

CONCORD ~December 2015

Prayer for the Month,
Eternal God, who in Christ have shared our time and space,
and who have made this most holy and blessed season
to shine with the brightness of your one true light;
bring us who have seen the revelation of that light on earth
to see the radiance of your heavenly glory,
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Amen.

Based on the collect for Christmas night..

Northenden Rectory,
Ford Lane.
0161 998 2615

Dear Friends,

We plan that **Concord** in the coming year will be a curtailed one page version, giving reports and diary dates, at a slightly lower price of 45p (£5.00 per year). Anything less than that will not break even, sadly. But do not pay in advance for 2016 (but 2015's is due!).

It's early, but happy Christmas! There will be junketing in the village on Saturday 5th December, and even before that St.Wilfrid's School are having a Cringle service on 3rd in church. After that it's open season!

But now read on; this month we have news of events and services, as you might expect, and also information about future plans for both St.Wilfrid's School and Church, such as can be said. But most important of all, some thoughts on Christmas itself, and what we have to celebrate ... **Greg Forster**

Magpie ...

... was sidling around the back of Palatine Road shops last month when he saw a sight to make his heart stop. After a quick second glance he turned round and flew in the other direction. There on the ground was a rather smart and rather large personage, with mottled tawny and white feathers, really making a meal of some poor thing. Feathers flew in all directions, as the sparrowhawk ~ for that's who it probably was ~ gorged herself for twenty minutes or so on her prey. Her? Not

sexism, but reality, since this was some bird, and the female of the species is in this case larger than the male.

... and flew past the church again this time to see the Rector on his knees ~ on the tower roof! "What's this?" said Magpie. "Are you taking prayer to new heights?" "No," said the Rector. "I often pray when I come up here. You get such a vision of what you are praying for. But this time, no, I'm looking at a wheelbarrow." "Oh, yes," said Magpie knowingly, "and the Sunday Sport says there's a London Bus on the Moon, I suppose!" "No, seriously," said the Rector, "we're up here looking at the graffiti, and there's the wheel, and there's the box, and there's the handles, all pecked into the lead. A wheelbarrow, like I said. Someone's left his trademark." And he was right, too

... met a cleric once who used to meet up with specialists from across the Christian world. One of them, a Greek Orthodox priest, once said to him, "The difference between you Anglicans and us is this: you come to church to find the place in your service book; we come to find God." Ouch!

... and a different slant, perhaps equally valid, comes from Bill Hawley. His ears had been assaulted by a rather painful version of some hymn by a children's choir, but he shrugged his shoulders and said, "By the time it gets to heaven I'm sure it sounds beautiful."

... those in the know seem to think that the Farmers' Arms was sold as a going concern as a pub, with plenty of time on its lease, but keep your eyes on it.

... the Union Flag on St. Wilfrid's tower was an obvious one for Remembrance Sunday and then 11th Nov. (And the parades at the War Memorial on both days did credit to the Village, with a good turnout despite poor weather on the Sunday, and children from three local schools joining those standing to on the 11th.) A week before St. George's flag marked the All Saints season as we celebrated the faith and victory of all God's people ~ but what will be next? Keep your eyes skinned at the end of November/beginning of December.

... and keep your ears peeled too (if that is what you do with ears) at the end of November. On Sat. 28th from about 6.30pm a group of ringers who have helped us out over the years with weddings will be ringing a quarter peal (no pun originally

intended!) as a farewell to Greg and Sue Forster. Thanks for this occasion, and thanks for your help down the years.

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

**There is a meeting for worship at 10.30am every Sunday.
at the Friends' Meeting House, Wythenshawe Rd.,
Children welcome.**

**** Details from Lesley Thompson, 445 6778**

The main hall and smaller room are available for hire;

~ contact: area Meeting office 834-5797

e-mail: office @ manchesterquakers . org . uk

St. Wilfrid's School ~ prospects, 2016.

In mid-November the chairman of the interim board which took over the management of the church school following its poor Ofsted inspection wrote to parents and to staff to update them on what is happening.

In addition to efforts which seem to be paying off to improve the learning and teaching, they have been discussing the future governance and support for the school too. While at present nothing can be seen as definite, since our Church Council and various other groups have to give their approval, it seems most likely that we will be going into a partnership with the Academy Trust which manages Didsbury C of E school and the new Free School that opened this September in *West Didsbury*.

