

CONCORD ~ May 2012

Prayer for the Month ...

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire;
Thou the anointing Spirit art,
Who dost thy sevenfold gifts impart.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The first verse of an ancient Whitsun hymn ~ *Veni creator.*

Northenden Rectory, Ford Lane.
0161 998 2615

Dear Friends,

Whitsun ~ Pentecost ~ is a key time and celebration in the Christian calendar and the Christian story. This year it falls at the end of May: mark it in your diaries and join in the celebration. I have written in more detail later in this edition.

This year the regular Confirmation Service for our area takes place in St. Wilfrid's ~ on June 17th, at 6.30pm. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact me. In this diocese the lower age limit for Confirmation is 11, but there is no upper age limit!

Talking of age limits, can I thank everyone who wished me well on my recent 65th birthday. I wish I could have celebrated it by climbing Snowdon or something equally outlandish, but neither the weather nor other commitments allowed that. Thank you too for your kind gifts, and for keeping it nice and low key. Meanwhile, now that I am officially old, perhaps I shall wear purple ~ I've been practicing long enough! But now read on! *Greg Forster*

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 Roger Hensman, 980-5158.

The main hall and smaller rooms are available for hire;

~ contact Peter Todhunter (Meeting House Warden) 834-5797

Northenden Methodist Church

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

Sunday Services.

1st Sunday every month

Family worship ~ Sunday breakfast club ~ MESSY CHURCH
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 per person.

For details contact Amy Carline, 07816 888 704

May	6 th	9.00am	Messy Church
		11.00am	The Rev. Geoffrey Barnard (Communion)
		6.30pm	United Service ~ The Rev. David Bown
	13 th	11.00am	Miss Joyce Burgess.
	20 th	10.45am	Circuit Service at Brownley Green.
		6.30pm	District Service at Cheadle Hulme.
	27 th	Pentecost.	
		11.00am	The Rev. David Bown plus General Church Meeting
June	3 rd	9.00am	Messy Church
		11.00am	Morning Worship
		6.30pm	United Service at St. Wilfrid's
	10 th	11.am	Morning Worship (details not yet available)

Community Lunch

Wed. 9th May, 12 noon - 1.30pm ~
Next lunch ~ Wed. 13th June.

Fun Bingo

Usually last Sat. of the Month (May 26th), 12.00 noon - 2.00pm.
(to be confirmed in weekly notices)

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;

On Thursdays at 10am there will also be a communion service.

We run "Scramblers" ~ which I mustn't call a Sunday School ~ for children from 3½ to 7 ~ in the Church Hall, ...

... and "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 ~

i.e. May 6th, June 3rd., &c.

May 6 th	10.30am Family Communion 3.00pm Nigerian Congregation 6.30pm United Service at Methodist Church
13 th	10.30am Holy Communion, 6.30pm Evening Worship
Thurs. 17 th	Ascension Day Service at 10am, <i>And also at Christ Church, W. Didsbury at 7.30pm</i>
20 th	10.30am Holy Communion 6.30pm Evening Worship
27 th	10.30am Pentecost ~ Holy Communion 6.30pm Holy Communion
June 3 rd	10.30am Family Communion 3.00pm Nigerian Congregation 6.30pm United Evening Worship @ St.Wilfrid's
10 th	10.30am Holy Communion 6.30pm Evening Worship.

Drop in on St.Wilfrid's ...

On Sundays from 2.00 till 5.00pm the church is open, for private prayer, for enquiries, or just to look around.

On 6th May & June 3rd the church will be open from 2 till about 2.45pm in this way, and then will be in use for a service.

In addition, the church will be open on the last Saturday of each month, from 10am till noon (in parallel with the Coffee Mornings). This is a new arrangement to compensate for the "lost" open hours on "first Sundays". If you want to visit specifically on a "first" week-end, please contact the Rector.
The next open week-end is June 16th & 17th ~ displays & tower.

Dates for your Diary ~ it's all happening!



Weds. 2nd, 9th May; Bible Studies, Rectory, 8.00pm

May 13th – 19th **Christian Aid Week** (No Bible Study)

Mon. May 14th Women's Group (avoiding bank holiday)
 Rectory, 7.45 for 8.00pm.

Thurs. 17th Ascension Day service at Christ Church, Didsbury, 7.30

Weds. 23rd May Archdeacon's Visitation, 7.30pm, Stretford.

No Bible Study.

Thur. May 24th 9.15am (-ish) St. Wilfrid's School Service in Church
 Concert ~ see panel.

