

CONCORD ~ SEPTEMBER 2011

Prayer for the Month ...

Lord of Creation, Lord of the Harvest,
We again thank and praise you for the generosity
we see in the world you have given us;
We confess to you the greed and exploitation
we see in the Earth around us;
We lift to you the needs of the poor and the rich,
in this "spaceship Earth",
for we all share its limited resources
and experience its strains and stresses.

Grant mankind the wisdom and humility to use your gifts aright,
with justice and restraint, meeting need not feeding greed.

For your honour's sake. Amen.

A repeat of August's prayer ~ but appropriate for Harvest-tide.

Northenden Rectory, Ford Lane.
0161 998 2615

Dear Friends,

During July we were asked by Christian Aid to hold a "retiring collection", as it is called, in aid of the relief work going on in the face of the severe drought in horn of Africa ~ Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia. I sent off a cheque for £80 in the end as a result of that collection. Thank you all. If you want to contribute directly, their address is PO Box 100, London SE1 7RT.

Mention of drought in Africa is an appropriate starter for two of our themes this month, of Harvest, and also of so called Transition Towns. To see how that fits, read on!

We live in a generous and many-splendoured world, which our Creator has given to us to enjoy, and to use responsibly and wisely, with restraint but generously in our turn too ~ as we reflect his character in ours. Harvest Thanksgiving is an occasion to acknowledge that openly, but it should colour our whole attitude to Creation and to our Creator who has given rain and sun, seed-time and harvest, to all people alike, whether we deserve it or not! Once again, I think our formal services on 2nd October are almost too late, since the real harvest is mostly "safely gathered in" (we hope) by early September now.

Greg Forster

Riots?

Thankfully there was little trouble in the immediate area of Northenden when Manchester and other Cities saw the so called riots in mid August. A few missiles were thrown at police in Wythenshawe centre, and the culprits were arrested; an attempt was made to break in to a climbing store in West Didsbury, and again the culprits were very smartly arrested ~ they came from Burnley, I gather. This was hardly a riot: more like opportunism, by a few thousand of our 60 million citizens, taking events elsewhere as an excuse to relieve boredom or cover plain criminality. To me a "riot" implies some cause or grievance, political or otherwise. With the possible exception of the first events, in Hackney where a man had been shot in puzzling circumstances, that was not the case. No; what we saw elsewhere was a breakdown of order, and a willingness to use it as an excuse for theft. Sadly, for many people that led to tragedy or economic loss.

So who was responsible? Strictly, each person involved made their own moral decision to get involved. The back-ground to that decision may be lack of moral guidance, or dis-ordered conscience, or some social factor, but the responsibility cannot be shrugged off onto social or economic factors ~ unless someone wants to claim they are insane, in the sense of being incapable of moral and rational thought. At the same time we are connected, so that all the individuals are part of a moral field, which influences and affects its parts. Thus it will be right in the coming months to look into how better moral guidance can be given ~ not just by way of advice or laying down the law, but in character-building, so that instead of it being second nature to help oneself it is second nature to help other people and respect them and their property, and foresee the consequences of what we do. So when you pray "Lead us not into temptation," pray not just for your own integrity but for a community which builds the characters and the consciences of its members, and see how what you do, say and are can help build it.

Northenden Methodist Church

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

Sunday Services.

Sep. 4th 11.00am Morning Worship - details to be announced
** 6.30pm Evening Worship @ **St.Wilfrid's**

1st Sunday every month

Family worship ~ Sunday breakfast club ~ MESSY CHURCH

All start off with breakfast together at 9.00am, then do activities with your child(ren) followed by a story, songs, and prayer based on the activities ~ finishes about 10.30am.

Currently £1 per person

For details contact Amy Carline, 07816 888 704

*The poster does look gorgeously messy ~
but it's in glorious technicolour, so won't reproduce here!*

Sept 11th 11.00am Morning Worship. ##
18th 11.00am Morning Worship
25th 11.00am Morning Worship
Oct. 2nd 11.00am Morning Worship
6.30pm United Service at Methodist Church **
9th 11.00am Morning Worship

** Northenden Players' season starts in September, and to avoid clashing with their Sunday performances ~ they use the vestry as a changing room ~ we are juggling the shared evening services. In September and December they will be at St.Wilfrid's, and in October and November at the Methodist church.

At the time of preparing Concord for September ~ mid August ~ the details of the September preachers and services had not been received.

Community Lunch

Wed. 14th Sept. 12 noon – 1.30pm

Fun Bingo Last Saturday of the Month (24th), 12 noon - 2 pm.

(to be confirmed in weekly notices).

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) South Manchester Meeting

There is a meeting for worship

at the Friends' Meeting House, Wythenshawe Rd.,
at 10.30am every Sunday.

