

CONCORD ~ October 2015

Prayer for the Month,
Almighty and everlasting God and Father,
we thank you that through your Son
you have called us to be part of the team
which is your church both here and more widely;
Hear this prayer of ours,
which we offer for all your faithful people,
that all in their various callings and ministries
may be instruments of your love,
and ministers of your grace.
And give especially to those responsible for continuing your
work within this parish your gifts of wisdom, understanding and
vision; to your glory, for the wellbeing of the church and
community, and maintenance of your truth;
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Based on prayers from the Alternative Service Book

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

Dear Friends,

October is the traditional time for **Harvest** Festivals, of course, though I anticipated it a bit in September. This is a cause for gratitude, as we see God's generosity in creation and express our thanks ~ to him primarily, though everyone involved in production and distribution should be in our thoughts too. And though the traditional harvest gifts are fruit and vegetables, the other gifts of the earth ~ mineral resources, and the human skill to use them ~ all these are God's gifts, even if what we see in front of us is a mine shaft or a production worker. All good gifts come down from above, as St. James reminds us.

In our set harvest "collect" prayers we remember not just our gratitude to God, and our own well-being, but the relief of those in need. One of our harvest hymns asks for "a just and equal sharing of the gifts that earth affords." So our immediate gifts are shared (from Northenden at least) with some of Manchester's street people through the work of the Booth Centre ~ the Cathedral's project to help and rehabilitate them. And gifts

to development charities such as Christian Aid should also be part of our worship ~ their envelopes will be out on 4th Oct. in church.

And a third element in our celebrations should be a resolve to use God's gifts wisely and with restraint. That may be our own individual care for our gardens, or thoughtfulness over what resources we use; it may also be a desire, and maybe some kind of campaign activity, to see restraint and wise use of limited and at times polluting resources. (How much do you use a car when you could walk or cycle, and improve your health in the process, perhaps?) I am embarrassed at present at the amount of car use we are putting in. Pray for the Climate Change Conference in Paris this month, and for positive effects from it. 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 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. The scenes are tragic and moving. But what should they move us to do?

I suggest that we need to break down our action, and our understanding of what is going on, into separate parcels. Faced with the (comparatively minor) humanitarian crisis of 5000 hungry people in empty country, Jesus' question was direct and personal: "What have you got?" What can we do to share in helping with the immediate problem? Christian Aid, and other organisations, are trying to support people in their immediate need ~ Christian Aid, PO Box 100, London SE 1 7RT.

But this is a more long lasting and more complex issue, and along with meeting immediate need there is a longer term issue to be sorted out. I suggest that we *should* distinguish between asylum seeking refugees and simple economic migrants (though those who don't like them at all are trying to treat them all as economic, and for some there are probably mixed motives. A camp in the Lebanon may be safe, but any person with initiative and hope for his family will want to improve their economic situation as well as their safety.)

I believe we should be ready to accept those who are fleeing for their safety, and in doing so we should recognise that they may in fact help British society. Our health service, to give

but one example, is overstretched and understaffed: with suitable retraining, if only in language skills, medical staff from Syria or Iraq, say, would be an asset, not a drain on this country.

And even those whose motive is simply economic have shown significant initiative, which should be seen as a positive element in their CV. If they do bring useful skills as well, this country should be geared up to using those skills from the start, rather than forbidding their use for years while an asylum application grinds through the processes. It is a complex situation, I know, but sometimes it is this country which creates its own problems, I fear.

One Friday in September **Parliament** debated an important ethical issue, and by all accounts debated it seriously and well. I began to write about this in this letter, but I think it is more suitable to a separate article, which you will find later in this issue ~ *No Man is an Island ...*

We are considering the future for **Concord** in the coming year. 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**

St. Wilfrid's School.

Some of you will know the Church School had a bad Ofsted in May. Let me confine myself to what has been done, and what will be done. The Local Authority was required to put the school into Special Measures, and so from 1st Sept. it is being run by an Interim Executive Board. They are supposed to turn the school around within a year, and then feed it into Academy status. In doing so the church connection must be retained. The parish will hold them to that ~ but we wish the school and its pupils the best.

Magpie ...