Sat. 26th Summer Fair. Details on posters to follow.

Wed. 30th 8.00pm Bible Study, Rectory.

Thu. 31st 7.30pm PCC (to be confirmed)

Weds. June 13th Bible Study. 8.00pm, Rectory.

NB Open Days in Church on 16th & 17th June, noon till 5pm.

And note also the two **Farmers' Markets** on May 5th & June 2nd.

Sidesmen.

Please note the Archdeacon's Visitation at St. Matthew's Stretford at 7.30pm on Wed. 23rd May. Wardens and clergy are also expected to attend, and PCC members are invited.

Women's Group. The next meeting will be on Monday **May 14th** to avoid the bank holiday; ~ timing as usual, speaker; Joan Mycock describing a visit to Egypt. Jubilee party on June 4th. Nothing in July, but mark August in your diaries.

Annual Meeting, April 22nd.

There were really no surprises at the Church AGM. Gwyneth Lloyd is again elected our only Churchwarden (thanks!). And Kathryn Morgan was able to report a surplus in 2011 in the church finances (Praise the Lord!) ~ just about balancing last year's deficit.

The Parish Registers –

In Memoriam ...



Cameron Simon (Marylon Dr.) 90, Harold Jones (85),
Peter and Bridget Marsland (Newall Green)
John Gurbutt (Sale) 68.

Baptised on Sunday 15th April ...
Alissia-Ava Kilcourse

Married on 24th March ...
Jody Armstrong to William Baker

Northenden Players Theatre Club:

The next production is on May 13 - 19th
~ Easy Virtue ~

at Northenden Methodist Hall, Victoria Rd.

Magpie...

... The Spread Eagle! Due to an oversight the words "The Spread Eagle" appeared almost randomly in Magpie's column last month. It was a reminder to put in some news, but since the news had not yet broken it just got overlooked. Now Magpie can reveal that an application for planning permission has gone in for the construction of eleven houses on the site of the old Spread Eagle public house on Royle Green Rd. They should be not unlike the development just next door in Belcroft Close ~ a row of houses on the front, and a spur going back towards the Church Path. The police agency which monitors such developments for security in their design (they are paid to be paranoid about these things, after all) has voiced very strong objections to the right of way through the car park being retained, and rather than delay the whole process it seems best to accept the developers' offer of improving the alternative footpaths on Ford Lane as part of the package.

Meanwhile, the council sub-contractors who are paid to discourage weeds from defiling the fair streets of our glorious city (and leave brown rings round every tree and signpost in sight) have sprayed the whole of the Church Path with weed-killer, so that it now looks a hideous yellow slimy mess, and will encourage other anti-social elements to fly-tip, churn up the ground, and otherwise defile this once fair green lane in our village. The Church Path is literally the Church's path, and these contractors are, arguably, guilty of criminal trespass and damage to private property.

As Magpie said last month, he takes a dim view of hacking into people's emails ~ perhaps even the emails of a Syrian dictator. This month he simply notes the irony that as charges are being brought by the police against newspaper staff who have hacked into emails and phones, and as there is an outcry at the news that a Pregnancy Advice Centre has had its website hacked, both our own government, and the European Parliament, and the US Congress are busy with legislation to allow them ~ their police or security services ~ to do just the same, officially: to gain access to personal details and messages on our computers and emails.

... has a footnote to the Rector's piece on Syria last month. Bahrain has also been a centre of protest, as a Shi'a majority press for more political rights from the Sunni led royal government. Apparently during what we call the middle ages Bahrain was governed by a Shi'a group, which raided Mecca, and went off with the black stone, the core of the main shrine there, and held it for ransom. In Christian European terms that is the equivalent of Martin Luther, at the height of the Reformation, leading an expedition to Rome and running off with St. Peter's bones. You can see why they might be a bit touchy.

... was delighted to see a flotilla of five Canadian canoes paddling down the Mersey in late April, despite the high water following the rains. More strength to their elbows.

... it was the most appalling slice. (Magpie has a few golfing stories, you see.) From the first tee it went off almost at right angles and crashed into a nearby tree. The golfer winced. His companions stifled their laughter. The ball bounced off wildly and landed on the no.18 green, where it rolled gently down the slight slope, bent neatly round the edge of the hole and went down. 71 under par must be a record. How many rounds of drinks did he have to buy for that?

NORTHENDEN CIVIC SOCIETY.

