

CONCORD ~ October 2010

Prayer for the Month ...

Lord of hope and truth,
in a world of doubt, give us confidence in you,
in a world of disbelief, help us trust and obey you,
in a world of disobedience, give us fuller faith in you,
in a world of materialism, help us to live by your values,
in a secular world, give us a vision of your heaven,
and in this heavenly world, keep us rooted in practical love,
that our hearts and lives may be surely fixed on your
love and truth and worth, in worship and gratitude to you
for all your loving generosity to us. *Amen.*

Northenden Rectory, Ford Lane,
0161 998 2615

Dear Friends,

Welcome to October's issue of Concord.

Can I first highlight a number of events, which you will find in the diary pages; On Sat. 16th Joan Mycock is promoting a Coffee Morning in the Church Rooms in aid of the Children's Society (I think they are encouraging a nationwide series of coffee mornings that week). Box holders are specially welcome, but we are all invited. 50p coffee & biscuits, + sales table in aid of the society.

On the following Thursday, 21st, the Palatine Wind Quintet have agreed to give a concert for us in Church. You may remember their previous visits, with a selection of light classical pieces. They are an excellent group, with members working in other orchestras and ensembles as well as this one. Do come along and support them, and the Booth Centre in aid of which the concert is arranged. More details will be on posters around the village.

Sunday 31st. is All Hallows' Eve, as you may be aware. On a number of occasions in previous years we have marked this season ~ All Saints' & All Souls' tide ~ with special services for those who have been bereaved in the previous year or so. I hope to arrange that again this year, and to send out invitation letters to the next of kin whom I know, but some of you will perhaps have lost loved ones who lived elsewhere, whom I do not know about. Do

please feel free to come specially to the service on 31st., and invite other family members if you wish.

I have received advance notice of the planned fees for weddings and funerals next year. These are fixed by the Archbishops' Council, and vetted by Parliament. We do not control them locally, though there are also local fees ~ for the organist, and virger ~ to pay. Banns, here or in another church, remain unchanged at £22 and £34 respectively. The wedding itself rises by the princely sum of £2 to £262. (I have some leaflets about church weddings available in church or from me if anyone wants to know more details). These are probably among the smallest items in the list of costs at a wedding nowadays! Funerals also show a slight increase, of £3 to £102 for a service led by a C/E minister at a crematorium. The permutations for use of church and churchyard are complicated, but if you need to know I can explain them ~ the changes are of the same order.

Last month I encouraged people to consider getting involved with leading worship. There is a special event arranged by the diocese for those who help share the wine at a communion service, at St.Clement's, Chorlton, on Thurs. 11th Nov. at 7.00pm.

I am writing this over the week-end in which the Bishop of Rome has been visiting our shores. His presence has stirred up some controversy, not least because of child abuse scandals in the church. Perhaps he has made a rod for his own back over this, but I cannot help feeling there are those who are not affected themselves but who are only too keen to pick it up and beat him with it. Sadly that has partly obscured his main pastoral and political message, that faith should not be pushed out of the public arena by what he called militant secularism.

Nevertheless, politicians and others have indeed been swift to proclaim that they do value faith communities, and the church. Let them continue to say it, not only loudly for the Pope's ears, but also when it comes to recognising Christian conscience in legislation about, say, schooling or adoption. And let them say it too for the faith's own sake, and not because a church or faith based charity is a cheaper way of developing communities in a big society than by direct payment of civil servants or local government employees to do this. The silly secularism which tried to replace Christmas with Winterval, in case it upset the Muslims, is largely

receding (or was it a clumsy ploy to do Christian faith down?) There remains a more insidious kind which finds it difficult to respect faith or a conscience shaped by values, Christian or otherwise, different from its own ~ sometimes in the name of an imposed tolerance.

So let us pick up the message and run with it. God is there, faith is real, and a conscience shaped by Christ's standards has much to say to a culture distorted by militant consumerism.

I have mentioned one concert. Please look out for two more, details of which will follow next month. We expect to run our usual Christmas mixture of Folk music and traditional carol singing some time in December, and then, probably in February, a visit from a Choir from Hazel Grove with a range of popular songs ~ details still to be arranged.

And advance warning of another price increase. For many years now Concord itself has been priced at 40p a copy, £4.80 for the year. This is lower than many comparable church magazines, and given that the church is working at a deficit it seems right (even though Concord almost pays its way) to increase the monthly price to 45p from next January. (The Church council rejected the steeper rise to 50p, which seems to be the going rate, if not below it.) Obviously, we still hope that you will continue to take and enjoy the magazine.

If you still haven't managed to pay your distributor for this year's copies, you could get the payment to church or the rectory (but include a note to say who it is from, or we may still chase you for it!)