... and his friends are sometimes asked about one of Northenden's most enduring Urban Myths ~ so enduring that it was probably once a Rural Myth. There is a tunnel ~ there are tunnels ~ running from the church to Wythenshawe Hall! The romantic (or perhaps actually frightening) image is conjured up of

fleeing Cavaliers, or priests, or whoever, crawling from one to the other while marauding Roundheads/protestants/or whoever, scour the countryside above. Well, though Magpie is happier exploring above ground he feels fairly certain that there is nothing underground to explore. The route would go under two old watercourses, and since the underlying ground is compressed shingle and pebbles which let the water through any tunnel would be awash. (The same would be true of any tunnel between Baguley and Wythenshawe Halls) Digging of graves and trenches for sewers and power cables (not least in the past 25 years) has unearthed nothing. And why tunnel so far, anyway? What a shame!

But when you meet an Urban Myth it is sometimes worth asking it where it came from. Might there be some truth behind such a story, or some trigger which gave rise to it? Let's see. There once was a cellar under the church tower, which was filled in in 1875 during the rebuilding of the church. There are cellars in houses opposite the church. Did someone with a sense of imagination put two and two together and make five (or 22) ~ especially when one of those houses was occasionally used for Roman house-masses before St.Hilda's was converted to Catholicism? And at the other end, were there tunnels, or just extended cellars, or even a genuine bolt-hole, under the old buildings and copses at Wythenshawe Hall? Magpie has heard that the numbers reckoned in the garrison in the 1643 siege vary widely ~ were people slipping in and out? If and when archaeologists get at the Hall this is a question they might try to answer.

... had a merry jaunt flying to Yorkshire in September, to celebrate the introduction of Margaret Young as vicar of Easingwold with Raskelf, near Thirsk. Lots of people from her old parish of St.Luke's were there too and clergy from Wythenshawe, but it was a Manchester affair in other ways as well, as a former curate in Didsbury and a former Vicar of Moss Side were among the *dramatis personae* from the York end. Also there was David Bown, the previous Methodist Minister here, who had come up from Bedford to see Margaret installed and to join us in wishing her well. Her new parish is a country town, with a network of villages and communities around looking to it for shopping and social facilities, and a large school too. We wish her well.

... looked out for the Stockport Half Marathon on Sept. 6th, and has to admit that he did not see much of it (and neither did many other people, it seems). Yes, traffic cones were put out (in the wrong place) to prevent parked cars blocking the route. They were still there a fortnight later. Some stewards in yellow jackets were seen; but the runners? Ships in the night. They must have been travelling too fast to be seen.

... without being dismissive, that could not be said of the participants in Northenden's one and only Boat Race, on 30th August. There were in fact two races in one ~ canoes and dinghies. They were started this year by Sue Forster ~ a Cambridge rowing blue ~ and prizes were presented by Jimmy Kelly, our local Youth boxing champion. Congratulations to Mike Kane MP and his crew who won a close fought race against David Metcalfe and Claire Chapman in the canoes, in a time of 12 and a half minutes; ... and to John Horner and his colleague who won the dinghy section, again by a tight margin. A pre-run of the 2020 election? There were more contestants than ever before ~ three canoes and 23 dinghies, two of which became floats as their crew ended up swimming the course. Well done you all, and well done for what was raised for the work of Christie hospital. £600 or so on the day, and lots more in sponsorships to come in.

... flitted around Northen Moor one Sunday morning and saw (actually he heard them first!) that the Nigerian Anglican Congregation which used to meet later in St. Wilfrid's, is now worshipping in St. Michael's Hall ~ where there is more parking, though even there it is not without difficulty, and more space for children's classes. He wishes them well; more strength to their elbows!

... is one for the birds ~ he is one, of course. He remembers how, perhaps thirty years ago, it was a thrill to see a pale dusky pink bird with a collar round its neck. Yes, collared doves used to be rarities; now they are two a penny. So Magpie was delighted to see another feathered friend in the neighbourhood, with a collar round its neck ~ an iridescent red one, matching its beak, and contrasting with its iridescent green body. Yes, we have a ring necked parakeet visiting frequently, maybe two, presumably from the colony in Fog Lane Park.

... one of the little ceremonies when a new incumbent is introduced to a parish, is that she rings the church bell to

announce to the parish that she is there. When Margaret Young was inducted at Easingwold she rang their bell a dozen or so times, and someone was heard to remark, "she's going to be here a good long time, then." There is a standing joke, perhaps a mere superstition, that a vicar will stay as many years in the parish as the times she strikes the bell. Magpie asked the Rector here how many times he rang the bell those 36 years ago. "In fact I didn't ring it at all," he replied. "Climbing all those spiral steps in the middle of the service, in cassock and surplice, would have held things up, and been a recipe for an industrial accident. No, I simply walked to the back of the church, and called up to the ringers who were waiting in the tower to let them go. They rang a touch of their favourite method. Six bells for two or three minutes must have been a heck of a lot of strikes! No wonder you couldn't get rid of me!"

