

CONCORD ~ September 2015

Prayer for the Month,
Almighty and everlasting God,
who are always more ready to hear than we are to pray,
and who are more generous than we expect or deserve,
we offer you our hearty thanks
for all your goodness and loving kindness to us and to all people,
and especially for giving us the fruits of the Earth in their seasons
the fruits of soil and sea, of mine and the human mind.
Give us the grace and wisdom to use them rightly and
sustainably,
To your glory, for our own wellbeing, and for the relief of
those in need;
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Based on harvest and rogation prayers from the Alternative Service Book

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

Dear Friends,

As we move towards autumn, I want again to highlight God's generosity and the gratitude we should show in connection with all that we have and enjoy, and especially the food, clothing and shelter we use. All too easily we think of it as human achievement and energy, which it is (and gratitude for that should be part of our thinking ~ gratitude reflected in the readiness to pay a fair price for a fair product, as well as a warm feeling and a word of thanks for the producer.) But all that we enjoys is ultimately a gift of God, from whom all good things come, and so we owe him our conscious gratitude too. Harvest-tide worship is publicised elsewhere in Concord, but there will be a touch of harvest thanksgiving in most services at St. Wilfrid's, at least, in September as well as October. But amid the gratitude there are deeper questions to ask.

We are told that the Economy, in Britain at least, is looking up. Averaged out that may be the case, but I know that for some in the community it is not the case, as benefits, or employment are restricted, or other problems create hardship. Five years or

so ago, as the economic situation darkened, I think I wrote questioning whether we should see unlimited growth as a good thing. We all like greater comfort and financial security, I suppose, but is that possible, or even moral, in a world of finite resources which we are using (at least in Britain and similar countries) faster than they can be replenished? So when politicians and economic pundits assure us gleefully that we are back into growth, I have my worries even while I enjoy the benefits. We live in compromise.

And when the same experts voice their worries when inflation is in negative figures, or is flat-lining, I want to question their assumption that there should always be some inflation in the economic system. This is all the more so because some of the causes of this drop in the cost of living are low prices paid to the people who produce our food and goods, and low oil prices leading to the greater use of fossil fuels and oil based raw materials, which in turn will lead to a greater emission of harmful gases into our finite atmosphere, and so greater instability in our climate. So when I make a harvest prayer that we may use God's gifts of the good Earth in a sustainable way, I am praying for a restraint in our greed and increasing consumption, and a realism in what we expect to take from the earth. Cheapness now may be landing our children and grandchildren (or even ourselves in older age) with costs and hardship in the future.

The idea that Inflation is a good thing puzzles me. What it means is that the pound in your pocket is being devalued, whether it is by 2% as the Bank of England wants, or 10%+, as we rightly fear. It means that I borrow £100, on the understanding that when I pay it back it will only buy you £90 pounds worth of goods. (Or in Government terms, I borrow £1 Billion, but will only pay back £900 million.) Does that sound moral? It sounds rather like the proverbial nine pound note! "I promise to pay the bearer on demand 9/10ths of the face value of this piece of paper." But then, I am not an economist.

Maybe we need a different measure of economic success, such as the amount of harm not done to the good Earth or the amount of wealth recycled rather than consumed once and for ever. Perhaps what is consumed and lost for ever should be reported on regularly, along with the quarterly inflation figures.

Now, how do I tell that to the children at the Harvest Festival services? Or their grown-ups?

And likewise, I am disturbed that the support given to sustainable and renewable energy generation is to be cut back, and at short notice too, on the grounds that people would rather have cheaper energy now (forget the future!). I have recently come back from Cornwall, where I was initially surprised, and then delighted, to see whole fields dedicated not to flowers or livestock but to solar panels, interspersed with wind turbines. Not exactly your traditional green and pleasant land, but a recipe which, please God, will keep the land green and pleasant for generations to come. And they are no more unattractive in their way than a traditional windmill, or rank on rank of Sitka spruce. But if we reduce our provision of such alternative sources of energy, and rely on carbon fuels, that may not be the case ~ if not for us then for others in more vulnerable parts of the Earth.

So as I prepare to leave Northenden, one of my regrets is that we have not (yet) been able to reinstall a hydro-electric generator at the weir by Mill Lane. It is technically challenging, though possible, but would need premium prices to be a commercial proposition. I look forward to hearing that it has been taken up again.

