 11.00am The Revd. David Bown

29th 11.00am The Revd. Margaret Hall
 (Holy Communion)

Sept. 5th 11.00am Morning Service
 6.30pm United Service @ St.Wilfrid's

Community Lunch

... There will be **no** community Lunch in August

Fun Bingo ~ either Sat. Aug. 21st or 28th, noon till 2pm
(**event still to be confirmed.**)

Bread, Wine and Gratitude

Following Greg Forster's slightly tongue in cheek article about bread and wine parties last month, Joyce Burgess has some thoughts to offer, drawn from a 1989 book on the *Study of Liturgy*. She points out that the Eucharist ~ the communion service ~ connects us with the whole history of our salvation, and especially our Lord's passion. What Christ achieved by his death is a "mystery" ~ it is real, but too big to be pinned down in words. The Eucharist enables us to recall all that, and more. It tunes in to the rescue of God's people from Egypt ~ the Passover. When they were not forthcoming with the faith God looked for in response to that rescue, God sent his Son, whose full-blooded Yes to God's will and purpose gives us a focus for saying our Yes to him, even though we are unworthy.

And the Eucharist ~ the "thanksgiving" ~ gives us an event which we can take part in, using the symbols of bread and wine which we as the community of believers consume to express our faith and be part of a saved people ~ not by our own efforts but because Christ suffered to make salvation available for us.

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; gsf @ stwilfridsnorthenden . org . uk

Services:

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

On Thursdays at 10am there will also be a communion service.

Except over the summer holidays (that is, during August!) we run "Scramblers" ~ which I mustn't call a Sunday School ~ for children from 3½ to 7 ~ in the Church Hall, ...

... and "Sunday Club" ~ for children from 7 upwards ~ in the Rectory between 10.30 and 11.30am Sundays (and which may be functioning some Sundays in August.) ...

... unless there is a Family Service in church.

- Aug. 1st 10.30am Family Service
6.30pm United Service @ Northenden Methodist Ch.
8th 10.30am Holy Communion
6.30pm Evening Worship
15th 10.30am Holy Communion & Baptism
6.30pm Evening Worship
22nd 10.30am Holy Communion
6.30pm Evening Worship
29th 10.30pm Morning Prayer
6.30pm Holy Communion (1662)
Sept. 5th 10.30am Family Communion
6.30pm United Evening Prayer @ St.Wilfrid's

Drop in ...

On Sundays from 2pm till 5pm the church is open, for private prayer, for enquiries, or just to look around.

*The next full scale "open days" will be on
11th & 12th September from noon till 5.00pm,
when the tower too will be accessible for Heritage Weekend.*

Dates for your Diary ~ it's all happening!

Sat. 31st July 10.00am - 11.30am

Coffee Morning (& books). Church Hall.

Sat. 7th August Remember to visit the Farmers' Market !

And do come to the famous **Cream Tea**, in the Church Hall from 2.00 till 4.00pm, with cakes and other goodies.

Sat. Aug 28th Coffee Morning, as above.

Sat. Sept. 4th Farmers' Market.

Further ahead, note the **Open Days** on 11th & 12th Sept., and "**Back to Church Sunday**" on Sept. 26th Sept. The services then should not only be friendly, but also user-friendly, and it is an opportunity to invite friends who haven't been in church for a while, or dip your own toes back into the water. Publicity later.

The Parish Registers

Baptised, on Sunday June 20th

Ellie Molly Eastwood, Ellis Morgan Kilcourse,
Libby Louisa Morgan, Thomas Frank Robbins.

on Sunday July 18th

Colette Louise Linda Mulvanny-Wilkinson

... and on Sunday 28th March

Alexander Patrick Forrest

Married in the parish church on ...

June 26th; Danielle Donaldson to Christopher Andrew McKinlay

July 3rd; Rachael Marie Varey to Wesley Lawrence Roche

July 9th; Melanie Whitmore to Joseph Kieran Battle.

It was also a privilege to celebrate with Brian and Monica Ogden, and with Ian and Pamela Darke as they came back into church to remember respectively their 50th and 25th wedding anniversaries.

In Memoriam

Mai Norman (90), George Miller (ex Patterdale Rd.) 83,
Edna Dawson (Greenwood Rd.) 84.

