

CONCORD ~ September 2010

Prayer for the Month ...

Gracious Creator,
in your world of generosity, give us gratitude,
in your world of variety, give us wonder,
in your world of beauty, give us delight,
in your world of plenty, give us generosity,
in a world of pain, give us your sympathy,
in a world of hardship, give us your compassion,
in a world of need, give us your creativity,
in a world of loneliness, give us your love,
through the work of our Saviour
and the energy of your Spirit.

Amen.

Northenden Rectory, Ford Lane,
0161 998 2615

Dear Friends,

A number of invitation and other special events this month: the Methodist Church Harvest is on Sunday 26th, as a chance to celebrate God's generosity and offer him our grateful thanks. (St. Wilfrid's' is the next week.) Despite all the problems we hear about, we do still live in a rich and abundant world.

At St. Wilfrid's we have one of our regular open weekends on 11th & 12th Sept, coinciding with the national "Heritage Open Days". Do take this opportunity of looking round the building at leisure, and seeing what displays we have on show, and of climbing the tower and ringing a bell ~ and not just yourself, but this is a chance to invite friends, neighbours or family into the church to meet people and perhaps become more aware of God's presence, as well as seeing the architecture.

A fortnight later we are taking part in another national event ~ Back to Church Sunday. If you don't make it to church very often yourself, this is a chance to renew your acquaintance, and we intend to make the worship fairly straightforward. For most readers that will not be the case, but this is a special "invitation" event, and it gives you the opportunity to encourage those friends or relations who used to come years ago, but never quite make it now. Invitation cards are available in church or

from me, using the logo and slogan on the front cover of this magazine. With luck there will be something about it in the press and on radio, too.

This month's issue takes a look at what we mean by Christian ministry and service, and includes an invitation to that as well. I also want to pick up the "Harvest" theme as we move into autumn, and consider the richness of creation, and its problems too. Magpie, of course, has his say; there is an invitation (another!) to confirmation, and (somewhat unusually) an obituary ~ for Morfydd Eglen. So now read on.

Yours faithfully,

Greg Forster

Cracks in Creation?

G.S.F

I firmly believe that the awesome wonder of the world around us is a pointer to the exuberant creativity of the God who made it; its intricate beauty is a pointer to his design, and the interconnectedness of things a pointer to his purpose. I know there are people who cannot accept this, and who rightly show us how this has grown and developed, tiny step by tiny step, down the aeons. Yes, if you want not to believe in God you can say these tiny steps are simply a process, and the result merely a wonderful outcome of incredibly long odds over an incredible length of time; but I simply want to say, *Amen to that, HalleluJah*, because that's the way God has chosen to work.

But if we are living in God's creation, what are we to say when things seem to go so badly wrong, and to be so awfully destructive? How are the floods in Pakistan part of that scheme of things? The very extent of them is hard to take in. An area the size of England inundated, they say. I find it difficult to envisage an area that size being flat enough to be flooded all at once! (I note that such a challenge only makes sense if we accept a *Christian* vision of God, as caring and well intentioned towards us. If your view of God is not shaped by this vision, then why are you complaining; It may be capricious, or callous, and you can't complain, and if you do not believe there is a god at all, that's just the way the world is. Tough! Don't complain ~ or actually recognise that your complaint is itself a pointer to God!)

But this intricate and exuberant and awesome and interconnected world is a dynamic thing. It is all those things

because it is full of movement and action. What is the alternative? Without this dynamism our Earth would be an inert ball, and there would be no problems ~ because there would be nothing and no-one to have problems and experience disaster. There have been times when the earth has been a bit like that ~ so frozen as to be a "snowball earth" ~ but the force of creativity has been so great that even then, as scientists are only just discovering and revealing, there was life at work within and below its frozen wastes. Awesome!

