

CONCORD ~ December 2012

Prayer for the Month

Lord, in the business of the festive season, and its busy-ness, keep our eyes and minds on the truths that it brings;

that you have shared our earthly joys and sorrows, and offer us a share in your eternal kingdom;

that you have shown us your love and character in the face of Jesus Christ,

and that he brings a vision of glory to God on high and peace to his people on earth, to whom he brings your good-will.

Through this same Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

Northenden Rectory, Ford Lane.

0161 998 2615

Dear Friends,

Did you spot the two errors in November's Concord? At least two ~ there may have been more! Firstly apologies for the confusion caused because I did not fully change the cover template from *October's*. Sorry. The other mistake that I saw was where I typed *here* in stead of *hear* ~ less obvious and more easily done, and not something that a spellchecker will show up, either. No prizes, but did anyone see any other mistakes? And what about this month's? !

Over twenty years ago the small publishing house with which I have long been associated ~ Grove Books, which produces pamphlets on Christian ethics, and other church topics ~ was offered a paper by an ex-Oil Executive who had just been ordained. This was soon after a number of high profile industrial accidents in which the companies concerned escaped prosecution (if I remember rightly) though there seemed to be some kind of corporate responsibility which they ducked. The paper had probably started life as part of his training, and was written in the light of his previous professional experience of corporate life. We must have met him to discuss the project because that is our standard practice, especially for first-time writers, though I cannot honestly remember the meeting. The booklet subsequently came out, under the title *Can Companies Sin?* The author, a certain Justin Welby, maintained his interest in social justice, and is currently serving on the national commission investigating the ethics of banking. And,

you may have noticed, he is shortly to move from the bishopric of Durham to the archbishopric of Canterbury. I am sure readers join with me in wishing him well in this new role.

Whether you are as unimpressed as I am about the way news of his appointment came out is up to you, but this is not the sort of situation where one expects leaks to the press or the betting industry. Nor does it seem dignified that what is an appointment of the Crown should finally go public and go official through a breakfast time Tweet from the Prime Minister's office.

Buildings continue to be a feature of Concord this month. May I simply repeat my hope that what is done should be good for Northenden, and practical. It is encouraging to see many of the flats on the old British Legion site occupied, and work progressing apace on what has provisionally been called Church Mews, but is likely to be Gartmore Close, where the Spread Eagle once flew.

Thanks to Josh Stephens for the Organ Recital he gave in mid-November in aid of the Booth Centre. It raised £141. We are running the usual Folk Carols in December, and I can now confirm that this will be on Thursday 13th, starting at 7.30pm

It was good to join in the Service at St, Michael's, on 3rd Nov. with the Bishop of Manchester, along with a few others from St. Wilfrid's, as they celebrated 75 years of worship and service in the community in Northen Moor. There was a very good turn out of past and present members of that church including a few who could actually recall the original service of consecration, and we wish them well for the next 75!

Oh, and Happy Christmas. But now read on.

Greg Forster

Christmas

"We only do it for the children." As an explanation of balloons and jelly perhaps that is excusable, but as a reason to celebrate, it sells Christmas short. As a justification for decorations in the streets (including Northenden's) in early November it is rather pathetic, but Christmas is bigger than all that, and more serious, certainly, than the economic benefits that the rather pathetic decorations in the streets are supposed to bring.

So cut the grumpy old man bit, and talk about the celebration! We celebrate a birthday, and the life that grew from it, probably with presents, cake and candles, and no doubt more besides. At one level it is an ordinary life, though the circumstances of the birth

may have been extraordinary; there was more uncertainty than most, though being a refugee is too common now to be skated over, but there was also the routine of manual labour, running a business and earning a living. We celebrate, as Christians, that God himself is no stranger to the experiences of human life, and that by Jesus's birth and life he has affirmed and sanctified ordinary human life ~ in Sydney Carter's words, *Holy was the human body, holy was the human birth*, in all its ordinariness. Most of Jesus' life was routine, and he did not sail through it living a charmed life with no difficult times. He did not, you might say, have any special privileges.