GSF

Firstly, please note not only the regular open meeting of the society, on Tues. 8th May at 7.30pm in St. Wilfrid's Church Hall, but also a special meeting, to discuss the Society's possible role as a *Neighbourhood Forum* under the new "Localism Act", on Tues. 15th May ~ same venue and time.

Annual meetings can be fairly routine, boring things, though they are necessary. The Civic Society's AGM was anything but. The guest speaker was Geoff Scargill, an ex-head-teacher now from

Stockport, though with strong Northenden connections. He spoke about some-one else with strong Northenden connections, Sir Edward Watkin, who during the 19th century lived at Rose Hill, now much altered and situated off Bronington Close.

Watkin was quite a significant figure; apparently he pulled together negotiations which led to the formation of Canada, despite major differences between the four British colonies involved; he wrote the building of a railway into their constitution (rather more constructive, I suppose, than their neighbour to the south, who wrote the carrying of guns into theirs.) He was a railway entrepreneur, of course, and dreamed of a through rail link between Manchester and Paris. He got half a mile under the Channel with his scheme before someone decided that the French might use it to invade us. He has been proved right in the end, but was too far ahead of his time then. Dear to my heart, he created a footpath up the difficult side of Snowdon which, Geoff suggested, is virtually his only public memorial. Within the church there is a monument, and he is buried here, and for those who know, Wembley Stadium is built on a foundation he laid for a rival to the Eiffel tower. So, should we be asking for a Blue Plaque? And if so, where? By the entrance to Bronington Close? (The house itself is set well back behind electronic gates now, and is called something different.) On the frontage of his station in Manchester ~ now the G-Mex or whatever conference centre? Perhaps not on Wembley, where the pleasure garden he created (and where they then began to play some football) was sadly not his greatest success. Any ideas?

Geoff also went on to tell the story of "the Icebergs", a painting by the American artist F.E.Church which Watkin bought in about 1880 because of his Canadian connections, but which then got "lost" here until it was found in 1979 still (after a circuitous story) in Rose Hill. That is, as they say, another story, but it was good to see Mair and Glenn Baulch, who were in charge of Rose Hill at the time back with us at the meeting to hear the story and catch up with Northenden. Geoff was urged to put his talk on paper for publication. I hope that he does, since it is a fascinating story.

Confirmation.

As noted earlier, there will be a confirmation at St.Wilfrid's in mid June. At Confirmation services the bishop presides, as the local representative of the worldwide church, and welcomes people into fuller membership of the church. For Anglicans confirmation is the

rite of passage admitting us to share in the bread and wine of the communion service. It stands for more than this, though; we confirm or affirm for ourselves what was said and done for us when we were baptised; we do believe in God, we do believe that Christ has reconciled us with him, and we to look for the Holy Spirit's support and presence in our daily lives. We pray that God will confirm and strengthen us in our faith and service; and the church confirms our membership within its ranks. It is not just something for teenagers ~ far from it ~ but for anyone who wishes to reaffirm these things. Contact me if you want to find out more. *Greg Forster*

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire ... GSF

Whitsun, or Pentecost, is the festival when we remember the coming of the Holy Spirit in a new and dynamic way to the church after Jesus resurrection and ascension into heaven. The account of the first Whit-Sunday is found in the Book of Acts chapter 2 in the New testament, as I am sure you know. Pentecost is simply the name of that festival: it simply means fifty; fifty days (7x7, a week of weeks) after Easter/Passover. Whit-sun derives, I think, from the custom of wearing white, or simply new, clothes on that day. By either name, it is worth celebrating, and making part of our daily Christian life (just as Easter should be part of our daily thinking).

And talking about names, we should not be confused by the two terms, holy *Spirit*, or holy *Ghost*. "Ghost" is simply the older, mediaeval English word for Spirit, as used in early translations of the bible, and is in this setting a way of describing the divine, personal energy and presence of God, influencing and inspiring his people individually and as a community. It is not to be confused with ghost stories about haunted houses or the like! He is as real and as loving a presence as Christ himself, reaching out to bring God home to us, and enrich our experience of God in our daily lives.

So how does the Spirit work in our lives? In all kinds of ways, and you cannot pin him down. *Catch the bird of heaven, sang Sydney Carter, lock him in a cage of gold ~ look again tomorrow, and he will be gone.* It would be too easy to think that we could describe the Spirit's work and say that we had got him taped. No. When we try to restrict God just to our set patterns, rituals and expectations we underestimate him. But we can give some examples of how he touches people, and sometimes he does use those patterns too.