Children welcome. *Details from Roger Hensman, 980-5158.

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

Northenden Players ...

The 2011-12 season opens with

What the Butler Saw

In the Methodist Church Hall, from 4th to 10th Sept.

St. Wilfrid's Church, Northenden.

Ford Lane, M22 4WE

Rector ~ the Revd. Greg Forster,
Northenden Rectory, Ford La., M 22 4NQ
Tel. 0161 998 - 2615

Email; gsf @ stwilfridsnorthenden . org . uk

Services:

On Sundays there will be a communion service at 8.00am.

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

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

... and "Sunday Club" ~ for children from 7 upwards ~ in the
Rectory, both between 10.30 and 11.30am Sundays ...

... except when there is a Family Service in church.

Sep. 4th 10.30am Family Communion

** 6.30pm United Service **at St. Wilfrid's** **NB. venue**

11th 10.30am Morning Worship
6.30pm Evening Worship.

18th 10.30am Morning Worship

6.30pm Evening Worship → → →

25th 10.30am Guest Service ~ Morning Prayer
6.30pm Holy Communion

Oct. 2nd 10.30am **Harvest Festival ~ Family Service**
** 6.30pm United Serviced at **Methodist Church**

9th 10.30am Holy Communion
Sunday Nearest to St. Wilfrid's Day
6.30pm Evening Worship

Drop in ...

On Sundays from 2.00 till 5.00pm the church is open, for private prayer, for enquiries, or just to look around.
And note the full Open Week End, on Sat./Sun. Sept. 10th/11th. with tower trips, displays &c. marking the national Heritage w/e

Dates for your Diary ~ it's all happening!

Sat. 3rd September ~ Remember the Farmers' (and others') Market. 9.30am to 3.30pm (-ish!)

Mon. 5th Sept. Women's Group. 7.45 for 8pm in the Rectory.

Sat. 10th & Sun. 11th Sept., 12.00 noon to 5.00pm.

Heritage Open Days ~

St. Wilfrid's will be open, with trips up the tower and displays of past and present (and future?) Northenden, as part of this national event.

Wed. 14th 8.00pm Bible Study. Rectory
Also 21st and 28th, and Oct. 5th (but not 12th)

Sat. 24th 10.00am ... Coffee Morning. Church Hall
... books, cakes, and company.

Mon. 26th ~ School Governors' Meeting. Evening.
~ Deanery Synod Meeting with John Leach, MP.
Christ Church W.Didsbury, 7.30pm.

Wed. 28th **Age Concern and the Healthy Living Network**
invite you to Afternoon Tea from 1 – 3pm. ~ see panel below.

NB. Farmers' Market, Sat. 1st Oct., 9.30 – 3.30 ish.
Sun. Oct. 2nd Harvest Lunch (in church?) after morning

worship. (ca. 11.50am) Bring food for half a person.

Mon. 3rd Women's Group; 7.45 for 8pm. Rectory.

NB. Bible study on 5th but not 12th Oct.

Reprints.

During the summer four of the booklets on the historical features of the church were reprinted ~ the general history, the records of the windows and of the bells, and the fictional account of how the church may have been founded and who St. Wilfrid was. They are available in the church, at various low prices. Some details from them are also on our website.

Also look out for the *Once Upon a Time* stories, which look into big questions in a friendly way ~ Creation, Life, Humanity, Christmas and Easter. More are planned. Like a lot of children's books, you don't need to be under 12 to appreciate them.

The Parish Registers –

In Memoriam ...

Susan Elsie Andrews (Gladeside Rd.) 51

Married, on 24th July ...

Amanda Flanagan to Gary Dugan.

... on 6th August ...

Helen Jayne Dursley to Paul Glyn Federline.

... and on 13th August ...

Jacqueline Margaret Bailey to Vernon Little

Women's Group.

We restart on Sept. 5th. Speaker t.b.a., and then Oct. 3rd.

SDF

Stamps.

After a period of uncertainty we are now back collecting stamps ~ now for Guide Dogs for the Blind. There is a box, as before, near the back of St. Wilfrid's. It would help if you could sort them into separate Foreign / UK special / and UK standard packets.

Concerts and things.

Book 9th Dec. for Folk Carols, and 12th Jan. for an Organ Recital.
Magpie...

... read the TV schedules for August 18th. There was a programme on the experiences of British Troops in Afghanistan, and, so they alleged, it featured the work of the Royal *Anglican* Regiment. Now that's a unit to make Taliban knees tremble!

