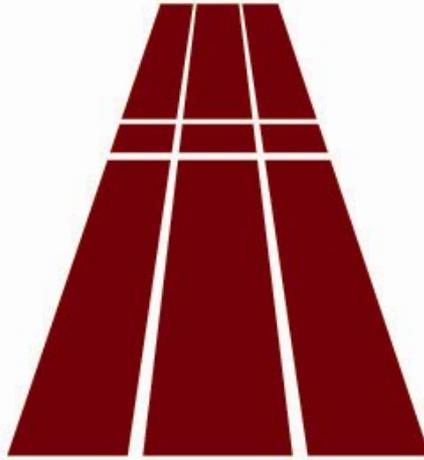


20 - J a n u a r y - 08

Cover Picture; Into the future ~ the bishop's pilgrim logo.



Prayer for the Month ~ and the coming year.

Guide me, O my great Redeemer,
pilgrim through this barren land ~
we are weak, but you are mighty,
hold us in your powerful hand.

Strong Deliverer, lead us now and evermore.

Amen

Based on the hymn by William Williams.

Northenden Rectory, Ford Lane.

0161 998 – 2615

Dear Friends,

Firstly, of course, happy new year! We none of us know what it will bring, though we may hazard some guesses ~ problems in the housing market, perhaps, and no end to conflicts in the middle east or parts of Africa; increasing razzmatazz in the American Presidential stakes (which will be very intriguing this time round, as well as a serious matter.); the threat of argument if not division at the Lambeth conference of Anglican bishops, and perhaps at the same time an increasing tendency to push the Christian church to one side in society. After all, as we learned over Christmas, there are celebrities who want us to sing carols, and think everyone would if they were set to a karaoke beat, and

promise us that you don't have to believe anything to join in the singing! After all, it's so traditional! Oh, dear!

I'm not sure how to answer that, if people do not see the irony ~ or is it the blind hypocrisy ~ of such an argument. A multi-faith Christmas with no believing! The warm comfy bath-water, with no baby, it seems.

Or consider the suggestion ~ its not a new one, of course ~ that the bishops should not be in the House of Lords but should stick to religion, not politics. Two errors here: the minor one is to think that Bishops are in the House to push Anglicanism, not to be wise counsellors to the Monarch and her Government (as they have been for a thousand years); and the major one, to think that religion (or the Christian religion at least) has nothing to say, no wise counsel to offer, about justice in society, the public expression of morality and the flourishing and valuing of people ~ which are the things that politics ought to be about.

So, in 2008, be aware, and be wary, of the secular agenda which either consciously or subconsciously which tries to marginalise Christian faith, and rule God out of the equation. (I say marginalise Christianity. We take the brunt of it, because we are 'established' in this culture. This agenda would in fact like to dispose of all or any religion, but is condescending enough to see that other faiths are part of 'the ethnic culture' and so cannot be pilloried with any correctness.)

And since I have mentioned politics, ... a gentle excursion into politics in Northenden this coming year. It is probably good for the village that there is lively political activity in the ward. Politicians and administrators are extra anxious to get the things done that residents care about. I hope that in 2008 this competition will be characterised by forward looking, positive campaigning all round: this is what we propose; this is how we see or do things; rather than by going back over old ground.

Yours faithfully, Greg Forster

The Year of Matthew!

Greg Forster

You may recall from items in Concord in previous years that readings in church are taken each year in turn from the first three Gospels, with John used to fill in gaps or details. Thus this year (2007-08) is Matthew, next year is Mark, and so on. So what can we say about Matthew? What is distinct about his view of Jesus?

Firstly, he is certain that Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies, and is the culmination of Jewish hopes. "This took

place to fulfil what was written" is almost a catch phrase with him. The genealogy at the beginning of the gospel, as well as being a very Jewish interest, portrays Jesus as the last and greatest in a line of Jewish worthies.

Matthew also betrays a very Jewish interest in spelling out a pattern of life. Most obviously there is the sermon on the mount, (chs. 5 – 7) but there are four other blocks of teaching, on discipleship, the nature of God's kingdom, church life, and how to handle the crisis in world history. More so than Luke or Mark he pulls together Jesus' teaching, and sets it out in order.