So read on: to find our usual mix of diary events and services, comment on local and national issues, and this month, thoughts about the Christian good news itself.

Yours faithfully,
Greg Forster (Rector)

The Children's Society ...
... has a charity shop at 356 Palatine Rd.
Normal opening hours are 9.00am – 5.00pm.,
with a range of Good-as-New goods, especially books.
There is also a wide selection of new, end-of-run, wallpapers.
Volunteers are needed in the shop; contact Debbie on 945-7384

Northenden Methodist Church

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

Sunday Services.

- Oct. 3rd No Morning Service at Northenden:
**11.00am Circuit Service at St. Andrew's Ch.
Brownley Rd.**
6.30pm United Service **at St. Wilfrid's ***
- 10th 11.00am Holy Communion Service
The Revd. David Bown.
- 17th 11.00am The Revd. David Sanders
- 24th 11.00am Mrs. Olivia Tuihalamaka
- 31st 11.00am **(GMT)** Mr. J. Harrison.
- Nov. 7th 11.00am Morning Worship
6.30pm United Service @ Northenden Methodist Ch.*

* The programme for our united evening services has been juggled to avoid clashes with Northenden Players' performances in the hall.

Community Lunch

Weds. Oct. 13th. 12 noon – 1.30pm

Fun Bingo

Sat. Oct 30th. 12 noon - 2.00pm
(please check details beforehand !)

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,

IN GOD WE TRUST, ...

Greg Forster

Last month I wrote about the wonders, and challenges, of Creation, and the way in which I believe they point to a wonderful and creative God, who works through the challenges to craft something awesome, yet a fit home for us and for life as a whole. I do believe that the world around is a pointer to God, but my faith focuses not on creation, but on Christ.

Who he is, what he said and what he did speaks even more eloquently about God, and his dealings with us, than even the glories of the created universe. (Though in passing, I note how even people who shy away from talking about God will attribute purpose, and benignity to the Universe and its dealings with them, as if it is God by another name. Built into *our nature* is a sense and recognition of his truth.) But to continue, as someone said, Christianity *is* Christ. Our belief in God is not just a belief that there is a higher power somewhere which is behind what we see around us, a "Force" that may be benign, or a "World Soul" which animates the material universe. He is "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," personal and concerned about his creation and us within it, and the evidence for that is as much the way Jesus lived and taught and worked as anything else.

And yes, Jesus, like father like son, speaks God's character and purpose to us in person. I know that sounds an odd way to talk about someone, but we do describe him as the *Word of God*. John, in his gospel (ch 1 v 14) describes how the Word ~ God's self expression and creative communication, there from the beginning ~ became flesh ~ fully human ~ and lived among us, full of grace and truth, generosity and integrity. In what we see of his life we see a revelation of God's reality and qualities; our view of God has to expand to include what he said and did, suffered and achieved.

In a page I can hardly sum that all up, but I will try to begin. He showed that God values people of all sorts, even the ones who get squeezed out in the normal run of social affairs. The classic examples in the gospels are the lepers, pushed away for fear of ritual as well as clinical contagion, and children, too young to count, but whose trusting nature he saw as the gateway to God's rule, his kingdom. And he even prayed for foreign soldiers who were hurting him cruelly, when they might have expected curses.

Yes, he pushed for reconciliation and forgiveness, and wept over how his fellow countrymen turned away from it. He told brothers, arguing over their inheritance, a story to make them turn away from materialism and look for eternal values ~ not least (I believe) the need to make up with each other. Asked about divorce he gave answers which challenge people to realise what they are doing to each other, not what the law allows them to get away with.

Where people were sick, or deeply troubled spiritually, he made God's rule a reality in their lives by healing and restoring them, forgiving them and freeing them. This was no easy touch, but something which seems to have drained him emotionally in some way. It was not magic, but care. These actions, whether feeding crowds or whispering hearing to a deaf man, were loving responses to human need, not the acts of a show-off.

He took the reality of God as given. To pray was for him as natural as breathing, so you won't find complicated arguments for the existence of God in his teaching, but he did encourage people to look at the generosity they found in creation ~ the rain falling on good and bad alike, the birds finding food and the glory of a flower meadow ~ and see in it a reflection of God's generosity, which they should go on to copy. People would find God by copying and following him, not by arguing about him: belief is not just what goes on in your mind, but the practical trust you place in him.

And why did he come? His answer was that he came to serve, and to give his life as a ransom, a way of bringing people back into a relationship with God. So the story of his death on a cross, drawing all people to himself, and of his resurrection, is a portrait of a God who goes through the challenges of his own making to bring real hope and new life to all who accept him, working not just through power and pomp, but more through love and fellow feeling.

All Hallows' Eve ... *just a thought.* GSF.

