

2 0 ~        S e p t e m b e r        ~ 0 9

### Prayer for the Month.

Blessed are you, Lord God, sovereign of all creation, for in your generosity you have given us a rich and good world, a beautiful and prolific world, and all things take their existence from you.

Help us to honour and worship you for all you have made, to show respect and care for your good Earth, to express our gratitude in action as well as words of praise, and use what you have given us with wisdom, foresight and generosity;

Blessed be God, creator, sustainer and life-giver; blessed be God for ever.                      Amen.

Northenden Rectory, Ford Lane,  
Manchester, M 22 4 NQ  
0161 – 998-2615

gsf @ stwilfridsnorthenden . org . uk

Dear Friends,

Local history to be proud of, and Heritage days to celebrate it; a magpie on a soap box; marriage and baptism ~ the Rector's views on the latest cut price deal from the dear old C of E; and harvest thoughts on food production and the like, ... its all in September's Concord, and much more (well, a bit more) so read on now.

And when you've finished reading Concord (or better still, before you start, how about reading a bit of the bible?

Yours faithfully,

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 Lesley Thomson (491-1323)

The main hall and smaller rooms are available for hire;  
~ contact Peter Todhunter (Meeting House Warden) 834-5797,

# Northenden Methodist Church.

Palatine Road.

Minister: the Revd. David Bown,

**5 Kenworthy Lane, Northenden, M 22 4 JF**

**0161 998 – 2158**

## Sunday Services.

Sept. 6 <sup>th</sup>	11.00am	Mr. Duncan Rutter
	6.30pm	United Service at St. Wilfrid's
13 <sup>th</sup>	11.00am	Holy Communion (the Rev. D.Sanders)
20 <sup>th</sup>	11.00am	Mr. T. Fawthrop
26 <sup>th</sup>	11.00a,	The Rev. Malcolm Purdy
Oct. 4 <sup>th</sup>	11.00am	Morning Worship
	6.30pm	United Service

## Community Lunches ...

... restart in September; the next one is on  
Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September, from noon till 1.30pm  
and then every 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday in the month.

Fun Bingo Sat. 26<sup>th</sup> Sept. Noon till 2.00pm

---

## Marriage and Baptism

Greg Forster

It must have been the day after Concord went to press for the August edition when there was an announcement that the Church was publishing a combined Marriage and Baptism service. For some this was a sign that the church is moving with the times; for others it was a sell-out to the declining standards of the present age. For myself, I'm not sure whether it is worth the fuss. I'm sorry if this is damning the liturgical commission or whoever with faint praise, but it hardly needs a central church pronouncement to enable clergy to slot one service into or alongside another. I attended just such a combined service last year, which worked well enough without guidance from central authority.

What does trouble me, however, is the confusion that this introduces. I suspect that the liturgiologists have had a good idea and run with it, without asking themselves what the implications are. They did it in the latest plain marriage service

in fact. The lump together the solemn legal commitment made by bride and groom to each other as they answer "I will" to the question, "Will you take ... N ... as spouse?", with the welcome, but merely social, promise of friends and family to support the couple; a promise which has no legal or binding force. The promise by friends and family is socially nice, and it is a moral point worth making that support from their immediate community is important for any couple. But that is not the same as the legal undertaking the couple themselves are making to each other. It is of a different order, and to mix the two can lead to confusion and a lessening of the significance of the couple's commitment.

Similarly, to introduce a baptism into the marriage ceremony confuses the issue. It too is of a different order. (Or should I say to introduce a marriage into the baptism service?) The marriage is an institution within God's common grace to humankind ~ his general good will and intention for order in human communities ~ ratifying the relationship between a man and a woman, and clarifying their status for social, tax and inheritance purposes. The baptism is a sign and symbol within God's saving grace, expressing how we come to relate to him within the Christian community. To throw it in as bolt-on extra in a marriage is to diminish the enormous truths about the love of God which it expresses, and to diminish the importance of the children involved too. Their place in a wedding, if practical, should be as bridesmaids or pages.