... was more than interested in what happened at the City Planning Committee meeting on 28th July. Once again they actually threw back the request for retrospective planning permission for the increased height and reduced parking in the tower block on Church Rd. Not surprisingly there will be an appeal. This is a tricky one; no-one wants a white elephant on the corner of Church Rd. ~ presumably. But few people have told Magpie that they want what is there now. From the front if not the backside it is certainly striking, and would perhaps be magnificent elsewhere ~ Salford Keys, someone has suggested. Permission was granted, rightly or wrongly, in 2005 for a tall building, but in 2010 the developers proceeded to build an even larger building, without getting clearance first from the Council. They must have known what they were doing, and had opportunity to follow the correct procedure. If the planning process means anything neither the council, nor a government planning inspector can turn a blind eye to this. What is more, in 2010 the council published a policy stating that they would take positive action when planning regulations were infringed. So what might Northenden ask for? Strictly the building should be scalped, to bring it down to the 2005 permitted design line (which reputedly won an award, and would be less obtrusive from the back). In practice we should perhaps ask for legally binding commitments, for the whole life of the building, to provide adequate off-street parking for its occupants, together with a hefty fine or compensation arrangement, benefiting the Village (perhaps funding more shoppers' parking by co-ordinating the private parking behind shops.)

... Is it Salford Keys, as in Key West, Florida? It is an exotic development, after all. Or should that be Cai's ~ Magpie has an inkling that the original name for those islands in the 16th century was spelled that way. Or is it plain or garden Quays? Next time he flies over Salford he will have to look at the signs (and the gardens).

... there are already the beginnings of a Community Orchard in a corner of the Churchyard where we are not expecting more burials. It has already produced its first fruit, and more trees should be planted in the autumn, when similar work will also probably be done on a corner of land near the Mersey, connecting with the Riverside Park. That will need rather more clearing, but offers more promise too. Meanwhile, even our Village Green is producing some splendid blackberries, even if they do make it awkward to sit down! (There are blackberries in the churchyard too, though we have had to cut them back a fair amount to give access to graves.

Northenden in Transition?

Greg Forster

Last month I mentioned briefly a film about “transition towns” ~ communities which were taking seriously the growing problems of the shortage of fuel, food, water and the like. In August some of you may have seen a programme on BBC2 presented by Nicholas Crane, in which he visited Totnes, in Devon. This is a small town, barely larger than Northenden in population, which takes this very seriously indeed ~ in fact, it possibly started there! One of the locals who was featured in the programme was Rob Hopkins whose book on the subject ~ *The Transition Handbook* ~ is a classic. There is a group which is looking at these issues with particular reference to Northenden, and what might be done here. Mark Roughan (**998-0934**) is convening this group. Contact him if you are interested ~ or I could forward your contact details.

The problem is well publicised. Our way of life depends very heavily on oil. This is becoming harder to extract from the ground, and for technical as well as economic and political reasons is becoming more expensive. More than that, it's consumption releases carbon dioxide and other substances into the environment which are affecting the climate in a way which is making life as we know it more uncomfortable, and will badly affect our ability to provide basic needs of food, water and the like in not many years from now. There are people who deny this, or who calculate that some new technical fix will sort it all out without any great need to change behaviour or consumption.

There are also questions about whether lifestyles based on commuting from home to work, or on moving food half-way across the world when it could be grown, seasonally at least, very close to where it is consumed, or on jetting across Europe for a

holiday, are in fact healthy lifestyles. It was more than half a lifetime ago that we as a human race ~ all **2** billion of us ~ ceased to be living sustainably and began taking more out of Piggy-bank Earth than is in it; probably within my lifetime and yours we as a race ~ all **6** billion of us ~ will be living as if we had two Piggy-bank Earths to dip into. Unlike Greece, we do not have a kind of Cosmic Euro-zone to call upon to tide us over these debts we are borrowing from our future. We have only one Space-Ship Piggy-bank.

So what are people to do? Denying it won't make it go away. Assuming that some techno-fix will solve the problem may well be part of the answer, so long as we accept that we may be part of the techno-fix, and will have to use it, and perhaps pay for it to be used. One of the points behind the "Transition Town" idea is that you – we – have to start where we are, rather than leaving it to scientists, or the Government, or Business to sort it for us. Crane's point was that a town-sized community is about right for the person-to-person relationships and actions which can begin to make this work. He featured several examples, which in themselves seem too small to make a difference, but if we say that about every possibility, then there certainly will be no difference.

One business was reusing vegetable cooking oil, carefully filtered, to power its diesel-engined transport vehicles ~ Carbon neutral and avoiding the problem of disposing of it. Solar powered electricity was being installed at the rate of three houses a week (ten years ago it had been one a month.) and at least a quarter of those were "poor" rather than "posh" houses. Views of the town showed whole streets with glistening panels on their roofs. There was a vigorous recycling programme for household waste. They had introduced their own local currency, encouraging local people to buy local produce from local shops and keep the profits in the locality. Mention was made of wind turbines, though none was up and running this spring, when the programme was filmed.

