

CONCORD ~ July 2013

Prayer for the Month

Oh, Lord!

I ain't what I ough' t' be;

I ain't what I wan' t' be;

I ain't what I'm goin' t' be;

But I ain't what I use' t' be!

Overheard in New Orleans: a confession of hope.

Northenden Rectory, Ford Lane.

0161 998 2615

Dear Friends,

I mentioned last month very briefly that Vicky Ford, the head teacher at the Church Primary School here in Northenden, is retiring at the end of this term ~ technically that means August 31st, but in practice it means the end of term, 21st July. We wish her well for her retirement. She has been here for eight or so years, and among other things has led the school to a "good" Ofsted inspection, and developed links with other neighbouring schools. Being a head teacher involves headaches, and one of hers has been the oversight of a building project, as the side and rear walls of the school have been remodelled with modern, high-insulation materials. The building not only looks smarter, but is easier to heat and more comfortable for pupils and staff. Most important for a church school, to my way of thinking, is not the pupils' results (though they have been laudable), but the atmosphere among the children. This shows in their general happiness and friendliness ~ it is difficult to pin down, but definitely there in a good school. The jargon is "the Ethos" of the place. Vicky has maintained and built up a good ethos, and for this a generation of our children can be grateful.

Her replacement was appointed last term. She is Catherine Constant, who has been assistant principal at a primary school ~ now an academy ~ at Stanley Grove in Longsight for the past few years. That has actually given her headship responsibilities for some of the time, as the Academy found its feet, so she comes to us with a depth of experience and an enthusiasm for the new task. Welcome!

Greg Forster

Northenden Methodist Church

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

Sunday Services.

Family worship ~ Sunday breakfast club ~ MESSY CHURCH

****Usually the 1st Sunday every month****

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 £1.50p per person.

For details contact Amy Carline, 07816 888 704

** If this is a Bank or School Holiday, check with Amy to find out what alternative arrangements may have been made ~

July	7 th	9.00am	** Messy Church **	
		11.00am	United Wythenshawe Service at St.Andrew's	
		6.30pm	United Service at Methodist Church.	
	14 th	11.00am	Morning Worship	##
	21 st	11.00am	Morning Worship	##
	28 th	11.00am	Morning Worship	##
Aug.	4 th	9.00am	?? Messy Church ~ to be confirmed	
		11.00am	Morning Worship	##
		6.30pm	United Service at St.Wilfrid's	
	11 th	11.00am	Morning Worship	##

Community Lunch

Wed., ~ 10th July, 12 noon till 1.30pm

(Next lunch, Wed. August 14th ~ 12 noon till 1.30pm ~ tbc)

Apologies ~ I have received the preachers' list, and lost it! GF.

Northenden Civic Society

There is a meeting of the society on the second Tuesday each month, in St.Wilfrid's Church Hall, at 7.30pm. The July meeting is on 9th. Its **website** is < [www . northendcivicsociety . org](http://www.northendcivicsociety.org) >. It also has a **Facebook** site access it via the website, or go to: <www.facebook.com/NorthendenCivicSociety >. The meeting in August (the 13th) still needs to be confirmed.

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 Enid Pinch, 445 6778.

The main hall and smaller rooms are available for hire;

~ contact Sue Shaw at the Central Manchester Office, 834-5797

Christian Aid, 2013.

Christian Aid Week was back in May, as you will remember. We did less door-to-door collecting than in previous years, for various reasons. Nevertheless, in the village in general and between the three churches involved we raised **£789** for the charity. Many thanks to all who gave in envelopes at St.Hilda's, St.Wilfrid's and the Methodist Church, and to those who were able to do doorstep collections and those who gave to them. I have actually sent off a cheque to their funding Headquarters for **£825**, since we already had some money in our local account which came in very late last year. *GSF*

Concert, May 30th

Just a brief note to thank performers and audience for coming to the folk music concert we held in the church at the end of May (not to mention the cake-bakers too!). The proceeds from that were sent as usual to the Booth Centre ~ the Cathedral's work with our City's street people. This time we raised just over £100.

Neighbourhood Forum.

The steering group for this has met a couple of times with council officers. We are the first in the city, and they want to devise a scheme which they can use in any area, including those

which are far more diverse and complicated than here. They need to be able to demonstrate that all parts of a community are represented. We are working with them, but it is taking time.