This is a promising development since their ethos not only matches ours closely as a school, but our two parishes also share much in common.

Northenden Methodist Church

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

Sunday Services.

Usually# 1st Sunday every month

Family worship ~ Sunday breakfast club ~ MESSY CHURCH

All start off with activities with your child(ren) followed by a story, songs, and prayer based on the activities
For details contact Amy Carline, 07816 888 704

If the first Sunday clashes with a school holiday, check with Amy to see if different arrangements have been made.

Dec. 6th 9.30am Messy Church ??? check for information #
10.30am United Service **at Lawton Moor**
The Revs. Heegon Moon and Tim Nicholls
6.30pm United Evening Worship at St. Wilfrid's

13th 11.00am Mrs. Margaret Parker

20th 11.00am Communion & Carols The Rev. Tim Nicholls

Christmas Eve ... **11.30pm** United Service at St. Wilfrid's
"Midnight" Holy Communion.

27th 11.00am Mrs Kathryn Price (United with Lawton Moor)
(at Northenden)

Jan. 3rd 2016 No Messy Church
11.00am Covenant Service The Rev Tim Nicholls
6.30pm United Service at Northenden
The Rev. Tim Nicholls

10th 11.00am The Rev. Margaret Hall

Community Lunches

Next lunch ~ Christmas Dinner! Wed. Dec. 9th.
Details to be confirmed and booking will be necessary.

St. Wilfrid's Church, Northenden.

Ford Lane, M22 4WE

Rector ~ appointment pending,
Northenden Rectory, Ford La., M 22 4NQ

Tel. 0161 998 – 2615 **

Email; gsf @ stwilfridsnorthenden . org . uk **

Website: www . stwilfridsnorthenden . org . uk

And follow us ~ like us, befriend us even ~ on Facebook –
www.facebook.com/pages/St-Wilfrids-Northenden/208920952481082

** Church Voice-mail and Emails will be continue to be monitored.

Services:

On Sundays there will be a communion service at 8.00am
On Thursdays also, at 10am, there is a communion service.

Dec. 6th 10.30am Family Service and Parade.

Speaker ~ Father Christmas

6.30pm United Service at St.Wilfrid's (Tim Nicholls)

13th 10.30am Holy Communion ##

6.30pm Evening Worship

20th 10.30am Morning Prayer ##

3.00pm Carol Service (the Ven Mark Ashcroft)

Thu. 24th Christmas Eve ... **11.30pm**

"Midnight" Communion (Tim Nicholls)

Christmas Day **8.00am Holy Communion** (1662)

10.30am Christmas Morning Worship and Carols

Sun. 27th **10.30am Holy Communion**

No services at 8am or 6.30pm

Jan. 3rd 2016 **No service at 8am**

10.30am Family Service

6.30pm United Evening worship at Methodists

(Tim Nicholls)

10th 8.00am Holy Communion

10.30am Morning Worship ##

6.30pm Evening Worship

SERVICES, ...


It's business as almost usual, so far as we can arrange it. The programme (for the first couple of months anyway) will alternate between Communion and Services of the Word. But come to worship God, not to think which book we are using.

Drop in on St. Wilfrid's ...

On Sundays, from 2.00 till dusk, the church is open for private prayer, for enquiries, or just to look around.

To visit at other times, leave a message on the Rectory answerphone, and it might be possible to arrange something.

We hope to maintain these drop-in arrangements during the interregnum. They will be an initial point of contact for Baptism and Wedding inquiries.

Dates for your Diary ~ it's all happening! 

Nov/Dec PCC meeting ~ Special Meeting on Wed. 2nd Dec. in connection with St. Wilfrid's School, 7.30pm, Church Hall.

There is a School Cringle on 3rd Dec. at 1.45pm in church, and the main school carol service will be on Thu. 17th., at 9.15

The Carol Service is on 20th Dec at 3pm,
led by the Ven. Mark Ashcroft, archdeacon of Manchester.