... Hallowe'en, or All Saints' Eve, if you prefer it. 31st Oct. Something to celebrate, or just an excuse for a party ~ for the kids, or for us grown-ups?

It is actually supposed to be about saints, holy people, not ghouls, and if the dead come into it at all it should be their blessedness that comes to mind, not some horror!

So, have an All Saints' party if you want to ~ don't be a kill-joy: See who can wear the *happiest* fancy dress ~ clowns, or saints (in haloes, or in St.Helen's rugby strip, red and white) ~ bob the apples, light the candles (with care!), share the treats and spare the tricks (the nasty ones, at least!), enjoy the fun, scare away the nasties with your niceness! Yes, that's *well wicked!* (if that phrase isn't out of date by now.)

In fact, have a nice day!

And just another thought ...

What is it that makes you and me and John Newman, and Herr Ratzinger saints, let alone blessed ones? Let's take a leaf out of Holy Paul's book (Philippians to be precise, chap.1 verse 1, in the New Testament). He calls himself and Timothy his colleague "slaves of Christ", and addresses the "holy people in Christ" ~ the saints ~ in Philippi. Yes, he calls the ordinary Christian believers there "saints", the ordinary word for holy, or "special for God." Then, as a bit of an afterthought, he adds that he is writing to the bishops and deacons there as well. That puts a different perspective on saints, and on bishops, doesn't it?

HARVEST GIFTS (St.Wilfrid's)?

It is of course a customary part of Harvest Festival services that people generously bring gifts, not only as a symbol of their gratitude to God, but also for practical use to help people in need. If you grow your own fruit or veg., or have made your own jam, then it is a most welcome and appropriate offering and we can gratefully use it, but don't buy that sort of thing in specially. Stuff that will go off, especially soft fruit, is difficult to use.

But what is useful is either stuff like instant soups, tea, coffee or biscuits, and things that can be used to fill a sandwich, which we pass on to places like the Booth Centre, or tins, especially ones with ring-pull lids, which can be made up into small parcels for the travellers and others who call at the Rectory door, asking for food. Tins, of course, will keep the year round, and we make up enough packs to last most of the year.

The Booth Centre, by the way is, as many of you know, the Cathedral's drop in for Manchester's street people. They offer light food or drinks, and also run courses and activities to get people back into a more settled life. Their annual reports, &c, are available at the back of St.Wilfrid's church.

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 between 10.30 and 11.30am Sundays ...

... unless there is a Family Service in church.

Oct. 3rd. 10.30am Family & Parade Service ~

Harvest Festival.

6.30pm Holy Communion (United Service)

10th 10.30am Holy Communion

St. Wilfrid's "Day"

6.30pm Evening Worship

17th 10.30am Holy Communion

3.00pm @ Christ Church, W. Didsbury: Confirmation.

6.30pm Evening Worship

24th 10.30am Holy Communion & Baptism

6.30pm Evening Worship

31st 10.30am **GMT** Morning Worship

All Saints' tide ~ in memoriam service.

6.30pm Holy Communion (1662)

Nov. 7th 10.30am Family Communion & Parade Service

6.30pm United Service at Northenden Methodist Ch.

And a brief note, in case you get this magazine early enough ~ the
School's Harvest Festival Service is on Thurs. 30th Sept. starting at
about 9.15am. Families and friends most welcome. The Thursday
mid-week communion may start a few minutes late that day.

Drop in ...

On Sundays from 2pm till 5pm the church is open,
for private prayer, for enquiries, or just to look around.

***The next full scale "open days"
will be in May or June 2011***

Dates for your Diary ~ it's all happening!

Remember the farmers' market on Sat. 2nd Oct.!

Sun. 3rd, straight after morning service: Harvest Lunch in church. Bring some food if you can ~ there will be some provided too ~ and enjoy the food and the friendship.

Mon. 4th Oct. Women's Group Rectory, 7.45 for 8.00pm

Mon. 11th School Governors' Meeting, 6.00pm

Wed. 13th 8.00pm Bible Study, Rectory

Sat. 16th 10.00am to noon Coffee Morning ~ 50p

Church Hall ~ **Children's Society** ~ Sales table.

Wed. 20th 8.00pm Bible Study, Rectory.

Thu. 21st 7.30pm **Concert** Palatine Wind Quintet
In Church, in aid of the Booth Centre.

Wed. 27th Bible Study, Rectory, 8.00pm

Sat. 30th Coffee Morning, 10.00 – 11.30am Church Hall.

Mon. 1st Nov. Women's Group. Rectory, 7.45 for 8.00pm.

A Visit to the Maldives ~ last chance to see ...?

(and as Concord goes to press there is talk of a trip to hear *Singing in the Rain* at RNCM on 24th Nov. ~ ask Magpie for details)

The Parish Registers

Married in the parish church on ...