As news of my impending retirement gets around I am often asked whether I know who will be taking over as Rector of Northenden? The answer is no ~ no-one does, except God. The Church of England does not work that way. It sort of assumes that there will be no handover period and no continuity. It may be an advantage that the new person can make up her own mind about people and practice, with no prejudice or possible inherited bad feeling. But it can lead to its own kind of bad feeling; it was well into the first term (if not the second) of my time here that I learned that Derick Deakin was surprised and a bit upset that I was not continuing Gordon Jones's practice of spending some time discussing school affairs with him after leading the regular act of worship each Wednesday. And it was perhaps fortunate that I had come from a church with a similar Central Heating system to St. Wilfrid's ~ no-one in the parish knew how to turn it on for the winter! One of Gordon's few comments to me was that he was expected to know and do too much without back-up.

For the record, I am preparing a "continuity file", and you can rest easy; it will contain a Noddy's Guide to the C/H system! But in terms of a handover period, or any such arrangement which a good commercial enterprise would try to create, I fear you can forget it. Once I have gone the PCC will be asked to prepare a job description and person specification (or at least, a wish list) and a parish profile. They will meet with the Area Dean and Archdeacon; they will discuss plans and combinations between Northenden and another church or role, and (with luck) a few months later adverts will go out in the diocese, and maybe discrete phone calls will be made; then after interviews, someone will be appointed. It was five months between Gordon Jones' departure and my installation as Rector here. I fear it will be longer this time (as a precedent, I think it was about 15 months before Robin Usher was appointed to our neighbouring parish of St.Michael's).

In the mean time, services will continue, though perhaps not as normal. There may be fewer communion services, led by clergy called in from the neighbourhood, and more acts of worship led by lay people from the congregation and elsewhere. To a certain extent, it is up to you all how that works, though in the next three months there will be some trial runs. And it is up to you all to make it work ~ if only by attending worship and other events even if they are not to your immediate taste.

But now read on, ... welcome to September! **Greg Forster**

Magpie ...

... has noticed a man with a spray gun walking around Northenden, attacking anything green on the roads or pavements. He was working on contract to the council. It is their way of keeping the streets clear of weeds. So now our streets and pavements and the edges of the grass verges are graced with brown, dead grass or weeds, rather than live green ones. Readers can decide for themselves which is more beautiful, and whether Northenden is any the tidier for it, but for Magpie this is a job half done, and done lazily and badly at that.

... understands that the Nigerian Anglican Church, which has been meeting for the past few years at St.Wilfrid's, has been able to find another venue where there is better parking,

and where there is more space for children's classes. For a while the children used to meet in the vestry under the tower, but numbers have outgrown the capacity there, and other bookings meant that not much extra space was available in the church hall.

... the Rector gets some odd complaints about the churchyard. Usually it is "why hasn't my great aunt's grave been mown?" ~ often while he is in the process of mowing towards it. (With over 2000 graves ~ 2 acres ~ to cut, the answer should have been obvious.) Earlier in the summer two professional grave-gardeners turned up on his doorstep complaining that they could not do their job because the grave *they* were supposed to tend hadn't been cut and they did not know where it was. (Yes, you did read that right!) When he went out to find and clear it for them they disappeared in the other direction and drove off.

But the weirdest grouse of all was from the man who came into the churchyard to ask him to *stop* strimming the grass. He had just come home from work and wanted to sit out in the sun quietly. Couldn't the whole place be done by contractors during working hours? Well, supposing he was willing to donate the cost, (the Rector had a one-off quote for £750 back in 1980) it could be, but they would be using perhaps several far noisier industrial grade strimmers, no doubt, which would disturb all the retired people in the neighbourhood who wanted to sit out in the sun. So meanwhile the Rector will do an hour or so every so often, and the regular gardener will do one or two hours a week too, and by the end of the year the whole churchyard, including all the great aunts' graves, will have been done at least once ~ that's the target. And with luck the sun will be shining on garden and graveyard alike.

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

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.*

Sept. 6th 11.00am Details to be announced. **
6.30pm United Service at Methodist Church

13th 11.00am Morning worship. **

20th 11.00am Morning worship

27th 11.00am Morning worship

Oct. 4th 9.00am Messy Church
11.00am Morning worship
6.30pm Evening Worship at St. Wilfrid's

11th 11.00am Morning worship

** As Concord goes to press, the autumn roster is not available.

Community Lunches

Wed. Sept. 9th 12.00 noon – 1.30pm
Next lunch; Wed. Oct. 14th (To be confirmed)

St. Wilfrid's Church, Northenden.