This dynamism is part of the creativity which makes the world what it is, and has made us what we are. Earthquakes and volcanoes seem destructive, but they are also constructive, and by bringing chemicals and minerals to the surface they produce the materials from which life arose, and the nutrients on which it depends. Water too can be so destructive, but it is the very essence (materially) of life. It is only in those few areas of Earth that it is lacking that no life-forms are to be found. So floods and earth-quakes are part of the package, part of the challenge, and it is as life forms face challenge in their environment and from each other that they develop. So all that we resonate with and find beautiful, awesome or fascinating ~ all that is the outcome of the challenges in our dynamic, and so creative world. Without the challenges there would be, well, nothing, not even us to complain

So here we are, the products of a challenging world; and the children of a creative God. Is that tough love or a cruel joke? I will suggest two answers, but they are answers to a slightly different question. It would seem that one of the earliest characteristics of humankind is that we show compassion and support in adversity. It is possible to read the Laetoli footprints, 3.5 million years old, in that light; there are certainly signs in later human fossils of care and value shown to the injured or disabled. It is part of what makes us us that we deal with hard-ship by helping each other. That is not to say, *It's all OK then*, but it is to ask, *What are we going to do about the challenges we meet now?* And the other answer, a very Christian answer, is to point out how God has come to share in the challenges and hurts of his creation in person ~ not just off-loading it onto someone else. That is who we believe Jesus to be, and what (among other things) we believe he was doing. He shared the consequences of the challenging creativity, with all its exuberance, we see around us. He is no

stranger to the harshness when wrong invades the glories and wonders of his creation.

Northenden Methodist Church

Palatine Road.

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

Services

- 5th Sept. 11.00am Northenden Preaching Team
6.30pm United Service at St. Wilfrid's
- 12th 11.00am Holy Communion
The Revd. David Sanders
- 19th 11.00am Mr. Duncan Rutter
- 26th 11.00am **Harvest Festival**
Mrs. Margaret Hunt
- 3rd Oct. 11.00am Morning Worship
6.30pm United Service **at St. Wilfrid's ****

** From now until next spring the arrangements for United Services are juggled to avoid clashing with Northenden Players performances in the Hall. Watch out for these variations.

Community Lunch:

Wednesday 15th Sept., noon till 1.30pm

Harvest Event:

Listen out and watch out for details of this ~ being planned for Saturday 25th Sept.

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,

St. Wilfrid's Church, Northenden.

Ford Lane, M22 4WE

Rector ~ the Revd. Greg Forster,
Northenden Rectory, Ford La., M 22 4NQ

Tel. 0161 998 - 2615

Email; gsf @ stwilfridsnorthenden . org . uk

Services:

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

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

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

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

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

- 5th Sept. 10.30am Family Communion Service
6.30pm United Evening Worship @ **St. Wilfrid's**.
- 12th 10.30am Holy Communion
6.30pm Evening Worship
- 19th 10.30am Holy Communion and Baptisms.
6.30pm Evening Worship
- 26th 10.30am Morning Prayer \$\$
6.30pm Holy Communion
- 3rd. Oct 10.30am **Harvest Festival Family Service**
6.30pm United Evening Worship @ **St. Wilfrid's**. **

\$\$ This Sunday is "*Back to Church Sunday*" ~ see the invitation panel later in this issue.

** This service (on the 3rd) will probably be a communion, since the morning service will not be! We invite all who are communicants in their own churches to share in this.

Because of the schedule of plays by Northenden Players at the Methodist Hall our pattern of united evening services in alternate venues is complicated over the winter; watch these diary pages carefully, please.

CONFIRMATION Sun. 17th Oct., 3.00pm. West Didsbury.

Drop in ...

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

The next full scale "open days" will be on 11th & 12th September from noon till 5.00pm, when the tower will be accessible and there will be displays of current and past activities in the church and the community. This is part of the national Heritage Open Days Weekend.

Dates for your Diary ~ it's all happening!

Sat. 4th Sept. ~ Remember the Farmers' Market.

Also on 4th, at the Cathedral: Celebrating Christ the Healer.

10.00am till 4.00pm.

Mon. 6th 7.45 for 8.00pm Women's Group in the Rectory
Lucy Campbell ~ Life as a Grip-puller; *making films.*

Wed. 8th 8.00pm Bible Study & discussion; Rectory
Also 15th, 22nd, 29th.

Sat. 11th, Sun. 12th *Heritage Open Days in Church – see panel.*

Thu. 16th 7.30pm PCC meeting in the Church Hall.

Sat. 25th 10.00 – 11.30am Coffee Morning ...
... in the Church Hall, with sale of books, cakes, &c.