... Saturday 28th August

Kylie Louise Bowers to Alan Patrick Cleary

In Memoriam

Ruth Kearney (Gatley), Wilfrid Ollier (Yew Tree Lane) 73.
Alan Joynson (Northen Moor), Graham Wright (Sale Rd.) 67

And another ~ open ~ letter to the parish.

Please feel free to share it with anyone who has bent your ear about the Churchyard!

From the Rector.

Dear Parishioner,

Northenden Churchyard

I understand that a number of church members and people who do occasional work for the church have been approached by parishioners complaining about the way in which the churchyard is managed. Firstly, if you have any comments or

grumbles, please speak to me about it. It is not fair to trouble friends or acquaintances over something about which they probably have little knowledge and no say.

Anyone is welcome to maintain their own family grave how they want to ~ cutting it, planting flowers, placing wreaths, paying a gardener to come in, &c. If you do this you are welcome to take your rubbish home, or leave it in the black wheelie-bins at the east end of the church. Please do not, however, dump it on the next grave across, as I have seen done. After all, that family might repay the compliment when they do their grave next week! If you do leave flowers, please arrange to clear them when they are dead. We do not, however, allow weed-killer or kerbs and the like.

Our hope is to cut right across the churchyard at least once a year, but to do so in a way which leaves it as a wild-life sanctuary, rather than a tennis court. When one area was kept very short some years ago I used to find football games going on on it. This means that at any time there will be short areas (especially near the church itself) and long areas, but that it should not be so tangled and overgrown that graves are inaccessible. That is our hope: whether we manage it does depend partly on the weather. Wet grass simply clogs the mowers, and our gardener does not like working in a rainstorm any more than you would (and neither do I!)

Perhaps you feel it was not done this way in the good old days. I disagree. I have photographs from the "good old days" (1950s, 1890s) which show a churchyard far more unkempt than it is nowadays.

If you have a particular reason for wanting a grave cleared at a particular time ~ an anniversary, or because cousin Flo is visiting from Australia for the first time in 20 years ~ let me know and we can bring that grave into the normal round of cutting early. We cannot undertake to maintain particular graves specially all the time. The money and time we have available is simply not enough.

Some final points. You may know that in some parts of Europe graveyards charge a regular "subscription", and if that is not kept up monuments are cleared and the space allocated to another family. That is not British practice, but it means our only income is from current burials, or a subsidy from the church which is running at a deficit at the moment. And lastly, we are still open for burials, either in an existing family grave if there is space remaining, or in a limited number of unmarked graves last used over 100 years ago.

Yours faithfully,

Greg Forster

Magpie

... felt the need to duck the other day ~ the Open day. There he was, happily perched on the top of the church tower with his mate Chanticleer the weather cock, and who should come by but a Buzzard ~ and you don't mix with those fellows. Big, tough birds they are. And scarcely had the one gone over than another followed and they began ducking and diving, wheeling and soaring around each other. Magnificent! But yours truly kept his head down and his eyes open that afternoon, and no mistake. Mr. & Mrs Buzzard moving in, eh? There's a turn up for the book.

... and talking of Chanticleer, has anyone noticed how often he has been pointing North or thereabouts this year? Doesn't quite seem right, does it? We're used to lots of South-Westerlies, not chill Northerlies.

... has found his feet tapping of late, especially around the Church Hall. There's a group of dancers, singers and actors meeting there of an evening, rain or shine (and especially rain, it seems). They are rehearsing for a show, the well known *Singing in the Rain*, in the Royal Northern College of Music on November 24th, which sounds worth hearing. Tickets from the RNCM box office.

... flies along Longley Lane from time to time. It seems an age, doesn't it? All that work (or the lack of it) to put in traffic calming islands and chicanes, lights and crossings seems to be taking an age, if not an age and a half! Who planned the project, we wonders. When Magpie went to school they used to set problems ~ do you remember them? ~ "If it takes one workman one week to dig a trench, how long will it take five workmen?" Of course the mathematical answer was a day, but in the real world on the ground, ... well, from the experience of Longley Lane, it seems that five weeks would be an underestimate, ... or five months.

... hasn't heard the name yet of the heron by the Riverside Park, but he met its friend the other day ~ the Open day. A lovely, graceful bird this one, flying majestically over the pews in Gwyneth Lloyd's hands. Yes, a wicker bird. She (he?) may end up in the library. And there's a whisper that the lady who crafted him (her?) at the Park's own open day will be teaching other people how to do it some time.

... and while he flies along Longley Lane he sometimes drops in to the Waste Processing Plant at Sharston. The Household Waste area is open now: what a revolution from its predecessor! The new entrance is on its way, too ~ no more queues outside soon.