Not that he is exclusively a writer for Jews. The whole of Jesus' story is sandwiched between the visit of non-Jewish wise men to pay their respects to the new-born King, and Jesus' own commission to his followers to share his teaching with the whole world. (Ch.2 v 1 – 11, ch. 28 v 16 – 20)

Matthew bases his account around the Gospel of Mark, (substantially endorsing Mark's account in the process), but he edits it down, cutting to the heart of the matter; thus, when describing the raising of Jairus' daughter, the vivid drama is cut down: she is dead when Jairus asks for help, though Mark has given the detail of an interruption and the message, as Jesus is arriving, that he is too late. Jesus' power in raising the dead is highlighted by Matthew, though we lose something of the human drama. But in cutting the detail Matthew makes space for so much more teaching about the Christian life.

Matthew was one of the 12 disciples. Traditionally this gospel has been seen as his work, though some people find it surprising that an apostle should copy the work of a non-apostle (Mark). But why re-invent the wheel ~ especially if St. Peter was looking over Mark's shoulder? He seems to have been writing for a church made up of people with strong Jewish interests (possibly at Antioch, in N.-Western Syria), but its usefulness as a summary of Jesus' teaching soon meant that this Gospel became the most used and first point of reference for the church as a whole.

Northenden Methodist Church.

Palatine Road.

Minister: the Revd. David Bown,

5 Kenworthy Lane, Northenden, M 22 4 JF

0161 998 – 2158

Sunday Services.

Jan. 6th 2008 11.00am Morning Service
5.30pm United Service @ Northenden Methodist Ch.

13th 11.00am Morning Service

20th 11.00am A circuit Covenant Service at our
Lawton Moor Church.

27th 11.00am Morning Service

Febr. 3rd 11.00am Morning Service
6.30pm United Evening Service at St. Wilfrid's Church.

Fuller details of the preachers are not available as we go to press (a week or so early, to avoid the Christmas break.)

COMMUNITY LUNCHESES ...

2nd and 4th Wednesdays in January ~
9th & 23rd 12 noon to 1.30pm

Fun Bingo: Sat. 26th Jan., noon to 2.00pm.

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 (tel.)

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

R. B. L. Northenden.

Plans are in hand for the Royal British Legion branch to hold advice sessions in St. Wilfrid's Church Hall. This should allow more privacy than their present arrangements. Details will be included in the February edition, all being well.

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,
and on Thursdays at 10.00am

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

... "Scramblers", for children from 3½ to 6+, meets in the Church Hall from 10.30 till about 11.30am., except when there is a Family Service (for parents and children together) in Church.

Jan. 6 th 2008	10.30am	Holy Communion
	5.30pm	United Service @ Northenden Methodist Ch.
13 th	10.30am	Holy Communion
	5.30pm	Evening Worship
20 th	10.30am	Holy Communion
	5.30pm	Evening Worship
27 th	10.30am	Morning Prayer
	5.30pm	Holy Communion
Febr. 3 rd	10.30am	Family Communion & Parade Service.
	6.30pm	United Service @ St. Wilfrid's Church.

Please note how the evening services in January will take place at 5.30pm. (but not those in February) Note too that the united service in January is at the Methodist Church and February's at St. Wilfrid's (freeing up their premises for other activities.)

***The church is open each Sunday from 2.00 – Dusk,
for prayer, visiting, enquiries, &c.***

IT'S ALL HAPPENING ... for your diaries

Wed. 9th Jan. 7.45 for 8pm Bible Study, Rectory.

Wed. 16th., 23rd, 30th Ditto!

Thu. 17th 7.30pm Church Hall. P.C.C. Meeting.

Mon. 21st 6.00pm School Governors' Meeting.

Sat. 26th Coffee Morning ~ Church Hall, 10.00am ...

WOMEN'S GROUP next meets in the Rectory
at 7.45 pm for 8.00pm start on ...
... Monday Feb 4th, in the Rectory ... details later Sue

~ and one for later in the year! We hope to have a concert on Mon. 5th May (the bank holiday) given by Lyra, the Russian group whose last visit was so successful. More details and confirmation of the date nearer the time ~ but book this in your diary now!

First Saturdays ... GSF

The Farmers' Market is in town, so some of the activities which St. Wilfrid's ran on first Saturdays are moved ~ check the diary and be at the market as well! The next are Jan. 5th and Feb. 2nd.

From the **R**egisters ~ **I**n **M**emorial ...

Mary Tierney (Robert Owen Gdns),
Harry Nettleton, (Brett St.) 83,

Baptised ... on **S**unday 16th **D**ecember:

Isabelle Zengin

Magpie ...

... saw some odd bits of news over Christmas, like the national institution which wanted its carol service in a major London church to be "multi-faith", and squeezed one of the invited speakers out when it became known that her address would attack intolerance towards Christianity. 'nough said!