Sat. 2nd Oct. ~ again, remember the Farmers' Market.

Sunday 3rd Oct. Harvest Festival Lunch ...

... after the Family Service, in the Church Hall and open to all; bring your favourite "harvest" dish, if you can, and share with everyone else's. Starts approx. 11.45am –ish.

And advance notice of a wind quintet concert on Thu. 21st Oct.

The Parish Registers

Baptised, on Sunday August 15th

Ethan William Mitchell.

Celia Mae Conway, Theodore Maxwell Conway.

Married in the parish church on ...
... Saturday 7th August

Janet Anne Leach to Danny Bullivant

In Memoriam

Morfydd Eglen (Ford Lane) 87, Arthur Bridges (Morrell Rd.),
David Walker (Northen Moor).

**“Back to Church Sunday” ~
Sunday 26th September**

COME AS YOU ARE ...

... is the slogan and theme for this special event at the 10.30am service at St.Wilfrid’s (and many other churches) on this day. The service should be fairly simple, familiar, and “user friendly”. It’s intended for people who haven’t been to church for a while, perhaps, and want to get back in touch ~ or for those who just want to see what the Christian faith has to offer ~ or even those who feel angry or just puzzled by it all. So come as you are, whether this description fits you, or whether you are a stalwart regular; consider this as an invitation, so ...



Morfydd Eglen ...

... has been an active figure in St.Wilfrid’s all the time that I have been here ~ that’s 31 years, more or less. Her death in August was peaceful, not unexpected by her or her family and friends, but in the end swifter than we had anticipated. We thank God for her life and work, and wish her family ~ especially Jane and Richard ~ strength and comfort in their time of loss.

She worshipped regularly, at the Thursday as well as Sunday services, latterly missing only when hospital or other appointments claimed her attendance. She was for a long time a member of the church council, and even after leaving it she

continued to maintain the church's membership list efficiently, making her final entry only a few days before she was taken into hospital. Until recently she could be found, usually in the kitchen or behind a stall, at coffee mornings or other social occasions. Those of us who pay for our sunshine would regularly give account to her! Outside the church she was active in WRVS, and before retirement worked as a Sister in the Eye hospital. For all these things, as well as her friendship and patient support, and for the backing she gave to her late husband Jim in his ministry, we thank God. She will be missed.

Bags of Sunshine!

One of the things which Morfydd used to do was collect "sunshine bags" ~ from people who put a 'forfeit' of a few pence into a collection bag every time there was a sunny day, and then donated it to the church. I'm not sure yet what arrangements will be made to continue this, but for the moment I am happy to receive bags of frozen sunshine.

Morfydd also handled used stamps for charity. Please continue to bring these in and leave them in the box at the rear of church, and we will pass them on as before. **Greg**

Forster

Christian Service. *Greg Forster*

I wrote last month about Margaret Young's ordination, and also about bishops. Can I say something this month about two other aspects of Christian ministry or service. One point is an invitation, and the other I hope an encouragement.

Firstly, the encouragement; I believe that we misunderstand God's interest in the world, and our own part in his common generosity to us all, if we forget that most of what we do should be seen as our part in God's good ordering of the world. So if you spend a lot of time being a grandmother, or if you are paid to sort out the City's finances, or if you volunteer for a charity shop, or listen with sympathy to your network of friends, ... or whatever, think of that as service to God as well as a job or a hobby or an interest or just family. The poet George Herbert wrote a telling hymn;

*Teach me, my God and king, in all things thee to see,
and what I do in anything to do it as for thee.*

... nothing can be so mean

*which with this tincture, "for thy sake"
will not grow bright and clean.
A servant with this clause makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room as for thy laws
makes that and the action fine.*

So take heart, and encouragement, from that truth. Let me say, for myself, that I reckon I am as much serving God when I sort out the salaries of a group of community workers as when I stand in a pulpit.

The danger, of course, from having this approach to Christian service is that we forget the worship and the discipleship which should go alongside this service; it is not a substitute for bible reading and prayer and Sunday worship, but its partner; like left foot and right foot walking together. (Yes, you try walking with your left foot only!)

