

CONCORD ~ November 2015

Prayer for the Month,
Through all the changing scenes of life,
in trouble and in joy,
the praises of my God and King
my heart and soul employ.

O make but trial of his love,
experience will decide
how blessed they are and only they
who in his truth confide.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

From a hymn by Tate and Brady based on Psalm 34.

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

Dear Friends,

This issue comes out at about the same time as my final services, so briefly, farewell! I have been flattered by the kind things that many of you have said to me about my time here. I hope it has been of help to you, though I wonder whether I deserve all the nice things that have been said; I am conscious of the things that I have failed to achieve or wished could have been different in a way that you probably are not. Many thanks for your kindness, anyway. And Sue and I should like to thank people, both individuals and the church and in other groups and communities who have given us farewell presents of various sorts. You are most kind and most generous. Thank you. They will be valued and treasured along with our memories of the village and parish.

For the record, we shall not be leaving Northenden at once. In legal terms I am resigning from being Rector on 30th November, but taking the month of November as "holiday" ~ and probably working harder than ever sorting out papers and other items and writing up memos about the church while we frantically try to clear 36 years worth of junk and compress the contents of a large Victorian house into a small inter-wars semi. So if you see us around the village, do not be surprised. I have also

agreed to take a couple of funerals or interments of ashes (where I had taken the original funeral, so this is rounding off the farewells) during November.

“New” funerals, and requests for headstones, marriages or baptisms will be passed on as appropriate to colleagues, but continue to use the Rectory phone number to make initial contact, or drop in to the church on Sunday afternoons. We expect, at present, to leave the answerphone in operation, and it will be monitored and calls answered within a week or so.

Continue to pray for the Climate Change Conference in Paris. I thought last month that it was taking place then, but I gather now that it is later (December?). Whenever, we should still be concerned and pray for positive effects from it. I was saddened that our own Government seems to be backing away once again from its declared Green objectives, having recently announced cuts in the subsidies offered to green energy projects. Not only does this set a bad example, but once again it seems they are throwing away an opportunity for this country to be a world leader in these particular technologies in order to make dubious short term gains. As I said before, one of the lessons drawn from the story of Adam in Eden is that we are stewards, responsible to God for the care of the place we live in. It is not simply ours to ransack in our time as we choose.

We see a great deal more at the moment on our TV screens and in our papers about the **Refugee crisis** in southern and eastern Europe, stemming from the Middle East and parts of Africa. As I commented last month, the scenes are tragic and moving. But what should they move us to do?

What we can do to share in helping with the problem may include donations to Christian Aid, or other organisations, which are trying to support people in their immediate need ~ Christian Aid, PO Box 100, London SE 1 7RT.

We are still considering the future for **Concord** in the coming year. (PCC Meetings are rather overcrowded at present) At present it looks as if a curtailed version, giving reports and diary dates, will be produced, at a lower price, until my successor has the option of developing it again. More next month. So do not pay in advance for 2016 (but 2015's is due!)

But 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 ...

... flew past the church in mid-October, and saw the Rector sliding gracefully down a muddy patch on the roof on all fours. 'What on earth are you doing,' he asked. 'I'm not doing anything on earth, any more than you are,' came the reply, 'we're both thirty feet in the air.' 'You know what I mean,' retorted Magpie, 'What in heaven's name are you up to, if you prefer it?' 'I've just turfed a load of slutch out of the gutters and downspouts. Three years' worth, I reckon. There was a young forest up there on the high roof, and one of the hoppers was blocked. And I had a word with the heads, too.' 'The heads?' asked Magpie, 'has something gone to your head?' 'No, look where the high parapet meets the tower. There's a head with three faces on one side, and a weathered green man on the other.' 'Get away,' said Magpie, incredulous, but there they were so he perched on one. 'They were there before these gutters were,' said the Rector as he lowered the ladder. 'I'll take your word for it,' squawked Magpie, and flew off.

... has heard that the Booth Centre, the Cathedral's work with Manchester's street people, has featured as winner in two of the Spirit of Manchester awards; Lawrence McGill is volunteer of the year, thanks to the garden he has created for the centre. And the centre itself won the award for involving those they help in the running of the service. Look out, Magpie expects that there will be a fuller report in Crux.

... was saddened to hear of the death in October of former councillor (and ex-Lord Mayor) Gerry Carroll, who represented this ward for many years.

... and also of Kirsty Howard, whose life-long battle against a heart condition, and the use she made of her short life, has been an inspiration to so many. She lived in Northen Moor.