I mentioned having attended such a combined service as a wedding guest (and there were particularly poignant reasons for combining this service), but in my wider experience couples have dismissed the possibility of a combined do, timing baptism and wedding so as to give due weight and significance both to the child and to the celebration of his or her life, and also to themselves and to the celebration of their relationship. Generally, for emotional as well as legal reasons, that is how I believe it should be. Sorry, Liturgical Commissioners.

## CHAPTERS

Another date for your diary ... on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> Sept. and every following Saturday from 10am till noon we will be selling second hand books in the Church Hall to raise money for St. Wilfrid's church. We need books to sell, and people to come and buy them, so please tell your friends and ask them to tell their friends about

us. If anyone would like us to pick up books, please call Sandy or David Latham on 946 1377. See you on Sept 5<sup>th</sup> at CHAPTERS !

**St. Wilfrid's Church,**  
*Ford Lane. (Off Church Rd.)*  
Rector: Greg Forster (998-2615)  
Organist: Arthur Mellor (928-0472)

**www . stwilfridsnorthenden . org . uk**



## Services:

Communion on Sundays at 8.00am (except 23<sup>rd</sup> August)  
and on Thursdays at 10.00am

There is usually a "Sunday Club" for 7 – 11+ year olds meeting in the Rectory at 10.30am, for about an hour, but ...

... please note that Sunday Club is closed until October 11<sup>th</sup>. There are no meetings during September because leaders are away. So have a lovely summer, everyone, and come back to school refreshed! Note that there are Family Services in church on 6<sup>th</sup> September and (for Harvest) 4<sup>th</sup> October.

And "Scramblers", for children from 3½ to 6+, meets in the Church Hall from 10.30 till about 11.30am., breaking for the August holiday, but starting again from 13<sup>th</sup> September.

Sept. 6 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am Family Communion 6.30pm United Service @ St. Wilfrid's
13 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am Holy Communion 6.30pm Evening Worship
20 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am Holy Communion 6.30pm Evening Worship
27 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am Morning Worship ~ Back to Church 6.30pm Holy Communion
Oct. 5 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am Harvest Festival Family Worship 6.30pm United Service @ Northenden Methodist Church.

**Drop in ... 2 – 5pm.**  
St. Wilfrid's church is open each Sunday  
from 2.00 – 5pm,

for prayer, visiting and just looking round, enquiries about baptisms, weddings, ancestor hunting, ... &c.

And on Sat. 12<sup>th</sup> & Sun. 13<sup>th</sup> ...Open Days

It's All Happening ..., for your diaries ...

Don't forget Northenden's very own Farmers' Market, on the first Saturday of the Month ~ food that's good for you and good for the village

Wednesdays 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> Sept. Bible Study & Discussion  
Rectory, 8.00pm till approx 9.15pm

(Please note, I may have other commitments earlier on some of those evenings, so 8.00pm does mean 8.00pm ~ GSF)

Thurs 10<sup>th</sup> PCC Meeting, Church Hall, 7.30pm

Note the Open Days on 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> Sept ~ see separate item.

Sat. 26<sup>th</sup> Sept. Coffee Morning in the Church Hall, 10am ...

Mon. 28<sup>th</sup> School Governors' meeting

Open days ...

Please note the open week-end, which is Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> of September, coinciding with the national Heritage Open Days. On Saturday, 11.00am till 5.00pm, and on Sunday 12 noon till 5.00pm. There will be displays of current and historical interest ~ if you or your organisation have something to show, please contact the Rector. There will also be the opportunity to climb the tower, to sound the bells, to see the skyline (weather permitting) and the streets, trees and roofs of Northenden, and to enjoy light refreshments. We understand that something is also being planned for the Riverside Park that week-end.

FROM THE REGISTERS;

Married in the Parish Church on Sat. 15<sup>th</sup> August

Becky Louise Jones to Stephen James Johnson.

Baptised, ... on Sun. 16<sup>th</sup> August

Alfie Robert Lockwood, Toby Ian Mackey,  
Matthew James Rawcliffe (10)

Magpie ...

... was interested in some statistics about Swine Flu that were collected in Stockport, and reported on the local news. They took swabs from three hundred (or so) people who thought they had swine flu. When the results were analysed only 20 had swine flu itself. The report did not say what the others had, but Magpie hopes it isn't bird flu!