Ford Lane, M22 4WE

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Northenden Rectory, Ford La., M 22 4NQ
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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.

- Sept. 6th 10.30am Family Communion
6.30pm United Service at Methodist Church
- 13th 10.30am Holy Communion
6.30pm Evening Worship.
- 20th 10.30am Holy Communion
6.30pm Evening Worship
- 27th 10.30am Morning Prayer
6.30pm Holy Communion
- 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.

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, please contact the Rector.

The Next OPEN DAYS: Sept. 12th, 13th, afternoons.
("Heritage Open Days" ~ see panel)

Dates for your Diary ~ it's all happening! 

- Mon. 7th Women's Group ~ **7.30pm** Rectory
(See Sue's note ~ speaker, Alan Hewett)
- Sat. 12th, **Open Day.** 12 noon till 6pm ("Heritage Open Days")
- Sun. 13th, **Open Day,** 2.00 till 6.00pm ("Heritage Open Days")
- Sat. 26th Coffee Morning 10.00 – 11.30am Church Hall.

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.

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 ~ those whom I have married, baptised, &c. My final *Sunday* services will be on October 25th. **G.S.F.**

Half Marathon, 6th Sept.

This diary note is part by way of interest, part by way of warning. Stockport County FC supporters' club have arranged a half-marathon fun-(?)-run on the morning of 6th Sept., and its route goes along Ford Lane. They hope to keep our stretch, from Boat Lane to Copper Beech Close, clear of parking between 9.00 and 11.00am so that their competitors can run on the (barely existent) pavement and avoid traffic. I must say that I would have advised a better route, but it is too late to change.

Fortunately we do not have baptisms arranged that day ~ on 2nd August there were 211 adults and 72 children in church, most of whom came by car ~ so the strain on parking spaces might be manageable. But if you want, come to church early and shout the leaders on!

Registers ...



Baptised, on Sun. 2nd Aug. in the parish church

Esmee Jennifer Jane Hepple, Poppy Rae Davis,
Lucas James Pidlyskyj, Nathan Roy Tandy Skinner.

Registers, cont.

In Memoriam.

Pamela Hill-Wilson (Lanark Av.), Barbara Macdonald (Southport),
Leslie Waters (Crossacres), Barbara Bundred (Kenworthy La.),
Beryl Butterworth (Kingsley Rd.), Audrey Hargreaves (Poynton).

Women's Group ~ Sue writes...

On Sept. 7th Alan Hewett, a financial and legacy advisor, will give us a talk intriguingly entitled "Tax, Care and Toy Boys." Come and listen if you have a problem with any of those! At the now usual time of 7.30pm.

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

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

St. Wilfrid's Church ~ Open Days.

Once again we are joining in with the national
"Heritage Open Days"

to open St. Wilfrid's to all-comers ~ free, as always.

The tower will be open, with guided trips up it,
And displays of our village and church history and what is going
on here at the present time will be on show.

Book the dates now, come along, bring a friend,
and enjoy what you see, and what you eat!

Sat. 12th Sept. 12 noon – 6pm, **Sun. 13th Sept.** 2 - 6pm.

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. This year some of its trees have produced quite a heavy crop, even though they are quite small. I have rounded up a few of them already, where they are squeezed off by the rest of the crop, 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. Those I have collected are too sour except to cook.

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

I sometimes joke with visitors to St. Wilfrid's Church that I am always finding something new in the building. That is still the case, after 36 years! With a little bit of help from my friends, I have come across some graffiti. Don't panic. This is not your common or garden defacing of the place with "Kilroy woz here" or the like. (And even Kilroy would be interesting if it was very early Kilroy.) This is far more interesting, and dates from well before Kilroy's day. In fact it dates from before the time of the present church. (Work that one out, if you can!)

In September we might get some help to find and catalogue some more of the same, too. Carolanne King is an archaeologist

with the National Trust, and a member of the local Archaeology group. She is hoping, with a friend, to set up some training in the finding and logging of graffiti, following a surprisingly successful project in Norfolk, where they have found mediaeval sketches of ships, names, and architectural sketches. That, along with a selection of masons' marks and other features, is what Carolanne found during a Sunday afternoon pilot visit in August. The sketch is of some window designs, scratched onto the wall surface. And the designs are not of the present windows (we have them on paper, anyway, as well as the real thing); they are of a simpler design, with less fluting and filigree work. When we get to study them I think we shall find that they match the designs of the windows of the church that was demolished as unsafe in 1873 ~ or do they?