**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

Always something new, ... out of something old G.S.F

I wrote last month about graffiti in the church. The sketch of a window is not either the present windows, nor the previous ones. They had an angle of about 120° at the apex. The sketch has a right angle. So is this a rough drawing done on twelfth or thirteenth century plaster of a window put into the perhaps new south aisle in the fourteenth that was replaced in the sixteenth? By November's magazine I may have more to say about that.

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.

- Oct. 4th 9.30am Messy Church
11.00am Harvest Festival Holy Communion
The Rev. Tim Nicholls
6.30pm Evening Worship ** (at St.Wilfrid's ?)
- 11th 11.00am Morning worship; Praveen Jayaprakasam.
- 18th 11.00am The Rev. Philip Peacock
- 25th 11.00am The Rev. Charles Nevin ~ Communion
- 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

** Listen out for the venue in weekly notices ~ synchronising with the Players is not always straightforward!

Community Lunches

Wed. Oct. 14th 12.00 noon – 1.30pm

Next lunch; Wed. Nov. 11th (To be confirmed)

Our Ward Councillors hold a "Surgery"
in St.Wilfrid's Church Hall
on the first Saturday each month from 10.00 till 11.00am.
(i.e. Oct.3rd, Nov.7th)

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.

- Oct. 4th 10.30am **Harvest Festival, family service.** #
Light Lunch in Church ~ b.y.o.g.
6.30pm United Service @ St.Wilfrid's (Communion)
- 11th 10.30am Holy Communion (≈ St.Wilfrid's Day) #
6.30pm Evening Worship.
- 18th 10.30am Holy Communion (The Rev. Roy Chow)
6.30pm Evening Worship.
- 25th 10.30am Morning Prayer #
6.30pm Holy Communion
- 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.

SERVICES, ...

It will be up to the Churchwardens and the Area Dean, Stephen Edwards, to work out the pattern of services during the interregnum, but for the first couple of months the schedule that I am hoping to leave with them will alternate Communion and Morning Prayer/Services of the Word. I know that some of you are happiest with communion services, but in terms of practicalities, there will not be enough ordained clerics in the deanery for this to happen every week (two other parishes are 'vacant' at the moment too). 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 is bread and wine an essential ingredient ~ but you are!

We hope to maintain all three Sunday services, and the Thursday mid-week communion.

SWANSONG;

During October the Sunday morning services will take on a "farewell" tone, and I am hoping to invite particular groups of people to each one ~ at the Harvest on 4th it is those whom I have baptised, or whose children I have baptised; on St. Wilfrid's Day, 11th it will be those whom I have married. The 18th will be a baptism, and I hope the church building will be full of regular members as well as visitors for a welcome rather than a farewell. My colleague Roy Chow, a former vicar of St. Nicholas, Burnage, will be involved.

My final *Sunday* services will be on October 25th, and though the emphasis will be a more general look towards the future, it is the Sunday before All Saint's day, and those whose family funerals I have taken will be most welcome. And if you have been confirmed here in my time, please join us then too.

Please take this note not only as an invitation to yourselves, but also as something which you could share with friends, family and neighbours who might have a special interest in these occasions, and invite them to come with you. **G.S.F.**

Drop in on St. Wilfrid's ...

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

To visit at other times, for the moment please contact the Rector.

We hope to maintain the Sunday drop-in arrangements during the interregnum. This will not least be an initial point of contact for Baptism and Wedding inquiries.

Dates for your Diary ~ it's all happening! 

If you get this in time ~ PCC meeting on Wed. 30th Sept. 7.30pm

Thurs. 1st **Oct.** c. 9.15am School Harvest celebration in church

Sun. 4th Oct. NB Harvest Lunch immediately after 10.30 service

Mon. 5th Women's Group in Rectory ~ see Sue's note.

Mon. 12th Deanery Pastoral Group, in St. Wilfrid's (Church) 7.30.

Wed. 21st. **Folk Music Concert ~ "Swansong."**

Sat. 31st 10.00 – 11.30am Coffee Morning Church Hall.

October's/November's PCC meeting is yet to be arranged.

Mon. 1st. **Nov. Women's Group** 7.00pm Rectory
Farewell Party! Bring food for half a person!

11th Nov. **Concert** ~ Palatine Wind Quintet, 7.30pm in church

Remembrance Sunday, 8th Nov. The main village parade service will be in the Methodist Church, starting at 10.45am. Afterwards (about noon) there will be the wreath-laying at the War Memorial in Palatine Rd. The 11.00am silence will be observed in the Churches, and echoed (?) later at the memorial.