... wonders whether anyone else has noticed how some of the most up-market cars have been built without indicators ~ audis, mercs, beamers and even rollers seem devoid of that flashing amber light that says "I am about to go round that corner". You would think that for the price the drivers pay, there would be some mind reading device built into the electronics which would just know (just as following drivers are assumed to) that the driver intends to turn and would activate a flasher appropriately without the driver having to strain even a little finger muscle.

... made an interesting discovery recently. The river Mersey is land. Not just ordinary land, mind you, but very special land, decreed by Act of Parliament. From Stockport down to Carrington there are agreements in place (so says the official notice on the Trans Pennine Trail not far from the Pyramid in Stockport) that makes the river Mersey "Access Land" under the terms of the Rights of Way Act 2000. You are free to canoe, kayak or row along the river (sorry, across the land) but you are advised not to swim in it or fall in, let alone drink it. In the past some of our politicians have been accused of trying to walk on water, but here it seems they have achieved a greater miracle!

... a couple of years ago now one of magpie's friends discovered a council official putting up a "closure of footpath" notice near the old dye works on the Mersey at Heaton Mersey. As a keen walker and cyclist he objected, only to be told that the designated line of the footpath had to be revised because the river had moved and the legal path ran midstream. They had to "close" this and immediately open a new path five yards to the left, so that people using the track along the river bank should not be deemed to be trespassing. Now, perhaps, he needn't have bothered. Who needs Europe when we can produce such delightful quirks of regulation in England.

... when announcements are made in the press during August one wonders whether it is a serious item, or just a silly

season quirk. So we have been told that Organic Food is no more nutritious than non-organic food. Reports over many years have been studied, and this is the overall conclusion. One presumes that the earlier reports did ask the same questions as the later ones, and that the technology was up to the task then. Be that as it may, is it a surprise that nutritional value is the same for organic and non-organic food? The metabolism of the animals or the plants is presumably the same so that whatever goes into them will be processed to the same result. But is that what organic food production is all about?

I have several questions. Did these reports look into the non-nutritional additives and extras that might be carried over into our food? For instance, the barley in barley beef leaves a trace of gluten in the meat, I believe ~ correct me if I've got it wrong ~ which makes such meat dangerous for people with an intolerance of wheat and barley products. Did these studies look at that kind of question? What about other additives and preservatives on the surface of food? And what about the quality of animal husbandry or of environmental management that goes into organic as opposed to non-organic farming? Sometimes scientific reports answer the questions they ask brilliantly, and forget to ask the other more important questions.

... is glad to hear that the Government is finally starting to ask questions about food production and supply in the light of climate change and oil supply issues. (Oil, of course, is used to produce fertilisers which are needed to produce non-organic food) If you have kept your back copies of Concord you will see that Magpie and others have been suggesting for some time that this would be a good idea. When there are surpluses at least in some parts of the world, when Britain and other western countries have superior purchasing power, and when other nations can be coerced into accepting "market" economics, then we can corner the market and will get enough food (and the devil take the hindmost). When there is a shortage (as last year) and other nations with growing middle classes want to feed themselves before selling off food to us, then (as last year) there will be places where there are food riots in the streets, and we might even find that we are the hindmost! Food is a strategic commodity, not just a free market item. I know that argument is rather simplified, but it needs to be reckoned with ~ not least as we move towards our harvest festival season of thanksgiving.

We should be setting greater store by "home produced produce", not for jingoistic reasons but for simple reasons of a fair supply throughout the world and long term secure supply for ourselves.

... perhaps it's time for Magpie to get off his soap-box, but then again, maybe he needs to get on it again. It's the Parish Council business. It looks as if the City Council intend to kick this into the long grass, though the final vote in council on this is not for a while yet. I suggested last month that the response to the survey was about 10%, which would itself be a very creditable response which any commercial advertisers would give their eye teeth for. It occurs to me now that since only one reply sheet was provided for each household, not for each voter, perhaps that response rate is nearer 25%. Nevertheless the councillors who count have chosen to set aside the significant majority who indicated that they would indeed like a Parish Council in Northenden. Perhaps the full council will still in the end decide to reconnect with the people.