... had the opportunity to fly in to the opening of a new block of flats in Withington the other day. The penthouse suite and its roof terrace was open, with a nice patio heater to attract him. Splendid, bright and airy, with ample height and space! So why mention it? The developers are the person and company, who own the Church Inn, and among the features of the video loop that was running during the festivities was a section which showed projected views of the Church Inn, Northenden, with its external appearance much the same as now, and with the date 2008-09 in the frame. Well, if the Church Inn is restored inside to the standard of this new building, it will be a credit to Northenden, and well worth waiting for; but in his remarks about

the building to be opened the developer wryly commented that many of his timetables slip.

... flits about South Manchester, and was delighted to hear that the proposals to sell off part of Marie Louise Gardens had been dropped. How many wedding couples from Northenden drive up there for their photographs? How many young families get push-chaired up there to feed ~ or chase ~ the squirrels? The area at issue was quite small (probably less than the 'footprint' of the Church Hall main room) and had been used as a bit of a dump for gardeners' equipment and rubbish, but the principle does matter: public open space for leisure is at a premium, and should not be subject to creeping enclosure; nor should a concession given in one place become a precedent for a larger encroachment somewhere else.

... but in his flittings he heard a rumour, which sounds like more than a rumour, that one of the reporters who had covered the Marie Louise Gardens story had been sacked shortly after its conclusion. Despite trying to report things even-handedly he had upset the prospective developer who then ~ its rather a complex story ~ allegedly had words with the editor This leaves a bad taste in Magpie's beak. The rally to celebrate the reprieve of M-L gardens was to include an expression of support for him. Will that be reported, we wonders?

... has also been known to flit along the Trans Pennine Trail, which runs, as you will know, through Northenden along the river Mersey. It is one of the cycle routes which featured in the successful Sustrans bid for lottery money to improve the national network of cycling and walking routes. I was about to write "leisure" there, but that should not be correct: safe routes can and should be used to cycle or walk to work or to the shops, &c., as well as for fun. The bid, for £50M, I believe, was the successful one in the national phone-in voting. Though the alternative projects were good, this was the only one which will give benefits right across the country. More strength to their elbows ~ or should that be ankles?

... also takes on longer flights, which sometimes disturb him. The view across Greater Manchester from above Lyme Park, or from Shining Tor, is splendid ~ when you can see it. Twice lately Magpie has been up there, and twice he has seen something that probably has some lovely technical name like atmospheric inversion. Not so lovely to see: clear views across to Snowdon, or Rivington Pike, but in the valley, yuk. A yellow haze

or smog, hanging over the conurbation, masking the beauties of Northenden and making one wonder what it does to the lungs of people living and working down there. It is difficult to describe, except that there is a murky layer below, a crystal layer level with the tops of the hills, and then the bright clouds above.

But there is worse; Magpie has seen maps of pollution levels in the county; on the face of it, most of the area appears relatively clear in terms of air quality (probably measured as an average, not just on one of these still bright murky days) but in strips along the motorways, not least around Northenden and through Wythenshawe, the level is unpleasantly high. Not good!

Baptised? In duplicate?

Greg Forster

I sometimes get asked about the fonts in St. Wilfrid's. Why two? And what's the story behind the one at the front?

Well, let's start in 1873, or so. The old church had to be demolished ('health and safety' got at the old one, even then!) and the architect designed a new font, with carving to match the gothic decorations around his new church. That is what we have in the children's corner, near the main entrances of the church building (and so, symbolically, indicating entry into the church-which-is-people). It is lead lined (though we have lost the plug to keep the water in!) and has a "Mouseman" cover.

But in 1873 what happened to the old font? It seems to have been put by, in the tower. When repair work was being done there in about 1920 it was found by one of the workmen. One of the first baptisms which I took here was for the great-grandson of this man, and his mother told me the story. So, it was rescued from the lumber room, but ended up as a bird-bath, it seems, in the old Rectory garden. There Gordon Jones, my predecessor recognised it, and brought it back into the church, as a display at the front. Now that baptisms are done in the main service on a Sunday, it seems sense to use it, rather than ask people to bark their shins and crane their necks to see what is happening at the back.

But there is more to say. This front font is in fact two, or even three fonts itself! The base is red sandstone with eight panelled faces. In it rests a smoother, whiter stone pillar, which has been broken and rather coarsely repaired. It is not exactly true shaped, but I think of it as Queen Anne or Georgian in style. And on top of this is the fluted, eight-sided bowl of the font which is a separate piece, though it may have been made to go with the

pillar. The eight-sides is a give-away for a font, representing the new day of the new creation after the seven of the old order.