“You Lucky People!” Luke ch. 6 vv 20 ...

We call them the Beatitudes, which sounds nice. What that means is that here is what God reckons is blessed, that is, what gains his approval and support and favour. “You lucky people!” ~ except that it does not have the slightly sneering humour that that comedian’s catch phrase has for us now. So here is a list of the sort of people who should feel that God has a special care for them

But first, we should look at the setting. Luke reports this element of Jesus’ teaching just after he has recorded the selection of the twelve special disciples ~ though it is given to a whole crowd of his other disciples too. Here is some basic teaching for Jesus’ followers, reassuring them of God’s favour, even if things don’t go according to their hopes and plans. And Luke seems to contrast this with what most of the crowd were trying to do. They are looking for healings (not surprisingly, perhaps) or miracles; Luke draws a contrast by using a strong word for “He” ~ “And as for him, he ... began to teach ...” His priority was that people should understand God’s thinking and how they could tune in to it.

So what is that thinking? After two thousand years of Christianity it does not come as a surprise to hear Jesus say “Blessed are you who are poor, hungry, or weeping,” though we are not so used to this version in Luke’s gospel, where Jesus addresses people direct, and seems to be talking about real hunger, not a spiritual longing. For his first hearers it would have come as a bit of a shock (though they should have known Psalms which pray, more or less, “we are poor, help us.”) Jesus’ answer to those prayers is to say, you are *already* in God’s good books, already part of his kingdom, and the answer is on its way.

The next few verses contain a dire warning to those who are comfortable and unsympathetic; wealth and happiness are not necessarily proof that God is on your side. Similarly, Christian behaviour is a reversal of what Jesus’ contemporaries might expect. Pray for those who treat you badly. That applies to the family member you don’t get on with, or the noisy neighbour, at one end of the scale, or (dare I say it?) the murderer at the other. That is easily misunderstood; it is not a prayer for their ease and comfort

It is a prayer for reconciliation with God (and with you too, if it's family as you and they see each other in a new light!) So listen to Luke. He tells a good story, but reminds us of Jesus' challenge too

Hello again, God, ...

... I've just had a thought to ask you,
 though it's been on my mind for a while.
 I hope you don't think I'm being cheeky,
 but what's your favourite team?
 I hope it's the same as mine,
 'cos then they'd always win.

Or would they? I told my friend that the other day,
 and he said it wouldn't be fair ~
 and you are fair, aren't you?
 That's the same as being "just" isn't it?

So who do you support?
 Grandad said Spurs once went almost a whole season without
 being beaten?
 That must have been in the olden days,
 'cos I can't remember it.
 Were they your favourites then?

Or do you have favourites at all?
 Is it all about trying hard and doing your best?
 If that's how it is, is it fair for one team to buy up all the best
 players?
 Is that why you let them lose every so often?
 Or do you just let them get on with it, and have a laugh when the
 underdogs come out on top?

Come to think of it, someone told me that Jesus said,
 "Blessed are the meek"?
 Being meek is a bit like being the underdog, isn't it,
 and "blessed" is being sort of special?
 So is this what you're telling me? ~
 that you'll support a side that's not going to win very often, and
 being in your team is more important than winning the League.

But you know who I support, don't you, and I hope you don't mind
 if I go on supporting them as well as your team.

Honest.

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.
except July 21st & 28th.

Also on Thursdays there is a communion service, at 10am.

“**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, and during the long
School summer holiday.

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

July 7th 10.30am Family Communion & Parade Service
6.30pm United service @ Methodist Church.

14th 10.30am Holy Communion
6.30pm Evening Worship

21st 10.30am Morning Prayer
6.30pm Evening Worship

28th 10.30am Holy Communion
6.30pm Holy Communion (1662)

Aug. 4th 10.30am Family Communion
6.30pm United Evening Worship at St.Wilfrid’s

11th 10.30am Holy Communion
6.30pm Evening Worship.

Drop in on St.Wilfrid’s ...
On Sundays from 2.30 till 5.15pm
the church is open
for private prayer, for enquiries, or just to look around.

To visit at other times, please contact the Rector.
 The next **Open Week-end** will be in September ~ with displays
 and the opportunity to climb the tower ~
 linked to the national "**Heritage Open Days**" week-end.
 But the tower will be open on the afternoon of the Boat Race!

The Parish Registers -

In Memoriam ...