BOAT LANE

**VERY SHELTERED HOUSING**

COURT

**BOAT LANE COURT,**

**BRETT ST., NORTHENDEN .**

**RETIREMENT FLATS**

*ALL ENQUIRIES TO :*

**THE MANAGER, BOAT LANE COURT, NORTHENDEN, M 22 4 EZ**

**TEL. 0161 945-7064 OR 07970 676785**

A Word in Time ~ local oral history.

The Friends of Northenden Riverside Park are starting an oral history project about the River Mersey and the way it has figured in the lives of the people of Northenden throughout the years. Over the next 6 months we intend to ask people to share their memories of the river with us. We will record these memories and edit and collect them in order to create a story of the many ways in which the river has played a part in our lives over the years. We intend to publish these both in written form and using the internet and other media.

We want to talk to anyone who is willing to tell us any of their memories about the river. Did you play, or walk along the river bank as a youngster? Do you remember the floods in the

'60s, or the Mill before it was demolished? What was it like in the '70s? Do you have stories that have been passed on to you?

We would also like to hear from young people about their more recent memories. Did you play near the river before the new park was created? What sort of things did you do? Has this changed in the last year?

If you would like to take part, or know anyone who you think might like to talk to use, please contact us by talking to anyone on the committee of the Friends Group or contact;

Dave Wilson 21a Boat Lane, M22 4HR. 0161 902 9550

### Northenden Players.

In September the players start their schedule for the new season with "The Cemetery Club" by Ivan Mensehell, on Sun.6<sup>th</sup>, and then 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>

in the Hall at Northenden Methodist Church.

Their next production is in the last week of October.

"The Handyman", by Ronald Harwood.

### Northenden Civic Society ...

... hopes to launch its plan for Northenden right at the end of September or the beginning of October. It should get notice in the local press, and copies will be available then.

### Bible Study ...

It should be a natural thing for Christians to read their bibles, and develop their relationship with God in that way, thinking and praying about what they learn there. In the past I have included bible passages and comments in

Concord, and here is another in that occasional series. We should come to

We should come to the bible expectantly.

the bible expectantly, asking God to help us understand and apply it. Some people have used this prayer, from Psalm 119, as they approach reading the bible:

Lord, open my eyes, So that I may see  
Wonderful things out of your law. Amen.

### Ephesians ch. 5 v1 – 20

And so you must become imitators of God, like well-loved children, and you must live your lives in love, just as Christ loved you and handed himself over on your behalf as an offering and sweet-smelling sacrifice to God.

On the other hand, no sexual immorality and filthiness of any kind or acquisitiveness should even find a mention among you. That's how holy people should behave. The same goes for shameful conduct, stupid chatter and dirty jokes. They are not fitting! On the contrary, thankful talk is more appropriate. You should be sure of this, you see, that no-one who is immoral or dirty-minded or greedy ~ greed amounts to idol-worship ~ has any share in the realm of Christ and of God.

Don't let anyone lead you astray with empty words. You see, it is because of these things that God's anger comes upon characters who neither believe nor behave. So don't become their partners in crime! Once, you see, you were black as night, but now you are light in the Lord. Behave like light-time people. (The fruit that light produces, you see, is goodness and fairness and integrity) Work out what is pleasing to the Lord and put it to the test, and avoid co-operation with the pointless actions that stem from darkness; on the contrary, you should show them up, since the things they do in secret are disgusting even to mention. Everything that is shown up by the light is transparent, and what is transparent is light itself. So, as the saying goes, "Wake up, sleepy-head and rise from among the dead, and Christ will shine upon you."

Take good care, then, how you behave. Don't be stupid but show sense, making good bargains in the marketplace of time, since we live in evil days. For this reason, don't behave like fools, but give conscious thought to what the Lord's will is.

So don't get sozzled on wine, which leads to moral helplessness ~ instead fill yourselves with the Spirit, speaking to each other in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and chanting wholeheartedly to the Lord, and always expressing gratitude on everyone's behalf in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to the God who is our Father.

