

# CONCORD ~ March 2015

Prayer for the Month,

Almighty and everlasting God,  
who hate nothing that you have made,  
and forgive the sins of those who are penitent;  
create and make in us new and contrite hearts,  
so that as we lament our wrongdoing  
and recognise our sorry state,  
we may receive from you, the God of all mercy,  
complete release and forgiveness;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Saviour. *Amen.*

Based on the collect for Lent.

Northenden Rectory, Ford Lane.

0161 **998 2615**

Dear Friends,

I am happy to note that even before Concord hit the streets last month, the broadcasters had relented, and included the Green Party in the election debates which we will now be able to watch. How they will work, if the nationalist parties are also included even in England, will perhaps be more challenging and entertaining than the debates themselves! It's a shame, but I cannot honestly claim that Concord's intervention tipped the balance!

All of March is part of Lent this year. I don't pretend to say anything new about Lent (why reinvent the proverbial wheel?) It is a time for reflecting on our conduct, and on our relationship with God and on ways of improving it. So if you are able, join us for the Lent bible study/discussions in the Rectory on Wednesday evenings. I hope to use part of a course ~ "Emmaus" or something similar, to shape our conversations.

It is traditional for people to think about giving things up for Lent ~ chocolate, or sugar in tea, being the favourite examples. Don't let me stop you if that is what you decide, but as I have said before, Lent should perhaps be a time for *taking* things up, rather than giving them up: ~ Regular reading of the bible; more regular participation in common worship on Sunday

or (in Northenden at least) on a Thursday; some commitment to a charity or to community life or to the running of the church; ... and what you *take* up for Lent could perhaps be *kept* up afterwards. Or what else? *Making* up with an awkward neighbour, or relative? That does not always work out, since it takes two to make a go of it, but it is something to consider and try. Jesus suggested in his day that it could be more important than making a special gift at the temple. That would start with our prayers for her, or him.

During the month the Neighbourhood Forum is planning to ask for people's views on how the Village should progress in coming years. If you live or work in the Area, please let them have your thoughts, even if you are not a signed-up member. Questionnaires should come through your door, with a freepost reply envelope.

I am saddened to hear of the vandalism that has taken place at Northenden Golf Club. The presumably accidental fire at their club house is a shame, but the deliberate felling of a stand of about thirty native oak trees, and a number of sycamores too, presumably at the behest of the club directors is scandalous. They are custodians of part of the green belt, and of the Mersey valley park, even though the land is their own. They have cut the trees down in spite of a regulation which requires any felling of more than 5 cubic metres of timber to have the agreement of the Forestry Commission. Must we now literally watch this space for developments?

And now read on.

**Greg Forster**

# Church Road Chippy

78 Church Rd., Northenden

**Fish, chips, peas, sausages, pies, ...**

**Best quality food**

**tel. 0161 998-4630**

*Magpie*

... has again looked over the shoulder of some children as they wrote letters to God. Here they are, with original spelling and grammar;

*Dear God,  
We read Thos. Edison made light,  
But in SUN. School they said you did it.  
So I bet he stoled your idea,  
Sincerely, **Donna.***

Dear God,  
I am an Amearican, what are you? **Robert**

*Dear God,  
I think about you sometimes,  
even when I am not praying. **Elliott***

TEACHER: Glenn, how do you spell 'crocodile?'

GLENN: K - R - O - K - O - D - I - A - L .'

TEACHER: No, that's wrong.

GLENN: Maybe it is wrong, but you asked me how I spell it.

*(I Love this child. What a logical mind!*

*One day he'll be an accountant.)*

... has heard that some humans get excited about fifty shades of grey, and even have a film about it (is it in the old black and white format?) Well, Magpie can get excited about shades of black. People call him a black and white bird, you see, but just look at the shades of blue and green on his plumage, and he has a cousin in Spain who is Azure. But even more, look at the colours on a crow's feathers. Magpie doesn't always have much time for crows ~ noisy, cantankerous things ~ but their colours are stunning; glossy iridescent black, shot with all the colours of the rainbow and a few more besides, if you look in the ultra-violet spectrum. Just take a second look at them in the sunshine; they're cheeky enough on the village green to let you get close. Now that's something to make a film about ~ in colour!