... joined in the folk concert at St. Wilfrid's on 21st October. A good time was had by all, with a snappy, well managed programme, the usual wonderful cakes, and a warm church! £89 was raised on the night towards the work of the Booth centre, and this will be sent on to them as soon as possible

... has heard that both the toilet block by the river and the old Library site have been recognised as Community Assets, and it is now up to the Community to suggest practical plans for their management ~ in the one case Magpie would have thought it was obvious; a toilet by the public park is a sort of no-brainer, given the number of people using the park, the Trans-Pennine Trail that goes through it, and latterly the river itself for canoeing as well as fishing ~ but what else can be done alongside that use to pay for it and add to the amenities? Funding to work out how to manage a scheme and fund it long term seems to be available.

... heard that the Farmers' Arms has been sold, for £1.2 million at auction. But he does not know who the purchaser is (if he was told he forgotten it). At that price it must be the land, rather than the profit from beer sales, which is the attraction. There is no protective classification on the area or the building ~ though I believe there should be. It is part of a group of old houses around Moor End and the bottom of Longley Lane which the Civic Society suggested might become a part of Northenden's Conservation Area, also to include the listed JW building, the Dell (the oldest man-made feature in the Northenden landscape) and early and later nineteenth century cottages. Back in the late 1960s (wasn't it?) local campaigning preserved these cottages when the council wanted to demolish them alongside the premises on the triangle between the Farmers' and Palatine Rd.

... had sight of the book of comments and tributes presented to the Rector at his final Sunday service on 25th Oct. There were some splendid pictures and comments, and Magpie thinks that at least one should be recorded for posterity: *St. Wilfrid's Marches on its Stomach*. It accompanied a picture of an array of cakes at one of the church gatherings. But it is not just St. Wilfrid's. The Crown does a good line in cakes too, and Magpie took a peck at the cake church prepared by Alan as part of their farewell to Greg. Wow, that was some cake ~ or was it a "confection" of chocolate and icing and biscuit. Magpie only just got off the ground afterwards.

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

SWANSONG, ... or Parthian Shot?

Greg Forster

I have written elsewhere in this magazine about the church ~ the Christian community ~ and the wider village Community. Both are important and as "parson" of Northenden I have tried to foster both. But what to me is more important, and what is certainly the reason for the Church's existence, is our relationship with God through Jesus Christ, his Son and our Lord. (I would also argue that the wider community is a gift of God too, part of his 'common grace' or open handed generosity to all humanity, along with rain and sun, harvest and culture ~ but that is a different story.)

I believe there is a God. I believe too that his character is best seen in who Jesus was, but more on that later. I believe that our human sense of fairness is a pointer to him: that some things are right and some wrong, even though different societies will come up with different lists of right and good. Our sense of humour too (which I suspect we share with at least some of the animal kingdom) suggests that we are more than just biological machines, as does our ability to grieve (which we also share with some of the animals.) Our sense of awe as well, as we look at the cosmos around, and are awe-struck, but also inquisitive and curious to know how it works, is a pointer beyond ourselves, ... and this is a characteristic seen in the very earliest footprints left by man on our planet. And we are awe struck because that cosmos is truly awesome, and itself reflects the awesome glory of its Creator. All these are pointers to the God with whom we resonate because we somehow reflect his nature.

I have spoken of pointers, not proofs, because in the end it

is not something that I can prove absolutely ~ and perhaps even that is a kind of blessing, since it means that our relationship with this Creator will be a relationship, not a mechanical response. Some atheists, espousing their scientific (or scientistic) creed, talk about the 'probabilities' of God's reality, and dismiss them as being impossibly long odds. In the same articles they will perhaps describe the comparable odds against there being life as we know it anywhere, and then enthuse about the fact that it happened, at least once that we know of, here! OK. I would prefer to suggest for the sake of this argument that the odds on God are 50/50, if you like. Forget the clever maths; he *is* or he *isn't*. And the fact that we are here against the odds is a pointer to the fact that he *is*, and has chosen to express himself by communication and creation. So I say Hallelujah, not just Wow! I do believe in God!

The second plank of Christian belief is to say that the man Jesus, who lived about 2000 years ago, is an expression of God in some way in human terms; "The Word (who was and is God) became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." It is an amazing claim and theologians have spoken about the "scandal of particularity". (They like posh phrases!) Does it make sense that the Creator of the cosmos should allow himself to be pinned down in one particular human individual (add 'in a frontier province on one particularly minor planet in one corner of one small galaxy')? It is good to recognise our human limits, but they are not a limitation on what the Creator chooses to do. I know there are lots of questions about how, and why then, and so on. Let me sidestep them here (Concord is not the last word in theology) and just look at Jesus.