There is a **Confirmation** service in the Withington Deanery booked for the afternoon or evening of November 15th. If anyone is interested in exploring their faith more deeply, and going forward for confirmation, please let me know and we can make arrangements. *GSF*

Registers ...



Baptised, on Sun. 20th Sep. in the parish church

Rocco Christopher Wesley-Smith, Parker Atticus Brimble,
Bobby Ross Perkins, Teddy James Moore,
Benjamin Robert Mackey.

In Memoriam.

Beryl Butterworth (Kingsley Rd.), Cliff Smith (85).

Married, in the parish church on Sept. 18th ...

Elizabeth Alice Holden to Ewan James Allan

Women's Group ~ Sue writes...

The next gathering will be on Mon. Oct. 5th. The Speaker is to be John Roussell, talking about a small charitable project with which he is involved ~ *India Share*. He used to work for

Christian Aid in Manchester, and before that was a colleague of Greg's in a project in Moss Side. 7.30pm., in the Rectory.

And on Mon. November 2nd., again in the Rectory, this one probably at **7.00pm**; a farewell party.

Community Orchard

G.S.F.

Many of you will know that we have established a small "community orchard" at the east end of the churchyard. Some of its trees produced quite a heavy crop, even though they are quite small. I have rounded up a few fruits already, but the intention is for any members of the public to help themselves to a few, once they are ripe, which probably means mid- September. Likewise, if anyone wants to pick blackberries in the churchyard, you are welcome ~ but beware of anything else; it is probably poisonous.

No Man is an Island ...

Greg Forster

I referred in my opening letter to the Parliamentary debate on the Assisted Dying Bill. The courts had asked Parliament for a ruling, and this was an attempt to provide it. At issue was whether we should allow those whose life is drawing to a close in a painful or distressing way (but who lacked the means or physical strength) be allowed to ask for help to end it by their own choice? In the event the debate was remarkably well attended for a Private Members' day, and the proposal was (to the surprise, I think, of many) voted down by over two to one.

There are many emotional arguments on both sides, and emotion is part of the proper consideration of this issue. Pain, indignity, distress, pressures on the family, loss of personal control and autonomy, fear of the slippery slope towards non-voluntary euthanasia, the effects on others involved, ... Writing about this, and reading about it can be emotional, and painful too, and I hope that in saying all this I do not set too many raw nerves jangling. There are also more objective issues, to do with the value of life, respect for persons, how might this affect my relationship with God, the increased ability of medicine to keep people alive beyond a natural span, an individual's rights ~ and duties and responsibility ~ medical integrity, how does our society care for the terminally ill, and also the effectiveness and appropriateness of the particular proposals put forward.

Let me deal with that last point first. The proposal was that with certain safeguards a person might be allowed to seek

help in ending their life if they had only six months to live, and were of sound mind, capable of making the decision. For someone faced with severe and unremitting pain in a fatal illness, that can seem reasonable, but what most people express a fear of, I think, is the long drawn out indignity (and the drain on carers) of a dementia or wasting disease. With such illnesses it is not clearly possible to say a person has only six months to live at a time when they also have the mental ability to make a decision. In other words, well intentioned though the bill was, it was not appropriate for its purpose. More appropriate would have been commitment to adequate hospice and other end of life care. There is a danger that a focus on assisted dying could divert attention from this, more human and humane, consideration.

I listed a fair number of other points to consider. I will focus on just one, which the title of this piece highlights. I know that modern thinking sets a high premium on individual choice and individual rights. In this setting (and I don't mean to sound scathing) it boils down to "I have the right to do what I want with my own life, in my own time, because it is my own, and to expect others to fall in with my wishes."

I want to challenge this rights based moral thinking. Is "my rights" the only matter at issue? I suggest not. Modern thinking is in error, I believe, in looking only at the individual's rights. An individual has responsibilities and duties too, towards other individuals and to the wider community, and even as she approaches death those duties remain. Balanced against my fear of a painful or undignified death should be the respect I ought to show for my doctor's sworn duty to preserve and enhance life, and my elderly or disabled neighbour's fear that her family will twist her arm, or the medics', into shuffling her off before she is ready and when there are still fine things to be seen, and peace to be made. Despite the safeguards, this is a real issue, which was expressed, not least, by disabled parliamentarians around the debate. So no-one is an island, entire in themselves. We are all part of a wider network in which our actions impinge on others. So ask not for whom the bell tolls ~ it could toll for us all.

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! 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**