... and you might see another kind of bird around the village green: a green one! Yes, the Parakeets are here, or one of them is. It has been seen and heard on Ford Lane near the church, and on Patterdale Rd., near St. Wilfrid's School, and it has

friends and relations near the Stenner Lane car park in Didsbury. Listen out for its high pitched squawk.

... has been making his usual flits around Northenden's building sites. Camperlands *has* definitely got back into business, with walls that are now head height to humans. From high up he can see the beginnings of a roof, and a very definite back wall, to the Church Inn building, and the more conventional houses behind have roofs and windows. It's looking good! On Church Rd work ~ genuine, serious work ~ has begun on Cragg's corner, with half a dozen flats in prospect. Opposite, however, there are still broken and smoke-blackened windows on the tower block. Is the owner biting off his own face to spite his nose, we wonders. He probably won't lose anything on this (even if he doesn't gain) because costs can be set against his tax bill. So, a question for parliamentary candidates: are they going to pick up the late Paul Goggins' campaign to get derelict and empty sites rated or taxed?

... and talking about the election, and maintaining a strict neutrality, without any bias or prejudice towards any of the candidates, Magpie understands that we are to have an Official Monster Raving Loony Party candidate in Wythenshawe and Sale East, and also for Northenden Ward in the local election. They must be mad!

## **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

***Please note this month's changes.***

*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  
Website: www . stwilfridsnorthenden . org . uk

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

*Services:*

On Sundays there will be a communion service at 8.00am.

On Thursdays also, at 10am, there is a communion service.

**Sunday Scramblers** ~ for 3½ to age 9 upwards ~ meet, for the moment, in the Church Hall unless there is a Family Service, between 10.30 and 11.30am on Sundays

**The Nigerian Anglican "Restoration" Congregation** meets weekly at **12.30pm** for about 1½ hours in St. Wilfrid's Church. The service includes traditional and modern music. There are also activities for children.

Mar. 1<sup>st</sup> 10.30am Family Communion & Parade Service  
6.30pm United Service @ Northenden Methodists

8<sup>th</sup> 10.30am Holy Communion  
6.30pm Evening Worship

**15<sup>th</sup> March. Mothering Sunday Family Service, 10.30am,**  
( Parade, but not Communion )  
6.30pm Holy Communion

22<sup>nd</sup> Mar. 10.30am Holy Communion  
6.30pm Evening Worship

29<sup>th</sup> Mar. 10.30am Holy Communion  
6.30pm Evening Worship

**Thurs. April 2<sup>nd</sup> Maundy Thursday. 7.30pm**  
**A Celebration of the Lord's Supper.**

**Good Friday, Apr. 3<sup>rd</sup> 10.30am. Hymns and Readings  
The Passion Story according to St. Mark**

**Apr. 5<sup>th</sup> Easter Day**

**10.30am Family Communion**

6.30pm United Evening Worship at St. Wilfrid's

Apr. 11<sup>th</sup> 10.30am Holy Communion

6.30pm Evening Worship

*Drop in on St. Wilfrid's ...*

**On Sundays from 2.30 till dusk/5pm the church is open  
for private prayer, for enquiries, or just to look around.**

To visit at other times, please contact the Rector.

Dates for your Diary ~ it's all happening!



### **Women's Group ~**

Next meeting on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 7.45pm: in the Rectory;  
Joan Mycock is talking about her recent visit to North India.

Wed. 4<sup>th</sup> ( and 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> ...) Lent group in Rectory, 8.00pm

Note the Mothering Sunday celebrations on 15<sup>th</sup>, in church 10.30

School Governors meet on Tues. Mar. 17<sup>th</sup> in the school, 4.00pm.

P.C.C. Meeting to be arranged.