Some of those ideas will ring bells with us in Northenden. Waste recycling is with us, though the claim at Sharston to recycle 25% of waste each month is poor compared to Totnes's 50%+. The possibility of a water turbine is still with us, despite the technical problems. Other features are less prominent. It is not a condition of new building in the village, or in Manchester as a whole, that solar panel or geothermal energy be fitted as standard ~ and friends who have tried to install it have been turned down on the

grounds that it is not in keeping with a conservation area. I am not aware of cooking oil being recycled, and the Northenden Pound ~ or even a local loyalty card ~ is probably not viable. You need a certain degree of separation from other shopping areas and also a wide enough selection of shops for that to work, I suspect. Our schools also have "walking to school" days, and it is encouraging to see the newly installed bike racks at St. Wilfrid's school filling with not only bikes but also scooters and the like.

But some of this is a matter of the choices we all make. Readers will know that I cycle a lot. It is practical for work around the parish, so it is not just a statement of Green sympathies. Also unless I have an awkward load to carry, cycling is my preferred mode of transport to Manchester or Stockport and Sale; but I own up to flying and driving too, and I know many of you find cycling a frightening prospect because of traffic, or are simply unable now to do it. But to turn Northenden into a "Transition Village" would require a lot of people ~ a majority of our 6½ thousand, I suppose ~ being happy to work and to think this way, using cars less and looking for local produce even if it is a bit more expensive, letting parts of our green-space be used for allotments, being ready to see solar panels even on conservation area roofs or even nagging to make it the norm, and so on.

All this may seem far-fetched or utopian. At present it is a bit like that, but as I said earlier, there are events likely within our lifetimes which will force some of this on us, and if we do not begin to think and plan and act for it now, whether as individuals or as a village or as a city, then the transition which is forced upon us will probably be far more dramatic and traumatic than we can imagine. Totnes is not the only place where this is happening; Mark Roughan mentioned three dozen formal initiatives in this direction in the UK in a letter he circulated last October. The visuals from Nick Crane's programme highlighted a couple of hundred. Formal or informal, this is something for Northenden to follow up. As I have mentioned, Mark is co-ordinating a local group. Contact him for more details.

Fundamentalism?

Greg Forster

The word Fundamentalism was much in vogue at the end of July. Following the horrific shootings in Norway the media discovered that the culprit, far from being an Islamic fundamentalist as they first thought, might actually be a Christian one! They kept

the term of abuse, but revised the qualifying religion. I don't know if they actually pinned him down to any particular church group because we left for Denmark then, and though the papers there probably said even more than our English ones, my command of Danish is limited to asking for strawberry tarts!

It is a shame that words like fundamentalist, and even extremist, have negative connotations when applied to Christianity or to any other faith for that matter. They often start off with very good meanings, and then are perverted by critics and opponents. "Fundamentalism" derives from a group of hard-thinking, conscientious Christian scholars in the early to mid-20th century, who argued for the basic and traditional fundamentals of Christian belief against a liberal attitude. This liberalism saw Christianity as just one among many religions, Jesus as a rather special, but not unique moral teacher, and the bible as a record of human reflection about religion and God. In response these scholars wrote a series of booklets on the fundamentals of our faith, affirming Jesus' birth to Mary the virgin as God incarnate; his death to bear the penalty of our sins ~ sins which are real, not merely bad behavioural traits; his real bodily resurrection; faith (personal trust) in him as the means by which we receive a relationship with God; and the bible as God's word, a reliable revelation of God's will and purpose. Now I too want to affirm those fundamentals of the faith, which are the bible's basic teaching and are reflected in the historic creeds of Christendom, and are certainly not a recent and extremist innovation. I hope you do too. Perhaps, to avoid confusion, we should not use the word fundamentalist, but let us hold to those fundamentals. They are what we say in our creed, after all!

The other assumption of many people today, whether in connection with political or religious activity, or anything else, is that extremism is wrong. Perhaps people are embarrassed by enthusiasm, but I suggest that it is the *contents* of extremism which may be wrong, not extreme enthusiasm in and of itself. God is something of an extremist, you see, and Jesus shared his Father's views. *God so loved the world, St. John tells us, that he gave his one and only Son so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.* Such was the love which motivated Jesus, the Word who was God himself, to go to the Cross for us and for our reconciliation with him. That is taking things to the extreme. Do you think God should have avoided it? Or take Jesus' teaching: *Love your enemies; make prayers on behalf of those who treat you*

harshly. We could do with more of that kind of extremism, don't you think? God's blessing rests on those who go without food or drink to see justice done. Very challenging and counter-intuitive, if not counter-cultural! Quite difficult to practice in a sinful world! But it is what we are called to try if we seek first the kingdom of God.