Ordination

On Sunday 27th June, in Manchester Cathedral Margaret Young was ordained deacon, alongside a number of others, in a service led by the bishops of Manchester, Bolton and Middleton.

This has involved three years of at times stressful training, and before that a period of prayerful deliberation. She

and her colleagues were, rightly, greeted by rounds of applause in the cathedral and then here in Northenden afterwards, but I wonder whether applause or congratulations are the proper things to do. We don't, actually, have the right words or symbolic actions (we crack a bottle of champagne over the bows of a ship) to use to express best wishes and blessing to someone who may have put in a great deal of effort, but is essentially responding to God's call, and receiving his generous blessing.

But whatever the right word is, Margaret, we wish you well as you launch into work as curate in St. Luke's, Benchill, and the Wythenshawe team. (Duck before the champagne hits you)

The Children's Society ...

... has a charity shop at 356 Palatine Rd.

Normal opening hours are 9.00am – 5.00pm.,

with a range of Good-as-New goods, especially books.

There is also a wide selection of new, end-of-run, wallpapers.

Volunteers are needed in the shop; contact Debbie on 945-7384

Women's Group etcetera.

Sue Forster

Thank you to everyone who came, and contributed to, the Women's Group Barbecue and the Parish Lunch. Despite managing to pick the only two poor days of the month, I think we all had fun. I still have a pyrex dish, two white plastic trays and a white plate that haven't been claimed. Any takers?

We won't be meeting in July or August, so our next meeting will be Monday 6th September. Any bright ideas or volunteers for a speaker will be gratefully received. S.F .

"Pastoral Reorganisation" GSF

The word "pastoral" sounds so cosy, touchy-feely, doesn't it? Sheep, gently grazing on a green hillside, and all that. It irks me that when the church uses the word, half the time it is anything but that. Yes, we talk, rightly, about pastoral care, as the vicar drops in on the sick, or counsels the depressed. But we also talk about pastoral reorganisation, which is, bluntly, anything but that. It is about fewer vicars visiting more sick in bigger parishes organised in clusters, and delegating a lot of their traditional work to people whom the church does not have to pay.

Probably that is what ought to have been happening for years. After all, the church is all its people, not just its clergy.

Perhaps it is inevitable as more vicars retire than are being recruited. But I am still embarrassed to hear it called "pastoral".

But why write this? Because, like it or not, it is happening now, and has been for some time. By 2025 only 70 of the 350 clergy in Manchester diocese will be under 70. (even if those figures are wrong, you get the picture) So Northenden finds it shares its Rector with a next-door parish; lay people lead more of our worship; but will people see that "the church" has shown an interest, even if it is the churchwarden who dropped in? And will non-church-members see God's church behind a lay member's commitment to some local community project?

Magpie ...

... sometimes gets touchy about what clergy are called. *Oi, you!* is likely to get a response, but is not technically correct. *Your reverence*, is likely to come from a gentleman of the road, but even they are less obsequious than they used to be. Even undertakers now call clergy "Reverend" to their faces, which makes Magpie wince. **The** *Revd.* belongs on the outside of an envelope ~ notice the "the", which is correct; without it the title is wrong. If you want to be formal, to someone's face, the form is *Vicar*, or *Rector*, or in perhaps *Padre* (though how should you address a woman padre? *Madre*?) For a curate? ~ that is less clear, though *vicar* is a reasonable catch-all nowadays, even for someone who is not technically a vicar in a parish. Inside a letter it is *Dear Mr./Mrs. Smith*, **not** *Dear Reverend* or *Dear Rev. Smith*.

If you want to know, officially, what is correct, there is even a page on the Church of England website ~ [www.cofe.org.uk/anglican.org/addressing the clergy](http://www.cofe.org.uk/anglican/addressing-the-clergy) ~ which will enlighten you, from *The Most Revd. and Rt. Hon.*, down to *Oi, you!*

But should Magpie get so bothered in the first place? Jesus told his first followers that they weren't to let people give them fancy titles at all, *father*, or *rabbi* or whatever. *Brother* seems to have been the favourite in the early church.