Sat. 28<sup>th</sup> 10.00 – 11.30am Hall, COFFEE MORNING

Wed. 1<sup>st</sup> Apr. No Study Group.

Thurs. 2<sup>nd</sup>. School Easter Service, 9.15am in Church.

And note the Church's Annual Meeting on Sun. 26<sup>th</sup> Apr., 11.30am

Registers ...



### **In Memoriam.**

Irene Clover (Lingard Rd.) 91, David Devoy (Lovett Wk.) 71  
Bill Dewsnip (late of Northenden) 91.

We are also sad to report the death of Alan Robinson.  
Though for many years he has been a member of St. Michael's

church he also maintained links with St. Wilfrid's, through stage productions and latterly as a deputy organist. He will be missed.

### Anniversary ...

It was a delight on Sat. 31<sup>st</sup> January to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the marriage of Neil and Kirsty North with a short service of thanksgiving in church. (The original ceremony had been at the Registry) Congratulations and best wishes to them.

### Left Behind at St. Wilfrid's ...

Next time you are in church you might like to check the lost property tables! We have five and a half pairs of gloves, some children's, some quite smart adults'; we have about four and a half bibles (one is missing many pages); a scarf; several umbrellas; a vacuum flask; and in safe keeping the churchwarden has several bracelets, rings and ear-rings which have been left, and at least one pair of glasses. Are these yours?

### Annual Meeting ~ your advance call.

In the diary you will have noticed the forthcoming annual meeting, at the end of April. Before this, the church's membership list is revised, so if you are not on it but want to be, contact Elizabeth Towler or the Rector. At that meeting we shall hear reports on the church's activities and finances over 2014, and maybe discuss plans for the future a little. Elections for the Church Council will take place, as well as for Churchwardens and sidesmen (sidespeople? ushers?). Please consider standing, or proposing someone, for these posts. The meeting will follow a shortened Morning Service on 26<sup>th</sup> Apr. and should last less than three quarters of an hour.

### **Weight Control ...**

D. Holden

Gain control, not weight!

Weight Control is a participative self-help slimming club where members support one another through sharing their experiences of gaining and losing weight with weekly weighing.

We meet for about an hour every Saturday at 4.00pm at the church hall, adjacent to St. Wilfrid's Church, on Ford Lane, Northenden (M22 4WE).

For more information, phone Della on 0161 998-1378 or email dellayh @ yahoo . co . uk

CLASSES ARE FREE, so no excuses! Join us every Saturday!  
It's fun and empowering. This time lose weight permanently!

## *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, as they have for April.*

**Mar. 1<sup>st</sup>** 9.30am MESSY CHURCH ~ Pets and Peace  
11.00am Holy Communion ~ The Rev. Tim Nicholls.  
6.30pm United Service **at Northenden Meth. Ch.**

8<sup>th</sup> 11.00am Mrs. Margaret Parker  
6.30pm, evening service at Lawton Moor

15<sup>th</sup> 11.00am Mothering Sunday. The Rev. Philip Peacock

22<sup>nd</sup> 11.00am Mr. Tony Fawthrop

29<sup>th</sup> 11.00am United Service at Baguley, Tim Nicholls

**Maundy Thursday** Combined evening service at St.Martin's

**Good Friday:** Combined Service, Lawton Moor, 9 – 11 am.

**Easter Day 7.30am Sunrise service in Wythenshawe Park**

**11.00am Holy Communion,** the Rev Tim Nicholls.

6.30pm Evening service at St.Wilfrid's

Apr. 11<sup>th</sup> 11.00am Mr. John Harrison.

**Messy Church for Easter ~ Mon. 30<sup>th</sup> March.**

**3.30pm.**

and then the next Messy Church will be on 10<sup>th</sup> May.