But at a different level, this is special, this is wonderful (and full of wonder) and this is unique. Perhaps he claimed no special privileges for himself, but he brought special benefits for those around him, and those who continue to trust him now. If one side of Christmas is that God shared human experience, the other side of the coin is that he came to lift us out of mere human experience, so that those who identify themselves with him through trust and faith can begin to share the life of the kingdom of God now, and look forward to it beyond this world and this realm of experience. It the words of an old Christian slogan, *what he assumed he redeemed*, what he took on he raised up. No wonder the stories that surround his birth are stories of wonder and glory: angels praise God, and speak of his good will and peaceful purpose towards humankind; shepherds, perhaps standing for ordinary and at times down-trodden folk, are lifted out of themselves, and they too glorify God as they tell what they have seen and heard; wise, religious men from afar come to pay homage, and perhaps find something very different from what they bargained for, returning to their homeland *by another way*. (These are stories where, if you read something between the lines, it is most likely meant to be there.) And in their way, both the shepherds and the wise men are people with whom we are meant to identify. *If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb* says the carol; *Wise men followed Jesus, wise men still do*, says the poster. Yes, you can read yourself into the magic of the Christmas story as many of our carols do ... "*Oh, that we were there.*" But as we do, we should not stop with Jesus in the stable and the manger, or the house where the wise men found him. His story went on, and is for adults as well as the children to read themselves into, and we celebrate it in our ordinary ongoing living, as well as the special parties.

Carols and Kings

An evening of traditional and modern folk music and
Christmas Carols



... with Kieron Hartley and Folk
Thursday 13th December 7.30pm
Refreshments

Retiring Collection in aid of The Booth Centre,
Manchester Cathedral's work with the City's street people.
The Centre's newsletter and annual report are available in church.

Some light Christmas reading ~

Have you (or your children or grandchildren or God-children) read *The Other Shepherd's Tale*? It is one of a series intended for children, but with their adults looking over their shoulders, that the Rector has written and which can be found and bought in the church. Who looked after the sheep when they all rushed off to Bethlehem? What did he think about it all? What did he make of it?

Northenden Methodist Church

Minister: The Revd. David Bown,
5 Kenworthy Lane, Northenden, M 22
0161 – 998-2158

Sunday Services.

1st Sunday every month

Family worship ~ Sunday breakfast club ~ MESSY CHURCH
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 now increased to **£1.50p per person.

For details contact Amy Carline, 07816 888 704

Dec. 2nd 9.00am Messy Church

11.00am Mrs. Angela Clowes

6.30pm United Service **at St. Wilfrid's**

9th 11.00am The Rev. Malcolm Purdy ~ Communion
Circuit Service at 6.30pm at Bramhall

16th 11.00am The Rev. David Bown

23rd 11.00am **Carol Service** Mrs Sylvia Cowling

Christmas Day The Rev. David Bown (10.30am ??)

30th 11.00am Miss Joyce Burgess

Jan. 6th 2013 9.00am Messy Church

11.00am Mr. Ron Caseley

6.30pm United Service @ Northenden **Methodist Church**

13th 11.00am Covenant Service ~ the Rev. David Bown.

Community Lunch

Wed., Dec. 12th, Christmas Lunch ~

12 noon for 12.30 start ~ check whether booking is necessary.

(Next lunch 9th January, 12 noon till 1.30pm)

Amy Carline writes: ~ Messy Church are collecting for the Christmas Appeal of Wood Street Mission.

They help families in need, ensuring that their children all have a Christmas present on Christmas Day and provide a food hamper containing a variety of items to help the families over the Christmas period. Each child up to the age of 13 will receive one new toy, one

or two good quality second hand toys, a book and a game or jigsaw. Each family will receive a food hamper which will include non perishable items of fish or meat, fruit, vegetables, pasta or rice, soup, tea or coffee, biscuits, pudding, chocolates and one or two luxury items.

If people wish to donate they can contact me on 07816888704, acarline@me.com or 'Wythenshawe Methodist Circuit' through Facebook.

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

That Building ... part 3 !

Greg

Forster

The story continues! Very briefly, after the decision that the building is not acceptable, the developer was told to come up with a new application for an acceptable scheme. The new scheme must be produced by the end of November. It may be rather like the scheme which got approval in 2005.

How we in Northenden react to that proposal is an open question. The '05 proposal would probably not have been accepted if 2012 policies had been in force then. For that reason I would be perturbed to see it reinstated on the grounds that it is the minimum alteration to the structure that will meet the inspector's criticisms. But conversely, though many in Northenden would like the whole of the present structure removed, I would be surprised to see that happen so long as the developers do come up with a new scheme.

Meanwhile, have you seen the green mould on its staircase?

Northenden Players present Tickets: 445-6868
Calendar Girls by Tim Firth
from 8th to 16th December (not Monday)

in the Methodist Hall

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.