Colourful Church? *G.S.F*

I wrote last month about graffiti in St. Wilfrid's church, in particular about a scratched window plan (or was it ideas for the roof?). I also wondered about wall paint. Mediaeval churches were often riots of colour, and St. Wilfrid's, I now reckon, may have been painted, red, and black, and green or yellow. Careful cleaning of a couple of patches in the tower seems to have revealed a greenish yellow patch and a black patch. Elsewhere there is brown, which may have started red. And it seems to be in stripes matching the courses of the stonework.

During the "Interregnum" ~ Contact us...

Enquiries about baptisms and weddings may be made on Sunday afternoons (2 till dusk/5pm) in church.

For funerals, contact your chosen undertaker, who will approach a cleric from one of our neighbouring parishes to stand

in for Northenden. If you want the service in St. Wilfrid's this can be arranged, as can burials and interments of ashes here.

Messages can be left (by letter or answer-phone) at the Rectory, but do not expect an immediate answer. There will be a possible delay of a week or so. If it is urgent, contact the area dean, Stephen Edwards, on 0161 437-3194.

Sue Forster Writes ...

I would just like to thank everyone for their immense kindness to us in words, cards and gifts. We feel very blessed to have such lovely friends, and it is very sad to be leaving you all and our long-time family home where our children grew up.

We will treasure our memories, our gifts and our photograph album and cards, and I hope many of you will make it to 43 Essex Rd., and have a look at Church Stretton.

Life, inevitably, will feel very strange initially, and I hope we have not left you all with too much of a struggle, though God seems to have provided St. Wilfrid's well, with two capable wardens, many helpers and a loyal congregation with some new and younger faces who are willing to participate in the life of the Church.

May He bless you all.

Sue.

As things stand ... St Wilfrid's Church.

In early November the Church Council met with Archdeacon Mark Ashcroft, and began discussions about the new arrangements for the parish and the new Rector. That in itself is a very good move, since it is unusual to start such discussions before the previous parish minister has left. Perhaps it will become standard practice. It should do. Everyone with secular recruiting experience whom Greg has spoken with has been surprised that he does not know who his successor will be.

The PCC has been preparing both a factual description of the parish, and giving their impressions of it, and its needs, and has been consulted as to what sort of a person they would like. This response should go to the Archdeacon in early December, and with luck, hard work and good judgment there will be adverts for the role going out in early January. After that, ... remember that whoever is offered the post will probably need to give up to three months notice in the office they now hold.

Light reading ...

For light reading, or even the odd light present, over Christmas you might have a look at some of the booklets available in St. Wilfrid's Church which relate to Christmas.

The Other Shepherd's Tale asks who minded the sheep when the shepherds dashed off the Bethlehem to see this wonder that has come to pass. And *The Father Christmas Diaries* are (allegedly) just that.

For older readers, there is the story of *The Wise Man's Servant*, which thinks how the wise men may have got from Orientare, from which they were of, to Bethlehem, and what became of them, while *Long Time Ago in Nazareth* looks at how Mary's family, and others, reacted to the events. Happy reading!

And from the library or the internet, look out Betchman's poem, *Blame it on the Vicar*, and Kipling's *Edda of Manhood End*.

GOD WITH US ...

God with us, Emmanuel. A title given to a royal baby seven hundred years earlier, before his birth. Whether he lived up to it, I don't know; if it was Hezekiah, then he did. And what did it mean? Problems sorted? Hardships relieved? Invaders thwarted? Peace and prosperity on earth, and goodwill towards each other? All these things would have been signs for the ancient Israelites of God's presence and blessing; practical, perhaps worldly and material things, as well as inspirations to show gratitude to God, to worship him and feel his nearness.

But sometimes the old prophets, like Isaiah on this occasions, would speak truer than they knew. That royal title expressed hopes and dreams long after Hezekiah had been gathered to his fathers, as God's people longed to see him put things to rights, and come in on their side of the troubles.

Whether they thought of him coming in person I don't know ~ perhaps not, since no one, they thought, could see God and live ~ but in the event he surprised them, ... us, coming here on Christmas day. And he came full of generosity and honesty, not blinding us or overawing us, but showing us what he is like in human dimensions, being with us in the blend of ordinariness, and of happiness, and of ugliness which makes up a human life. He lived out peace on earth and God's good-will to humanity.