

January 2006

Prayer for the Month:

Sovereign Lord of time and eternity,
as the years turn and time rolls onward,
may we your people, your church, be a beacon of hope in
a hopeless world,
as we find in you the heart for this heartless world,
the medicine for all people,
and so bear witness to this hope that you have set before us,
through Jesus Christ your Son our Saviour. Amen.

**Northenden Rectory,
Ford Lane, 0161 998 – 2615**

Dear Friends,

Firstly, thank you to everyone involved in circulating Concord in 2005, and best wishes to all our readers for the new year.

As I write ~ way before Christmas, let alone before the new year! ~ firefighters are putting out that huge blaze in Hertfordshire following the explosion at the oil distribution depot. Amazingly, and mercifully the explosion caused no fatalities, and we have been treated (if that can be the right word) to some awesome pictures both of fire and flames, and of billowing smoke clouds. People are talking about the pollution it might cause, and the threats to the health of asthma sufferers or anyone caught in the smoke. The specialists are actually more worried about the danger of contaminating a major water source near-by. Certainly the smoke clouds represent an awful lot of pollution ~ and here is the irony: burning away there as the result of an explosion they are a terrible waste, and a very visible pollutant. Had they been kept safe, with no explosion, they would have been burned and would have produced much the same amount of smoke (perhaps less oily and black) via car exhausts, aircraft vapour trails and the smoke from our central heating boilers. I don't know how many days worth of fuel has gone up, dramatically wasted, but there we could see that many days worth of unseen pollution affecting and perhaps even creating asthma sufferers. Are there ways we can

take this as a lesson about polluting (or rather *not* polluting) our world ~ God's creation? It is all too easy to take the car when I could cycle, or turn up the heating when a thicker pullover would be more effective.

And what will the new year hold? No doubt its own crop of sad stories to match the natural disasters and human cruelties of 2005. As we hear these stories we should also listen to the stories of hope which are also told, often at the same time, as people rally round, whether in God's name or out of a sense of common humanity, to give help at such times. We should also take note of the individual stories of goodness and hope in the lives of people around us, rather than being blinded by the problems or worries we see. More than that; what can we do to light our own candles to put out the dark, inspired by the hope-full story of Jesus, and his overcoming of the dark around him? In a heartless world he offers a heart of love; and invites his church both to experience that love, and show it to the wider community. There's a promise, and also a target, for 2006. May God be with you this coming year. *Yours faithfully,* **Greg Forster**

Magpie ...

... noticed a man with a can of white spray paint and a surveyor's wheel near the junction of Palatine Rd. and Church Rd. back in November. Now there are holes in the road, and great red plastic bollards and kerbs. It certainly seems as if our traffic lights are about to materialise. This is at least twenty five, if not thirty five years after people in Northenden started talking about the need for them. Who says that dreams don't come true?

... and has seen his hopes come true that the new flag pole and weather vane on St.Wilfrid's church wouldn't take as long as the traffic lights. The pole, together with the lightening conductors which form part of the package, was completed in the first week of December, in time for the flag to be flown for Christmas. It was last Christmas that the dangerous state of the old pole was noticed, and it fell in the gale just into Jan. 2005.) One problem: the compass rose is turning, as well as the weather cock!

... has a shocking memory, but doesn't always have space to recall things either; in November he meant to put in a piece

about a 60th wedding anniversary but it got squeezed out. The actual anniversary was back on Sept. 29th, and the anniversarians paid a special visit to St. Wilfrid's from Wythenshawe ~ *Wythenshawe*, that is, their house in Polruan, Cornwall. Ewart and Margaret (nee Hammersely) Brickell married on 29th Sept. 1945 in St. Wilfrid's, he having crossed the border and travelled into England to meet relatives up here.

Street lights update...

Greg Forster

Most of the street lights in Northenden have recently been renewed as part of a private finance initiative scheme between the City Council and Amey. As yet those in Ford Lane, Boat Lane and Mill Lane have not been done, and neither have a number of other side streets in the village.

This is not forgetfulness or neglect, but because of a scheme to install more attractive "heritage" lamps, or poles which are strong enough to bear hanging flower baskets. Money has been obtained through grants which came through in late November, in some cases to local residents' groups, and in the case of the lanes mentioned to St. Wilfrid's P.C.C., to pay for these enhanced fittings, and Amey will be installing them after the Christmas break (they delayed slightly, so as not to leave holes open in the pavements over the long Christmas construction industry break.) The result, we hope, will be side streets brimming over with flowers, and a conservation area whose classic character is at least partly conserved.