Which reminds Magpie of an incident in a Trades' Union Congress Conference many years ago, in which the leaders of two unions (probably the Boilermakers and the Platelayers) were slanging off at each other, because someone had hit someone else's rivet or something like that, until one was heard to say, "And don't you 'brother' me, brother."

... and also of the parents who never argued in front of the children, until they heard *them* squabbling, with the words, "but you called me 'darling' first."

... has been watching the space on the corner of Church Road and Palatine Road, as promised. In fact there is now a lot more space there, since they have dug a deep pit, which will become the underground car park for the new flats. OK, so long as the electricity for the lift works.

Women as Bishops?

GSF

You may have heard something about the discussions and votes at the July meeting of General Synod ~ the church's parliament ~ about ordaining women as bishops. It made the secular news reports as well as the religious pages. Is it the church's fault that we only get reported when something that is controversial and seems outdated is being talked about? Or is that the way news works nowadays?

Whatever, ... we should have an interest in this, if only because our own diocesan bishop led the committee which produced the scheme which is now to be put into practice (after further discussion on the practical details! The C of E rushes into things at snail's pace.) But why is there such fuss? Though there are fewer women Chief Execs than men in big companies no one believes that they have *no right* to be chief execs, do they? But that, in effect, is what some people say about women bishops.

Why not? For some parts of the church a bishop is more than a chief exec. He symbolises the unity of the church, and its continuity down the ages from Christ's apostles, who were all men. The church has never had women as bishops, and tradition sets the rules. A church without such proper bishops is not a proper church at all. If you think that way, then for the C/E to introduce women bishops, unilaterally and suddenly, is for it to negate its very nature and existence. It is this line of thinking which has led the Roman church in the last month so ineptly to bracket ordaining women and paedophilia as in the same category of sins. We may laugh, or cry, but there is a logic in it. If the existence of the church depends on the right kind of bishop, accepting a wrong bishop destroys the church and so destroys your contact with God. Yes, it's as big as that.

Few if any anglicans would go quite so far as that, but some of our anglo-catholics do feel deeply uneasy at accepting the authority of a woman as bishop, or even as priest, over their

local church, and deeply hurt at the way their concerns have been trampled on. How do you cater for their sensitivities and pastoral needs within a church which does have women as bishops? Do you rely on *ad hoc* kindness and accomodation (as suggested in the scheme that was accepted) or do you legislate for it (as in the archbishops' scheme that was voted down)? But if you do make formal allowances for them, are you admitting that the women you have ordained as bishops are not proper? It would be like saying that the Chief Exec of M&S can't decide how half the M&S stores in Greater Manchester function, or even visit them.

At the other end of the church spectrum are those who are perhaps not even sure whether bishops are part of the proper nature of the church (after all, in the New Testament bishops and elders ~ overseers and presbyters ~ seem to have done much the same sort of job, and it wasn't being a symbol.) But they do take seriously some verses which say that women should not speak in church, or have headship in the community. In all the fuss about providing bishops who are acceptable to the more Catholic among us there is a danger that proper support for this other group will get overlooked.

Personally I have some sympathy with this latter group, though there are other New Testament passages which show women in clear leadership roles in the early church, and Paul tells us that in Christ "there is neither male nor female," so the New Testament is not unequivocal about this. Indeed, some argue that the things which are criticised are whispered questions in the back row, and a domineering approach to leadership.

For others this whole debate seems like counting the proverbial angels on pinheads. Methodists, for instance, have had women ministers for many years, do not (in this country) have bishops as such, and have (I think) seen a woman serve as *Chairman* (?) of Conference, as well as leading districts ~ episcopal, if not archiepiscopal, roles by another name.

So what are we to think, and do, about this? I do not particularly want bishops to be women. I do not particularly want bishops to be men, either. I do want bishops to be bishops ~ in other words to carry out their role as teachers, evangelists, pastors and leaders effectively under God (not to mention all the other roles as trouble shooter, PR guru, politician, and you name it), whoever they are. When the first woman bishop in England is appointed ~ God help her ~ I hope she will not get the job because it is the politically correct appointment, but because she

is the best candidate. And I hope too that her actions will then receive no greater nor more critical scrutiny than the actions of her existing, inevitably male, colleagues.