But secondly the invitation: within the activities of God's church, there is a place for people to take an active part in leading the worship. That may be through ordination or some other formally recognised position in the church, but it need not be. I have lately been asking more and more people to take part in our worship at St. Wilfrid's in this way, and I should be glad to involve others still ~ so if you feel that you could do this, and would like to, please ask me. It might be reading lessons, or helping with the cup at communion, or leading prayers or the opening part of a service.

If you can play an instrument, I should be very glad to hear from you. If you are interested in being part of an informal singing group, helping perhaps to introduce some livelier singing, that would be good too. I can of course offer encouragement, coaching, and advice (except if you are a guitarist!) if you feel that you wouldn't know quite how to do it, so don't be put off by feeling that you just couldn't.

Pakistan Floods

In response to the massive flooding in the Indus valley in Pakistan a retiring collection was arranged at St. Wilfrid's. I can't give a final total at present, but it is over £100 if all gifts that I know of are included. If you missed it, then most banks should have paying in facilities for the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) if you ask them, or simply send a cheque to

Christian Aid or any of the other charities involved, marked Pakistan Floods.

Christian Aid's address is **PO Box 100, London, SE 1 7RT**

Confirmation *Greg Forster*

Within the Church of England people are brought into full membership in two stages; we are baptised, very often as young children, and then as teenagers or adults we are "confirmed". This takes place in a service which the bishop will lead, and in which people confirm for themselves the promises and affirmations of faith made on their behalf in baptism; the bishop in turn confirms their membership and welcomes them again into the church; and we symbolise in the actions of the service how God confirms, or strengthens, us in our faith and for our Christian lives. Confirmation then leads on to sharing in the bread and wine of the communion service, in which we express our ongoing prayers for God's support and nourishment in our faith.

Prior to the Confirmation service I would expect to meet up with people over a number of weeks, and explain more fully to them what Christian faith involves. We have a confirmation in this area on Oct. 17th., and I would hope to prepare people for this in September and early October. If you are interested, for yourself or someone else in the family, please contact me.

The Children's Society ...

... has a charity shop at 356 Palatine Rd.

Normal opening hours are 9.00am – 5.00pm.,
with a range of Good-as-New goods, especially books.

There is also a wide selection of new, end-of-run, wallpapers.

Volunteers are needed in the shop; contact Debbie on 945-7384

Magpie ...

... remembers the story of the old shoemaker and the new minister. "So what do you do for the Lord?" asked the minister when he visited the old stalwart of his congregation for the first time. "I cobbles," said the old man. "But no, I mean what do you do *for the Lord*?" repeated the minister. "I cobbles," repeated the cobbler. "But no, what Christian work do you do?"

said the minister, again, rather exasperated that he could not make himself clear. "Like I said," repeated the cobbler, "I cobbles, same as you ministers, and while we's talking about it, that left shoe of yours have got a loose nail, and I'll fix it for you while we's talking, if you'll let me. God wants for me to be good at my job, same as he wants you to be good at yours."

... did a lot of watching this space during August ~ this space being the new building work where the car sales used to be at the end of Church Road. For a long time there was a digger deep down in the hole they had dug. For a while, what with all the rain we'd been having, it looked as if the new flats were designed to have an underground swimming pool.

... seriously though, the council and the designer did a grand job. There are to be car parking spaces in that basement ~ eight of them, if Magpie remembers rightly. But there are to be rather more flats than that in the building, so they say, so Northenden's parking problems, the inconvenience to residents, and congestion in Kingsley and Morrell Roads, will get worse.

... and that in a month when there are reports of cars being clamped on the private road in front of the old parade. This sounds crazy, doesn't it, if the shopkeepers who own the road want to keep the goodwill of their customers and attract trade to the village. It seems the Government agrees with this; their intention to ban private clamping was announced the day after Magpie typed the first part of this item.

... does anyone know a Michael Flatley living in or near Northenden ~ not the *Riverdancer*, presumably? A mass card addressed to him, but without a street address, was found in Palatine Rd., and has been handed in to the Rector to see if he can reunite it with its owner.

Northenden Players Theatre ...

This year's season begins with evening performances on Sun. 5th Sept. (7.00pm), and then 7th – 10th (7.30pm) of

THE GRADUATE

By Terry Johnson

in the Hall at Northenden Methodist Church, Victoria Rd.

For details or booking, ring 445-6868