George Nield (Robt. Owen Gdns.) 95,
 Robert Allsop (latterly in Spain)
 Jean Hilton (late of West View Rd.),
 Jean Ward (previously Hodcroft, late of Northenden)
 ... also Matthew Smith (formerly from Chapel Rd.)

Baptisms;

On Sunday 26th May in the Parish Church ...
 Edward Laurence Bullivant-Leach,
 Fayth Patricia Molly Stanley-Hayward
 Clara Emily Ibe.

(We were happy to welcome Clara, who would in normal
 circumstances have been baptised at the Methodist Church ~
 but it is currently out of commission for refurbishment.)

And on Sunday 16th June ...
 Oliver Samuel Vickers, Ava Luna Mae Johnson,
 Lily-May Elizabeth Birchenough.

Confirmed at St. Wilfrid's on Sun. 9th
 June by Mark Davies, Bishop of
 Middleton ...

Tyrone McIvor, Katherine McIvor.

... and from the Nigerian Restoration Church ...

Chisom Pascal Ezenwekwe, Sandra Eziamaka Ezenwekwe,
 Praise Chioma Ilechukwu,
 Esther Olayinka Oladipo, Olatumylara Jacob Onasanya.

The Most Important Thing.

G.S.F.

A number of incidents over the past week have prompted me to think about what is the most important time and feature in our services. →

My own feeling and background would lead me to say that the reading of the bible, with the sermon intended to shed light on it, is the high point of our worship. Not that I somehow feel elevated every time this happens (the sermons aren't always as good as they might be, for instance!). Things get in the way, and for a long time the Anglican belief that you have to stand for the Gospel, rather than listening to it at your ease, and that there are special words to say before and after it, used to niggle me. It still upsets me that we regulars can embarrass visitors by standing piously when they quite naturally expect to sit to listen. For myself ~ I try just to switch off, and listen to the words even if I am standing up. It's not worth getting upset about. That's what I try to tell myself.

Last week-end I took part in the Diocesan Healing Day. The leader of these sessions was the Bishop of Monmouth, Dominic Walker. Earlier in his ministry he worked in South West India, and he spoke of how he had once asked a Mar Thoma priest to tell him what the "Peace" meant to him, and what he thought of when he was giving the peace at that point in their liturgy. It was probably about that time that this was coming into Anglican liturgies with a vengeance, and causing quite a bit of upset in some circles ~ some people objecting strongly to this un-English carry on, and others getting down to a serious chat with friends at this point.

In Kerala the Peace was given in a very Indian way, as you might expect, with hands held together and a polite bow, and the word *namascarë* (if I heard him right. There are people who can put me right, no doubt ~ you may recognise the similar Hindi *namastë*.) It means peace and greeting, but what were the priest's thoughts, Bp. Dominic had wondered. They too were very Indian, but possibly a salutary lesson for us too. "I see in the eyes of the person I greet the image of God, and the presence of Christ reflected in him or her, and I honour him there."

That may seem surprising, even shocking, but it is in fact very biblical too. Mankind is made, according to Genesis, in the image of God, and in our Baptism services we pray that that image will be restored in us, and in the person baptised. Jesus taught that what we do for the least of his brethren we do for him, and that where two or three meet in his name he is there in the

middle. So I stand corrected; there is something very special and holy in the Peace, along with the fun and joy of greeting, the reassurance of touch, or the whispered apology of reconciliation.

This is true, whether the person we give peace too is a well loved friend of long standing, or a stranger who is visiting for the day; whether it is the quiet old lady whose spirituality we share, or the slightly boisterous toddler who is just finding his feet (perhaps literally as he runs up and down the aisles) in his church. Remember the story (from your Sunday School days?) of how David danced oh so-exuberantly before the Lord, while his wife Michal tut-tutted from the palace windows. It is Michal who is censured in the scripture, not David.

This is brought home even more clearly in a baptism service, where we not only give the peace to all-comers, but specifically welcome new members into peace-giving community, and promise to support and help them as they become members of the visible church. I know this is only something we say in the liturgy ~ but what we say in the liturgy is not an "only"; it is supposed to be what we practice in our lives. It is not "only" a play that we are performing.