But if *those* designs were scratched onto plaster in the church (for lack of drawing paper), what does that tell us about the structure that was demolished? Put your detective hat on! 1. It says that what we see in the photos taken in 1872 or thereabouts was itself a rebuilding or extension of an earlier building, and 2. It says that bits of that earlier building remain within the present structure.

That actually does not surprise me, because the people who built our present nave wrote about finding older foundations in Concord's precursor-magazine, and you can see traces of older work in the 1872 photographs, but it is nice to see more evidence of that sequence. When more is known about these marks, and the other graffiti, I shall write again about it.

Of Steeplehouses and things. *G.S.F.*

Another joke that I share with some of my friends is my gratitude to the diocese for giving me a historic building and archaeological site to look after and delve into. St. Wilfrid's is an interesting and beautiful building with an ancient churchyard, and it is formally "listed" as among the top 5% of buildings of regional significance in the UK. That is a joy which professional archaeologists would drool over, and I am certainly happy to use its history as a way of attracting people to visit, and to pray. But on the other hand it can be a temptation and a distraction ~ for me, and I suggest for us all. The Church is not a building made out of stones, however beautiful; it is a community of people, who may

find it convenient to have a building to meet in, but that building is there to be used (that includes fair wear and tear), not idolised.

So if the building's beauty or history becomes the be all and end all of its existence, then it ceases to be a church. I have a great deal of sympathy with George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, who dismissed the buildings (and the wider structure too) of the established church in the 1640s to '60s as mere "Steeplehouses" ~ fancy puffed up places with pointy bits. So I hope to leave St. Wilfrid's in good order as a place which is practical for the people of God to meet and worship him, and to meet and support each other, and above all to welcome newcomers to that fellowship and introduce them to our Saviour. If it ceases to be that, give it to the National Trust and move into someone's front room.

I believe 7. ... in the Holy Catholic Church. G.S.F.

So, to pick up the points made in the previous article, what is the Church? St. Peter speaks of the people of God as "living stones", which are being built into a temple made up of the community, the called out church. It is the people of God who are the church.

And, embarrassing though it sometimes is to say so, as that community we are part of the message and the belief of the gospel, as expressed in the creed. Paul, in Ephesians ch. 3, goes as far as to say that by our welcome and tolerance of each other we are to show the powers that be in the secular world what life and community and the presence of God are supposed to mean. And who does it belong to? Faced with that kind of question Jesus took a young child, and said to his followers that anyone who discouraged her or cramped her growing in her relationship with God should be tossed into the sea themselves. That applies to how we demonstrate God's love this week at St. Wilfrid's; we can't dismiss it as being a nice abstract principle from a teacher long ago.

Some people are puzzled that part of the creed said in Anglican churches affirms the *Catholic* church. The problem is that this respectable word meaning *universal* has been hi-jacked by one particular segment of the world-wide church. It has never been appropriate; when the bishops of Rome started in the 5th century trying to wield authority over equally venerable bishops

in Greece and the East they were met with firm (and perhaps not very polite) rebuttal. They held just as much authority within the universal church, and were just as "orthodox." Since the Reformation the Roman claim has been even less valid.

So, by speaking of belief in the *Catholic* church we are affirming that God's holy people are not restricted to any one denomination or national church; we are part of a world-wide community or fellowship, which is bigger than Canterbury or Rome or Constantinople or Geneva. The *catholic* church is not about an organisation, but about all followers of Jesus Christ in their various gatherings and associations. But the message is about the supportive, believing and welcoming community, and not about a hierarchy or structure.

The picture that the New Testament gives of this community ~ and I believe the New Testament is setting the pattern to be followed, not just describing how things were once ~ is one in which all members in each local expression of it have a role ~ an active one ~ to play in its worship and service, its care and witness. (And also that "Christian Work" is not limited to things done in church premises to maintain its activities ~ so that being City Treasurer is potentially just as much a Christian activity as singing in the choir or being on the PCC.) I am conscious that I have probably said more about these points than actually enabling them to be put into practice over the past 36 years in St. Wilfrid's. Over the last year or so I have possibly begun to remedy this a bit, and I hope that in the next year or so this Christian community will pull together to put it into practice more. So over to you: you are the holy catholic church here.