This section of St. Paul's letter to the church in the sprawling port city of Ephesus, on the west coast of what is now Turkey, deals with Christian behaviour, but tells us far more than just what to do. Look at the first paragraph. It de-scribes the Christians he is writing to as well-loved children of our

Bask in the phrase "well loved children".

heavenly Father. Bask a little in that phrase “well loved”, and remember not to take it for granted that we have a heavenly father. Generations of praying the Lord’s Prayer have made us blasé about that, but for the first Christians it was an amazing and new found privilege, and so it is for us, if we but realised it.

The basis of that relationship is what Christ achieved for us through his self sacrifice on the cross. Again, take time to think how much that shows God’s love for us (remembering that God’s love is Christ’s love, and that for Paul another way of describing this was to say “God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.”) That should provide an enormous motivation to live in a way that pleases him, out of sheer gratitude. Paul identifies the way to please him as following his example, and imitating his unselfish care.

Paul goes on to list a number of things which he describes as totally out of place in a Christian’s life. I imagine that most of the list does not come as a surprise to most readers of Concord ~ but the words Paul describes consumerist greed as idol-worship! of acquisitiveness and greed possibly do. Paul goes so far as to describe them as a kind of idol-worship, which was for a 1<sup>st</sup> century Jew the crowning condemnation. That poses a challenge and criticism for 21<sup>st</sup> century consumerist economics and consumerist society ~ and us individuals who are conditioned to it. We may have dispensed with gold or wooden statues of our gods, but there may be other things which we put before God.

Within Paul’s list of dos and don’ts is something which comes up twice: gratitude, or thanksgiving. In the first occurrence it probably refers to our attitude towards people around us and the environment around us since it is contrasted with empty-headed chatter. We should value these, and express that appreciation. In the second occurrence, at the end of the passage printed out above, we are told to express our heartfelt gratitude to God, and to share that expression with each other as we sing and worship together.

He commends gratitude as a way of life.

Paul may give this list of what to do and what not to do, but he does not regard the list as the last word. He wants his readers to think things out and work things out themselves, conscientiously. (No doubt he expected them to agree with him

after they had thought things through, but he does suggest, in Romans ch. 14, that he would at least in some areas respect someone else's conscientious but different decision.)

I suggested that we should approach our reading of the bible expectantly, wondering what new insights God will reveal to us. When I studied this passage early in August I was surprised to find that Paul encourages this conscientious thought here almost in passing, as if it would be a natural thing for these new Christians in Ephesus so that he did not need to labour the point. It was, I believe, a significant feature in early Christian moral teaching. He first encourages them to Work out what is pleasing to the Lord and put it to the test, and later says, give conscious thought to what the Lord's will is. Dos and don'ts may have a place within Christian behaviour, but not as a rather anxious check-list. They will be part of the framework within which we ask what is the right response from us as followers of Christ to the people and situations we meet; part of the framework with which we build a character which is confident that God accepts us and has learned what lifestyle pleases God.

To be or not to be ...?

Greg Forster

Shakespeare's Hamlet's famous question was of course about taking his own life, not asking someone else to help him take it. His conclusion was to take up arms against the sea of troubles he faced. At the end of July that question, very real for some people, was raised in the courts, amidst a reported tide of sympathy for a very vivacious yet terminally ill lady who was asking for her husband to be indemnified should he help her at some time in the future to shorten her life, as it becomes intolerable and undignified. The emotional pull in such a case is strong, as she speaks of her right to live, and to die with dignity. The law is at present in a limbo of ambiguity, since assisting a suicide is illegal, but no-one has been prosecuted in the various cases of this kind that there have been.

There is much that could be said here. I will confine myself to two points, one legal and the other moral. In English law the prosecutors are allowed discretion to ask themselves whether it is in the public interest to prosecute, and whether a jury is likely to convict. They are thus able to look at the merits and circumstances of a case; if they get pinned down by too

tight a set of conditions they may be forced to prosecute in inappropriate cases. And in moral thinking we should be asking whether the rights of individuals are the only issue in such cases. We are part of communities, responsible to each other to protect others, including doctors, from potential abuse or moral harm.