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, both between 10.30 and 11.30am Sundays except when there is a Family Service in church (Dec. 2nd, Jan.6th, &c.)

The Nigerian Anglican "Restoration" Congregation now meets weekly at **12.30pm** for about 2 hours in St.Wilfrid's Church. The service includes traditional and modern music.

Christmas Carols and Celebrations on Sun. Dec. 16th.

WATCH-NIGHT SERVICE starting 10.00pm, Mon. Dec. 31st

Dec. 2nd 10.30am Family Communion & Parade Service
6.30pm United Evening Worship (@ St.Wilfrid's)

9th 10.30am Holy Communion
6.30pm Evening Worship

16th 10.30am Holy Communion
6.30pm Evening Worship

23rd 10.30am Holy Communion
3.00pm Christmas Carol Service

Christmas Eve 11.30pm

"Midnight" Communion Service.

Christmas Day 8.00am Holy Communion

10.30am Family Communion

30th 10.30am Morning Prayer
6.30pm Holy Communion

Jan. 6th **2013** 10.30am Family Communion

6.30pm United Evening Service @ **Methodist Church**

Continues ...→

13th 10.30am Holy Communion
6.30pm Evening Worship

Drop in on St. Wilfrid's ...

**On Sundays from 2.30 till dusk
the church is open**

for private prayer, for enquiries, or just to look around.

To visit at other times, please contact the Rector.

Happy Christmas!

Of course it is rather early, but Sue and I should like to wish all readers a happy Christmas, and a successful and peaceful new year.

Greg Forster

Dates for your Diary ~ it's all happening!



Mon. 3rd **Dec.** School Governors' Meeting.

7.00pm Women's Group Party.

Wed. 5th Bible Study, Rectory, 8.00pm.

Thu. 13th Folk Carols & Concert.

7.30pm in Church ~ Kieron Hartley & Folk.

The School Christmas Service will take place in Church on Thurs 20th December at 9.15am (-ish) which may mean that the mid-week communion service is a few minutes delayed.

Note the Carol Service on 23rd at 3.00pm, and the "Midnight" Service at 11.30pm on 24th.

Bible studies will resume in January.

Note the **Farmers' Market on Dec.1st**, but probably *not* Jan. 5th.

Women's Group.

Our next gathering will be the Christmas Party, on December 3rd. As usual, bring food for half a person, and your friends too. We do not normally meet in January.

Sue F.

The Parish Registers –

In Memoriam ...



Stuart Kearney (Gatley) 81.

Married, in the Parish Church on Nov. 3rd
Rebecca Blakeman to David Heath

Baptisms;
On Sunday 18th November,
Keira Jane Foster, Hannah Lee Jones

Soups and Blankets, ... and Poinsettias.

We expect to have our usual collection before Christmas of easily heated soups and drinks, and of warm clothing or blankets, for Manchester's street people, via the Booth Centre and the like. Items may be brought early in December. The Booth Centre suggest toiletries (soaps, razors, &c.). I hope we might deliver them on 17th Dec.

And can we also suggest again that if you would like to help decorate the church with Poinsettias for Christmas that would be appreciated. These red and green flowers are such a bright and dramatic decoration that matches the season so well. But can I risk asking you **not** to bring them until the middle of December, and then perhaps to **ration yourselves** to one plant per person/family: the idea is that everyone can share in this, not that one or two donors commandeer the project.

Welcome ... and congratulations ...

Welcome to the new Rector of Wythenshawe, Stephen Edwards, who was installed at William Temple church on November 6th. It has been a long wait, but may God bless his appointment and his work in that parish and the team more widely.

... and congratulations too to Margaret Young, who has now retired from her health service work, was licensed on 12th November to continue what she has been doing as curate in St.Luke's and the Wythenshawe Team, but now in a full time capacity.

Magpie ...

... has seen some more interesting headlines; try these ...

War dims hopes for Peace. ~ you don't say!

Or this *Red Tape holds up Bridges.* ~ health and safety works

Or even *Kids make nutritious snacks.* ~ as part of a balanced diet

And you can play with words too: did you hear about the colonel who pointed the gun at his head which was fortunately empty?

... read an article after the discovery of what may be Richard III's bones in a car park in Leicester (did he get locked in looking for

change?) which asked "Is this Richard's final resting place?" Given that he has now been dug up and will be pored over by osteo-archaeologists for years, the answer is logically *No*, ~ unless the council decide to build a museum on the spot. And when the time comes to give him a decent burial, again, will they have to ask the Queen, as his heir if not a descendant, for her permission?