Once again, do you remember the story (again from Sunday School days if not more recently) of the time Jesus ticked off his disciples for trying to give him a bit of peace and holy quiet? "Let the children come to me," he said, "don't try to stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to people like them." It goes on to say that he took them in his arms and blessed them. We tend to picture this as some kind of ecclesiastical blessing that supposedly makes us a bit more holy ~ but I wonder. The standard Jewish "blessing" is a thanksgiving to the Creator for his gifts to us.

One of my early memories from our time in Northenden is when Sue shared with me how she had overheard whispers in church. *How badly behaved the Rector's children are!* No offer of help as she shepherded twins who had just learned how to walk, and a three-year-old, and when her husband clearly could not leave off what he was doing to help; just censure.

"We welcome you into the Lord's family!"

"We are members together of the body of Christ!"

Yes?

So what is the most important thing? The holiest moment? I'll quote from a hymn I wrote twenty years ago, which we might use more often, and from which I might take a lesson myself:

"to find in our fellow's face God's image seen." →

But what if we do find that strong medicine? ~ after all, the book of Revelation does speak about there being silence in heaven, if only for half an hour, as well as describing the unnumbered throng continually crying with a loud voice! Once we have learned, perhaps (and I do not find that easy), that worship is a sharing ~ after all, that is what *communion* means: *partnership, teamwork, fellowship*, and a whole load of other words which mean doing things together ~ after that, then perhaps there are opportunities for more muted worship, at 8.00am on Sundays, or on Thursdays at 10am.

Dates for your Diary ~ it's all

happening!



Note the Farmers' Market on Sat. July 6th

Women's Group

... meets on Mon. 1st July in the Rectory Garden for a Barbecue and general get together.

Note the earlier start ~ 7.00pm

As usual, bring food for half a person !

For all meetings, including this party, you are most welcome, even if you have not been before;

there is no formal membership ~ just turn up!

Wed. 3rd July 8.00pm Bible Study. Rectory. Also 10th.

Mon. 15th "Twilight" School Governors Meeting.

No bible studies for the rest of July, or August.

Thur. 18th 9.15 ish School End of Year Service

7.30pm P.C.C. Meeting in Hall.

Sat. 27th 2.00pm Cream Tea ~ Church Hall.

Farmers' Market, on Sat. 3rd August, in the village.

A Women's group is only pencilled in at present for August 5th.

Northenden Churchyard.

Just a brief note to thank those people who tend their own family graves. When this work is done it does take the load off our gardener and occasional volunteers. You will realise that at this time of year the grass has grown very long ~ that's what grass is

designed to do. This can be very attractive, though it can make it difficult to reach graves. If there is a particular one you want to visit, say for an anniversary, please let me know and we will ease your path! And a note of warning: this is a working graveyard, so watch out for hollows or humps as graves are dug or subside, and watch out for hidden kerbstones too.

And a final plea: if you are tidying the family grave, please **do not** put plastic bags, oasis or other artificial materials in the green bins, which are for vegetable waste that will rot only.

Magpie ...

... has been listening in to the debate about this American spy system called PRISM. It sounds a bit scary to think that a Government ~ someone else's Government ~ can check out who we call on the phone, or the sites we visit on the internet. But what strikes Magpie as perhaps even more scary is that this information is there for them to spy into, and that it is routinely available to commercial agencies ~ the phone company or the internet provider ~ and that they use it more freely than the Government spooks; to target us with advertising, or bombard us with not-so-free free offers as they plot our browsing and spending habits.

... is expecting a ringing in his ears on Wed. 14th August in the morning, as a team of Bell Ringers from various Universities comes to Northenden to sample the delights of our Ring.

... has discovered what the Rector did not know last month, that those funny hollow diamond shaped thingies (a real technical term, you notice) which appear in red on the gold St.Wilfrid flag ~ they are called *mascules*. But what a mascule is, other than a hollow diamond shaped thingy, is anyone's guess. (Now where's that French dictionary?)

... was it The Scaffold who sang a song warning us, wherever we go, always to take the weather with us. Over the past year we have had plenty to take, haven't we? But here's a thought, straight from a weatherman's mouth: *The Climate is what you expect; the Weather is what you get.*

... popped in to St.Wilfrid's Church on 16th June for morning service. Standing room only! 174 grown ups and 52 children.

Wythenshawe F.M. broadcasts in the neighbourhood ~ local news, music, views, diary events ... Tune in to 97.2 FM., or you can also listen online at < [www . wfmradio . org](http://www.wfmradio.org) >