Perhaps it is as we read the bible, and something suddenly makes sense and springs to life. Our hearts are warmed as the One who inspired the scriptures inspires us with them. Or perhaps it is as someone explains what the bible has to say, and our understanding grows. John Wesley spoke of his heart being strangely warmed one Whitsunday evening as he heard a Moravian pastor read a commentary on the letter to the Romans.

Perhaps it is as a church service seems to take off. It is not just a hundred people singing, but somehow through that there is a sense of uplift and an awareness that God is present, encouraging and inspiring.

Perhaps it is the sense of calm and peace as we sit praying; putting our hopes and worries into God's hands and knowing somehow that he is listening.

Perhaps it is the sense of wonder and worship as we see the beauties of God's creation ~ the gold of a sunset over the hills, or the wildness of a storm, or the delicate colours or intricate patterns of a bird's plumage.

Or perhaps it is the sense of relief as an argument is sorted out and resolves into laughter or tears, and disagreements are forgiven.

Or perhaps ... perhaps you could write a paragraph of your own here, thinking of some way in which God has touched you with his presence and love.

But the Spirit's work is not only shaping the way we feel. It is about more objective things in the way we behave and relate to other people within the community. St.Paul lists what he calls the fruit of the Spirit. The moral qualities which grow on us, like fruit on a tree, as we let the Spirit work in us and with us, and which affect how we get on with each other. Love, joy, peace and patience, he lists; goodness, kindness, gentleness and self control. You can't write laws or policies to regulate those, he adds. We may need to work at them, praying that these fruits will grow, and consciously practicing them ~ but as we do so, the Spirit works alongside us. Thus "spirituality" is not just about cultivating nice feelings, or even being religious, but becoming godly people and practicing justice and care.

St.Paul also talks about what he calls the gifts of the Spirit ~ though this is not just St.Paul. Other New Testament writers list the

same or similar gifts. He simply recognises that when we see them we are seeing the Spirit at work. Some of them are distinctly first generation Christian things ~ such as the role of the Apostles as the key first witnesses to Christ, his teaching and his resurrection. Others are for all time and any time; they may be dramatic, or almost routine. Service is one of them; practical help and getting your hands dirty, putting out chairs or making the tea. Managing the finances is another; I'm not sure if that is routine or a special gift, given the way some of us get into a whirl if there are more than two zeros after a pound sign, but Paul lists "accountancy" as a gift of God. Perhaps he has the idea of honest management of money, as well as coping with the figures, in mind. Teaching and preaching are other gifts; so is leadership. All these are things which he expected to be shared around the church. So too is prayer for healing, and the gifts of praying and praising God in languages beyond what we have learned naturally. Some translations put the word ecstatic in this list, but we are not necessarily beside ourselves as we pray in this manner, exciting though it may be. It simply means that we can tune in to what God wants prayed about, in ways beyond our human awareness. You will find the list, with variations, in the first letter to the Corinthian church, chapters 12 and 14, as well as in Romans and Ephesians and in Peter's first letter. Hospitality is another of these gifts, which must have been vital in the first century church, which lacked its own dedicated buildings so far as we can tell, and where many of its ministers travelled from town to town.

But this is not all. As you read other parts of the bible you will find other skills and actions described as the Spirit's work; the craftsmen who made the gilded metalwork and the fine tapestry of the Israelites' desert shrine are spoken of as endowed with the Spirit ~ so what does that say about fine craftsmanship or art in our churches, or in our homes, today? What about our hymn-writers? What about you? The things you have taken on for Christ's sake, and find you can do better than you dreamed of? The strength you have found to go an extra mile or two? I don't think Paul meant his lists to be exhaustive, if only because each one is a bit different. What would you put into a list of what you thank God for, in yourself and in others; his gifts through his Spirit?

But who is the Spirit? He is God's inner self reaching out towards us, so that God is not just a great but distant creator, nor

just a figure from gospel history, but someone who supports us here and now. In John's gospel Jesus promised that when he left the earth he would send "another comforter" to be with his people, guiding them into full integrity of faith. This implies that the Spirit shares the same qualities as Jesus himself, the original "comforter" who stood alongside his followers, but he also says that the Spirit's role is to point us back to himself ~ to Jesus that is.

St. Paul urged his readers to be filled with the Spirit ~ to go on experiencing the presence and support and inspiration of the Spirit. How can this happen? It should shape our prayers, and our expectations. Often, I think, people do not realise that God is at work simply because they haven't opened their eyes to that possibility. We have the example, in the early chapters of Acts, of how this worked for the early church, as they met and prayed.