The story of his life mingles the extraordinary with the ordinary, the painful with the joyful. He begins life as a refugee; he shows remarkable insight as a young teenager; he works in a family business (which probably involved hitting his thumb with a hammer from time to time!); he shares in and comes to lead a religious revival, but that involves misunderstandings, rejections, misrepresentations and physical hardships; he shares friendships and has a reputation for enjoying his meals and the parties that go with them, for feasting as well as fasting. He sees the hand of God in creation, and brings the rule of God close to people by his joyful presence. He speaks the word of God to those around him, even when it is uncomfortable, and accepts its guidance in his

own life and mission. He also accepts the sorrows that land on him as a destiny which will rebuild the bridges between God and humanity ... but read all about it yourselves in the Gospels. He is a portrait of God in human terms, enshrining God's image, but more: in him God experienced and so understands first hand the sort of things that make up our lives, and accepts the consequences of having the world created the way it is ~ and by doing so, by his suffering, he did some-thing which transformed his suffering into atonement, so making up for our moral errors and remaking our relationship with God, if only we will accept it.

I believe also that this suffering death of his was not the end of his story. Contrary to normal human experience and expectation he was seen alive and substantial in the weeks after his death. His followers were convinced of this, convinced too that it was not merely a ghostly apparition, and were willing to give evidence, almost in a formal court-room way, to the fact. They saw this 'resurrection' as a guarantee that what he achieved ~ our reconciliation with God ~ was true and worked; 'he was raised for our justification.'

He spoke to God as Father ~ so distinctively that the word is preserved in our records of his life in its original language; 'Abba'. Though he taught his followers to pray in that way too, the way he spoke of God as *his* Father pointed to the conclusion that his relationship with God was special and unique, and deeper than just close devotion. We see in him not just a teacher or prophet or even angel, but as God-in-man ~ God the Son, sharing not just human nature but divine nature and being as only God our creator can. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

God is not just an awesome cosmic Creator, or even a figure, however human, in human history, but is ready and I believe eager to support and help people in their everyday lives now. We speak as Christians of the Holy Spirit, and we mean more than just an atmosphere about a place or an attitude to life. We hold that God can make his presence felt within our lives, in our experience and our sense of direction. It may be in our uplift as we worship, or our peace as we pray; it may be our wonder at a sunset or at inspiring music; it may be relief as argument turns to laughter and reconciliation comes. It may be what Wesley described as his heart burning within him as we hear God's word brought home to us. I believe in the Holy Spirit, lord and lifegiver

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.

Nov. 1st. 9.30am Messy Church #
11.00am Joyce Curtis
6.30pm United Evening Worship ** (at Northenden?)

8th **10.45am Remembrance Sunday Parade service**
The Rev. Tim Nicholls

15th 11.00am Margaret Parker

22nd 11.00am Chris Goddard

29th 11.00am The Rev. Tim Nicholls Holy Communion
6.30pm Taizé Service The Rev. Tim Nicholls

Dec. 6th 9.30am Messy Church #
11.00am Details to be announced §§
6.30pm United Evening Worship at St. Wilfrid's **

13th 11.00am Morning Service §§

** These venues are to be confirmed ~ listen out for the venue in weekly notices ~ synchronising with the Players is not always straightforward!

§§ December's preaching roster is not yet available.

Community Lunches

Next lunch; Wed. Nov. 11th (To be confirmed)
Next lunch after that ~ Christmas Dinner! Wed. Dec. 9th.
Details to be confirmed and booking will be necessary.

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.

- Nov. 1st 10.30am Family Communion ##
6.30pm United Service at Methodist Church **
- 8th 10.30am Morning Prayer ##
6.30pm Holy Communion
- 15th 10.30am Holy Communion ##
6.30pm Evening Worship.
- 22nd 10.30am Morning Prayer ##
6.30pm Holy Communion
- 29th 10.30am Holy Communion ##
6.30pm Evening Worship
- Dec. 6th 10.30am Family Service and Parade.
6.30pm United Service at St.Wilfrid's (Tim Nicholls)
- 13th 10.30am Holy Communion
6.30pm Evening Worship

SERVICES, ...

Let me repeat what I wrote last month: it will be up to the Churchwardens and the Area Dean to work out the future pattern of services, but for the first couple of months the list that I am leaving with them will alternate between Communion and Services of the Word. I know that some of you are happiest with communion services, but seriously, there are not enough ordained clerics around for this to happen every week (now *three* other parishes are also 'vacant' at the moment in the Deanery).

Let me remind you also why we meet; it is to support and encourage each other, not least by being there and putting your heart and soul into it; it is to hear and receive God's holy word ~ in listening to the bible and in its explanation and application in the sermon; it is to pray for a troubled world, and offer our worship on its behalf; and it is to recognise our need of God's forgiveness and show our gratitude for this. We affirm this at the beginning of most of our Sunday morning services. You do not need a cleric present to do any of this, nor are bread and wine essential ingredients ~ but you are!