### **Community Lunches**

Wed. March 11<sup>th</sup> 12.00 noon – 1.30pm

Next lunch; Wed. 8<sup>th</sup> April. (To be confirmed)

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***I believe ... 2. "We believe in one God" G.S.F.***

Sunday by Sunday in church we repeat the Creed as part of our worship, affirming our belief in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in forgiveness, the Christian community, and the hope of eternal life. It is worth looking at the creed and unpacking it, so that it is not just a mantra we recite, but something we understand (a bit, at any rate) and live by.

So we begin by affirming a belief in one God, who is Father, and Maker of heaven and earth, and indeed of all that exists, whether we can see it or not. When this was first put on papyrus, in the third or fourth century, there would have been few who doubted that there was a god, or rather that there were gods. Nowadays we are sticking our necks out to say there is a God; *then* the surprise was to say there was just one, and that he could be approached as a father who had created all things, ~ though some philosophers were prepared to talk about a single distant divine principle, behind a world that went through many ages and cycles.

***Nowadays we struggle to persuade people there is a God. Then they struggled to argue there was only one!***

But what conclusion should we draw from the fact that there is *one* God. St.Paul took the Jewish commonplace that God is unique, and argued that he is therefore interested in the whole of his creation, and the whole human race, not just in one special nation. But he went on to argue that the way he makes available for people to relate to him depends on his generosity, equally to anyone and is not dependent on our ancestry or efforts. It depends on what he has given us, specifically through Jesus, not on our religiosity. Speaking in Athens to an audience of Greek philosophers, who would have accepted many ways of finding religious fulfilment, he pointed them to the uniqueness of who Jesus was and what he had done in his death and resurrection. They could not say that all roads lead to God, though Paul acknowledged that they had been trying to find him. He called on them to "repent", which really means to change one's mind and attitudes and way of thinking about God; not just to be sorry about wrongdoing. (See Acts, ch.17, in the New Testament)

So when the fourth century bishops wrote, "We believe in *one* God," they were challenging people around them who worshipped the gods of their cities and nations in public; who consulted the stars, perhaps, or other ways of mapping their futures; who subscribed to secretive sects which offered a "true knowledge" that would pilot them to eternity, or to fulfilment on a human level; who might try some foreign religion to see if it was more exciting than what they had known before or offered some novel route to god. The bishops affirmed that there is one route, available for all, but it is through what Jesus has done, and leads to the one Creator God. I believe they would challenge us in the same way today, focusing us on the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So I am saying, as I believe they were, that it is not sufficient simply to look for spiritual experience, or meditative calm or the like, anywhere. St. John urges us to test every spirit

***Not every spiritual experience is good, or from the true God. We need discernment.***

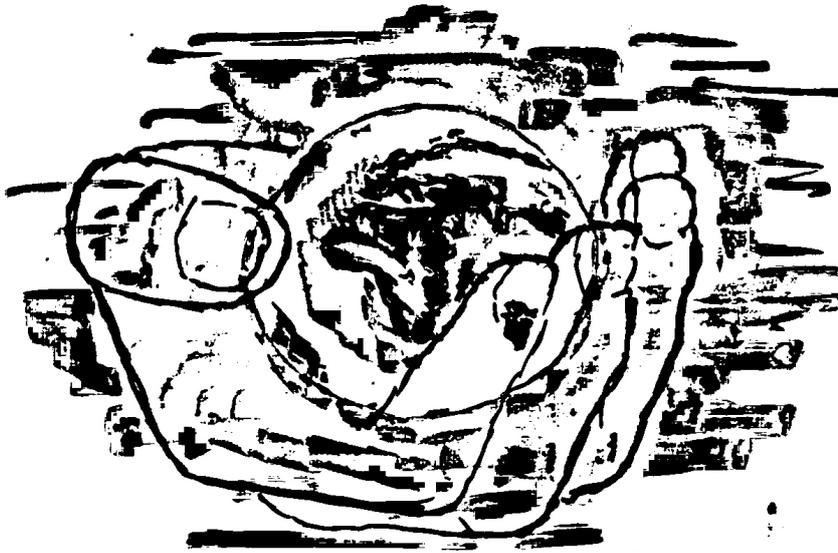
~ you could say every spiritual experience ~ to see whether it does come from God. I know of many people whose experiences in this area have been threatening or oppressive, not good.