The Police report that the crime rate in Northenden and neighbouring wards is down on last year; some of the figures are just a couple of percentage points, but theft of or from cars is down by between a fifth and a half. Keep up the good work!

From the Registers ...

Baptisms on Sunday Nov. 20th.

Isobel Charlotte Rose Tulip

Louis Michael Snazel, Martha Elizabeth Dalziel.

In Memoriam ...

Nora Nolan (Weston Grove) 87, Marjorie Mee (Brett St.) 80.
Louis Dunkerley (Woodhouse Park)

CUBS; A Church supported Cub group (for girls as well as boys) has started, using St.Wilfrid's School on Tuesday evenings, 6.00 – 8.00pm. For details, contact Mike Clegg on 998 – 4143.

Christmas Concert and Carols;

Proceeds from this went to the Booth Centre, M/c Cathedral's drop in for the city's street people. We raised £136, which has been sent to the centre. The new dean of Manchester was at the concert, and expressed his thanks on behalf of the centre.

THE YEAR AHEAD ...

Greg Forster

Earlier on in Concord I spoke of the hope which we can have as Christians in a world which has its problems as well as its joys. In this piece I want to talk more concretely about what is likely to happen, in St.Wilfrid's at least, this year.

That should be a very down to earth subject, at least in part, since it concerns toilets! I have just started asking for quotes for alterations to the Church Hall, so that we have up to date fire exits and access suitable for people in wheel-chair or with other disabilities, as well as improvements to the toilet area, including a disabled-access cubicle. We often use the catch phrase at fairs or other events "All are welcome" ~ well, this is going some way to making that a literal possibility. Some of the cost will be from our church funds, but I expect grants from the Council and others.

I am also hoping that we shall be able this year to install a toilet, suitable for fit or disabled people, in the church itself. The lack of one has long been a discouragement for some people who might otherwise love to come to worship at St.Wilfrid's. It will be sited in the present south porch (and a children's area will be retained, but moved elsewhere to make way for it). I intend to

make an appeal in due course to help fund this, but much of the cost will be set against this church's normal income or reserves.

One of the Confirmations in this area in 2006 is in St. Wilfrid's ~ at the end of June. I have already had enquiries about this, but I should like to encourage as many people as possible who are members of St. Wilfrid's, but have not yet been confirmed, to take this opportunity of affirming their faith in their own parish church. Confirmation stands for many things: it is an opportunity to learn in more detail about our faith; it is not just a thing for young teenagers (the oldest person, I think, whom I have prepared for confirmation was 78); it leads on to sharing fully in the communion service, where we look for God's support and sustenance regularly and express our faith and commitment tangibly. I intend to approach some of you individually, but please feel free to approach me directly yourself if you wish.

Another project for this year is Emmaus. "*Emmaus?*" you ask. Here is a series of basic studies in which we can find out, in practical terms, about Christian living and believing. I can't think of a better word than "study", but they are not heavyweight, or, I hope, off-putting, but a cheerful and lively sharing over coffee and biscuits of what we know and have experienced. This may be appropriate whether you are 19 or 90, life-long member or tentative enquirer into the church. Again, I hope to give personal invitations, but let me know if you are interested.

All this is about deepening our relationship with God ~ even the work on the buildings is about that, even if it is down to earth too. In shared worship, and fellowship, we encourage each other, and learn with each other. This is not something for Church-goers to keep to themselves, and any of our services or activities could be the opportunity for someone to make a move towards God, and find he moves closer to them. Those of you who are "regulars" might like to use the invitation leaflets which I intend to prepare to encourage a friend or neighbour ~ but there is no need to wait for an invitation ... to the 10 o'clock service on Thursdays, or to the Sunday School, or whenever...

Northenden Methodist Church.

Palatine Road.

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

Sunday Services. 11.00am

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Wythenshawe Meeting

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

Children welcome

Details from Judith Mawer (445 – 9397)

**The main hall and smaller rooms are available for hire;
~ contact Conor Jerram, Meeting House Warden (998-3031)**