We hope to maintain all three Sunday services, and the Thursday communion, but if you aren't there, neither will they be.

Drop in on St. Wilfrid's ...

On Sundays, from 2.00 till 5pm, the church is open for private prayer, for enquiries, or just to look around.

To visit at other times, leave a message on the Rectory answerphone, and it might be possible to arrange something.

We hope to maintain these drop-in arrangements during the interregnum. This will be an initial point of contact for Baptism and Wedding inquiries.

Dates for your Diary ~ it's all happening! 

Remembrance Sunday, 8th Nov. The main parade service will be in the Methodist Church, starting at 10.45am. At about noon wreaths will be laid at the War Memorial. The 11am Silence will be observed in the Churches and echoed later at the memorial.

Wed. 11th **Concert in the Church 7.30pm**
Palatine Wind Quintet.

Tues. 17th Deanery Synod, @ St. Michael's, 7.30pm

Sat. 28th 11am to 1pm Autumn Fair in the Church Hall.

Nov/Dec PCC meeting ~ Wed. 18th Nov. 7.30pm.

And looking a bit ahead, the Carol Service is on 20th Dec at 3pm, led by the Ven. Mark Ashcroft, archdeacon of Manchester.

Registers ...



Baptised, on Sun. 18th Oct. in the parish church

Taylor John Ward, Aurelia Iris Wilson,
Alfie Darryl Spilsbury-Sisson.

The baptism was conducted by the Rev. Roy Chow, Taylor's great-uncle.

In Memoriam.

Claudine Boyer-Chandler (Robt. Owen Gdns.) 80,
Christine Walls (Yew Tree Ave.) 61,
Madeleine (Madge) Brown (Weston Grove)

Many thanks ...

... to Sue Forster, Jeff Clarke, Jackie Walker and others who have been painting the churchyard railings with Hamerite metal paint over the past few months. They look so much smarter now.

Women's Group ~ *Sue writes...*

And on Mon. November 2nd., in the Rectory as usual, except it will be at **7.00pm**; a farewell party. Bring food, if you can, for the proverbial half a person, please.

Community Orchard... again

G.S.F.

I wrote last month about how we have established a small "community orchard" at the east end of the churchyard. Some of its trees produced well this year, even though they are quite small. The intention is for any members of the public to help themselves to a few each once they are ripe. Likewise, if you want to pick blackberries in the churchyard, you are welcome ~ but beware of anything else; it is probably poisonous.

Something new again, ... out of something old

G.S.F

I wrote last month about graffiti in St. Wilfrid's church, in particular about a scratched window plan. We continue to work on it, and some local archaeologists spent a happy Saturday in October learning about graffiti, and then surveying the church. We did not finish, but did find some carpenters' marks on the screens between the chancel and chapels, and have, perhaps, identified that the plaster/ limewash on which the window was

scratched, and in other places, may have been painted, red, and black, and green. Mediaeval churches were often riots of colour, not bare stonework or Victorian whitewash. By December's magazine we may have more to say about that.

And for a while (20 odd years to be more precise) I have wondered about the alignment of the church. It is roughly 80° , not due East (with the tower being about 2° off that). The conventional wisdom is that churches were lined up on sunrise on the day of the Saint to whom they are dedicated. Well, that does not work for St. Wilfrid's ~ his day is 12th Oct., by which time the sun rises at about 110° , or even further round allowing for the hills on our eastern horizon. But I was up on the tower taking the St. Wilfrid's flag down at sun**set** on 17th Oct., and noticed that the church more or less lines up on that. Making allowances for the quirks over leap years in the middle ages, and trees on the horizon, that is not far off St. Wilfrid's day. I wonder what that means; were they just rather lazy and did not bother to get up early enough to get sunrise ~ or is it simply parallel to Ford La.?

Jesus. *A very short introduction.*

Richard Bauckham, Oxford UP. £9.99p

Can I give a very short review of this booklet, which I came across when Prof. Bauckham spoke recently in Didsbury. It is part of an extensive series by a secular publisher, and gives a very fair and delightful intro to Jesus, how we know of him, and his place in the world. Well worth looking into. Easy to read. *GF.*

More Steps along the Way.

And a final brief note ~ that after October there will be a variety of worship leaders in St. Wilfrid's, some local and some from elsewhere. They will lead the services in ways different from me, and arrange pastoral support, probably better than me. But I have been me, and they will be them! The same will hold good for whoever is eventually appointed as the next Rector. Someone once complained to me that she did not get anything out of the services. Fair comment, perhaps, but I wondered how much she was putting into them. Use whatever is done, for your own heartfelt worship and gratitude to the God who loves us and has given himself for us.

Greg Forster