And what of other major world faiths, especially Islam and Judaism which also affirm the oneness of God? I would distinguish here between the historic study of world religion, and the recognition of how we may be "saved" ~ that is brought into a wholesome and life-giving relationship with God for time and eternity.

In terms of the history of religions, there is an obvious sequence with obvious parallels between the various branches of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, though it is not a simple timeline A – B – C. In terms of "salvation" the question must focus on how clearly we depend on God's initiative and his generosity to us, since we cannot hope to twist his arm into accepting us on the basis of our own achievements. So the focus is not just on similarity of teaching or morality ~ Jesus' or anyone else's ~ but on God's intervention and actions on our behalf. Most religions will say "thou shalt not

***'Salvation' is not a matter of twisting God's arm.***

kill" one way or the other: few will be saying "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son ..."



The other side of the assertion in our creed is that there is indeed a God, a Father to whom we can relate. Though there were some doubters to challenge our fourth century bishops, this is much more a modern issue. It puzzles me a bit to know that there are people who run websites and hold meetings to persuade people *not* to believe in something ~ or rather, to believe in *not something*. (Atheism is as much a belief as is Christianity.) They hold, I suppose, that religion is harmful ~ and they have a point as they look around the world today ~ but their logic is flawed. The fact that something is used wrongly does not mean that its right use is wrong. That applies through-out life: bad driving can kill, but we do not ban car drivers as a response, still less believe that cars do not exist. I find it ironic that (in the Christian understanding of him) in the death of Jesus God was partly the victim of warped religious zeal ~ but that is for another day.

***Atheism is a kind of religious belief.***

But why do we believe that there is a God? There are a number of reasons, which are better described as pointers than proofs. Some militant atheists will argue that the balance of probability (the odds) against God's (or at least a creator's) reality are 1 in 10 with an awful lot of noughts after it. Perhaps, but in extolling the wonder of the universe they come up with a very similar figure for the odds against life as we know it ~ and if

you focus down on their own personal existence the odds are even longer, by another 6 billion. And they are here, aren't they?

So what are these pointers? I cannot do justice to them all in so brief an article, nor respond to the difficulties which they may give rise to. Let me simply list them. The first is the very existence of the universe itself in all its awesome wonder. Where the atheist says "Wow!", I want to say "Hallelujah!", and add that part of the wonder is that I am tuned in to appreciate it all. **Where the atheist says "wow" I want to say "hallelujah!"** A Christian atheist, conditioned to think of the God he does not believe in as good, may find the violence in this creation a reason for disbelief. He can be answered ~ briefly, it is in this violent energy that creativity happens, but that is only one partial answer among many.

Within this world and within human experience we can look at the way some form of belief and worship or cultivation of powers beyond physical existence. Again, this could point simply to a human trait, or cultural bent. The latest dismissal talks of us being "hard wired" for religion ~ but that could point towards a Creator who made us to respond to him. In the 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>

**Do atheists have an Oedipus complex?** centuries psychoanalysts suggested that religion was the search for a father figure (they clearly were not feminists) ~ but does that mean that atheists have an Oedipus complex? I'm not serious, except that if you reduce human behaviour "merely" to psychology, the argument cuts both ways.

Similarly, we see a common sense of fairness in human communities ~ not that we all act fairly, but we appeal to 'justice' instinctively. What communities reckon is right or wrong can vary, but the near universal deeper sense that right and wrong are real distinctions does point to a source of that Justice.

An argument made recently by the sociologist Peter Berger is that humour is a pointer to the fact that life is not purely mechanistic. The ability to laugh in adversity is part of our lives, which points to a God who gives the resources to enjoy life.

And finally, especially from a Christian perspective, the evidence for God includes his self-revelation, not least in the life and teaching of Jesus. But that will have to wait for another day.