... while not playing with words, Magpie has flown past the Didsbury end of Palatine Rd. in Northenden, and noticed how the conversion of the carpet shop into a Morrison's is progressing fast. He has seen a suggestion that it will be open before the end of November, but is content and indeed eager to watch this space. Competition in this field will be good for the village.

... also open, already, is Mama Bear's Coffee Shop, not far from the Post Office, and it comes with this *imprimatur* ~

I have just visited the new cafe in Northenden, Mama Bear's Coffee Shop near the florist. It was lovely and is just what Northenden needs. Great prices, lovely staff who were happy to receive comments and ideas on what worked/didn't. I want to spread the word so people can try it and support this new business.

... and talking of shops opening, or re-opening, the Christian bookshop in Stockport, Christian Literature Crusade (**CLC**) has reopened, a few doors down Lower Hillgate from where their previous premises were before they were damaged in a fire.

... it is not often that a street robbery is the cause of merriment, but Magpie heard a lovely story the other day. The robber sped up behind his victim on a mountain bike, and grabbed the shopping bag (Boozebuster, was it?) that she was holding rather gingerly at arm's length. He rode off waving it triumphantly above his head. What he did not know was what his victim had just been doing and where she was going. She had just been collecting piles of dog-mess from her street and was heading for a dedicated refuse bin to dispose of it. Oh, to have been a fly on the wall (or even in the bag) when he examined his loot! Obviously it was a bit of a shock to the victim at first and we wish her well, but also a dilemma ~ do you report this as a robbery, and if so, what was the value of the goods taken?

... was talking recently with the Chairman of Wythenshawe Amateurs' Football Club ~ our local teams. It seems a roaring success; they now have as many as 22 teams in action, from children through to adults, with pitches being used not just in

Northenden (at St.Wilfrid's School) but across Sharston, Baguley, and Northen Moor. Play on, Wythenshawe!

... has heard that our PCC has a rival. You will have had the chance to vote for her, or more likely him, on 15th Nov. As you probably know, he (or she) is the Government's latest Big Idea ~ this time to make our police more accountable. PCC in this case does not stand for Parochial Church Council, but Police and Crime Commissioner. Presumably this does not mean he (or she) is being elected to commission crime but to keep an eye on it, and keep the police on their toes. Whether she, or he, works remains to be seen. Meanwhile, you will get a chance to vote for the other, and original, PCC in April.

... and talking about Governmental Big Ideas, last year's was the Neighbourhood Forum, and since March we have had the opportunity to set one up, to keep an eye on planning and development in our Neighbourhood, and keep the City Council planners on their toes. Northenden Civic Society has been discussing the possibility of doing this since the beginning of the year, and is now more or less ready to put in an application, for the area bounded by the river and the motorway triangle. If it does go ahead it will be the first in Manchester, though others are watching. [Webmaster added note from the Rector: the application was submitted to the Council planning dept. on 19th Nov, and has been acknowledged]

... we get all kinds of transport for weddings at St.Wilfrid's ~ carriages, vintage cars, as well as modern limousines, but in November there was a first. The virger looked worried. "There's a thirty-eight tonner just pulled up by the gates," he confided, "just the tractor. But it has got ribbons on the front." Shortly afterwards a second drew up, similarly decorated, and from the left-hand door the bride climbed down, in full dress, joking that she might have been on the driver's side. It was a very fitting transport for them both, since on the certificate both put "Occupation: HGV driver."

CHURCH OF ENGLAND FEES.

Will we soon hear squealing from the press about increases in C of E fees for marriages and funerals, which apply from 1st Jan.? They should not complain, since the costs in other churches and at secular venues or for secular celebrants are higher: we shall see.

The reasons why the increases may seem so great are twofold. Firstly, many clergy objected to similar big increases a year ago, and so they got voted down in General Synod. So we are now

playing catch up. The other reason is that in some churches, conversely, people did think the fees were too low, and so tagged on unofficial extras, which could for example include (outrageously) a charge for turning on the lights! Such practices are now clearly outlawed, but the trade off was to increase fees significantly.

The details of fees can get a bit complicated, depending on what you actually want, but for a wedding at St. Wilfrid's, with music but without bells, expect from January to pay about £500, (in round figures ~ currently £375), or for a basic funeral going on to the Crematorium £266 (currently £172) ~ both figures include music. For fuller details, or to enquire about burial here in the churchyard and about monuments, please contact me. **Greg Forster**