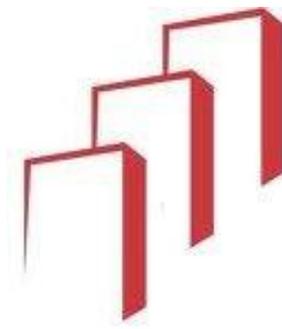


# Milestones in a Ministry



## Fr Neil Kelley at St Faith's: 1999-2012

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**To mark the ending of his 13 years' ministry as Vicar of the United Benefice, we present year-by-year edited highlights, in words and photographs, of each year's events at St Faith's**

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### AD. 2002

**An assortment of images and magazine reports featuring the dedication of the Lord Runcie window, the Parish Charity Fun Day, a family baptism... and a donkey on parade.**

To commemorate Robert Runcie's long association with our church, we commissioned and installed a double-light window alongside the southern porch of the church. Here it looks out on to the busy A565 highway and the 'Saint Faith's' bus-stop, and is lit in all its colourful splendour by the sunshine of afternoons and early evenings. The window, whose details may be seen in the photographs below, show Robert Runcie, St Faith's, St Luke's Crosby, Merchant Taylors' School, St Albans Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, together with appropriate heraldry, the Military Cross - and, in the lower left hand corner, a pig, to celebrate Lord Runcie's life-time interest in pig-breeding.

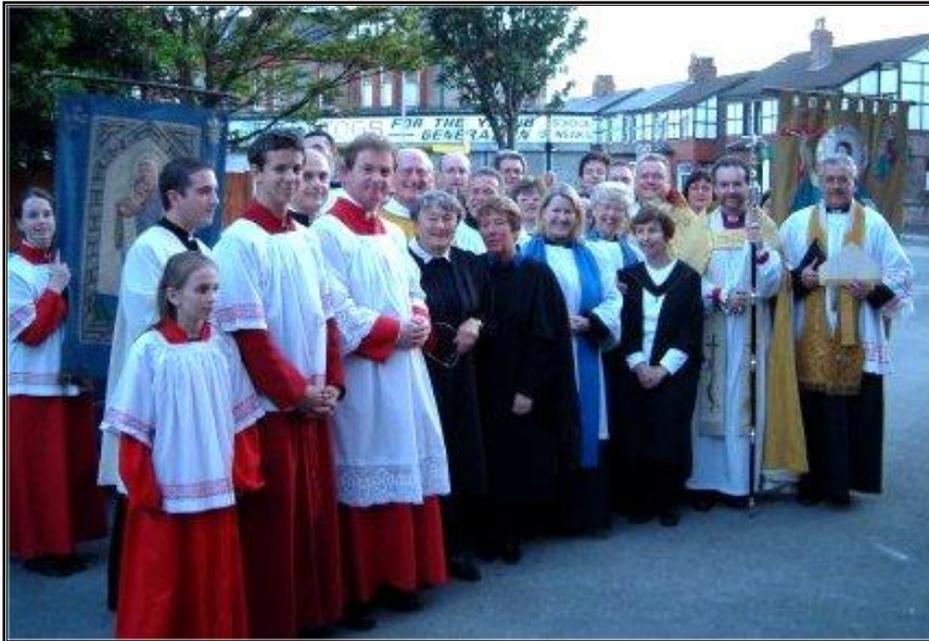
The Lord Runcie Memorial Window was dedicated by Bishop James Jones of Liverpool on Wednesday, May 15th, after a lengthy process of gestation following Lord Runcie's death two years previously. It is no secret that there were from the start those who expressed concern about the rightness of asking for money for a decorative luxury when the church's mission seemed to need the money more. Indeed, at one PCC meeting the prospect of putting the whole project on indefinite hold seemed quite likely. In the end, of course, every penny of the cost came from friends, members and well-wishers of Lord Runcie and St Faith's, past and present, and the only cost to the church was in terms of blood sweat, toil and (almost) tears, not least from this writer!



Like the Centenary window, the Runcie window was designed by Linda Walton of Design Lights Stained Glass. The installation was very much a last-minute affair, with alterations having to be made at the eleventh hour, when mistakes were discovered in the wording. The service of Festal Evensong, Dedication of the window and Benediction, was a wonderful occasion: dignified, colourful, musical and moving at all times. Our thanks are due to Fr Neil for his invariable liturgical skills, to the choir and servers for their usual professionalism in performance, and to Bishop James Jones for presiding, preaching, dedicating and giving a smoke-wreathed Benediction: all the rich panoply of Anglo-Catholic ritual, in fact, as if to the manner born. The service was full of joyful thanksgiving, and the superb spread afterwards added to the delight of a vintage evening: undoubtedly one of the great St Faith's occasions.

The very real gratitude of St Faith's, is due to all who helped to bring this project to its triumphant conclusion. To those who gave their ideas, their money, their talents, their moral support and their

time to the planning and funding of the window; to those who in any way helped to make May 15th so memorable; to those who over the years, serving St Faith's at its altars or finding their vocation here, are here commemorated; and especially to Robert Alexander Kennedy Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury and always much-loved and loving friend of our church: on all these God's light now shines in the images of the Lord Runcie Memorial Window.



Bishop, clergy, choir and servers outside church after the dedication service

At the south entrance, Bishop James prepares to dedicate the Lord Runcie memorial window



## The Charity Fun Day, July 13th, 2012

... came from the wish of our two churches, both to do more for outside charities and to try and involve our communities in so doing. Good publicity and even better weather resulted in very good numbers of people thronging the Hall, the Vicarage garden (where there was the bouncy castle, which seemed to have taken up residence there that summer!) and the church grounds. There were the usual stalls, with hot dogs doing a roaring trade, displays by some of the good causes we were helping, and a Treasure Hunt in church. The

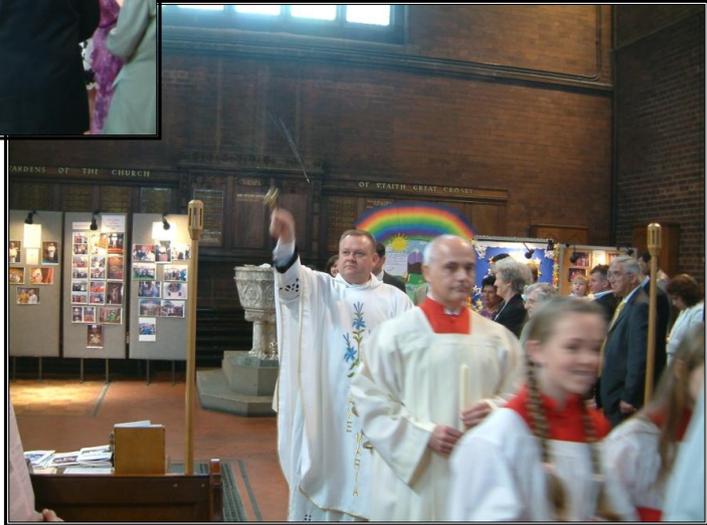
Mayor of Sefton opened proceedings, and our M.P. called in. Both of them, and many others besides, queued up to throw wet sponges at Fr Neil — undoubtedly the highlight of the day (and he offered an encore after the Sunday service!). In the pictures below, Claire Curtis-Thomas, M.P. takes aim at an expectant vicar — with spectacular results!



Among the charities represented, Medic Malawi was prominent — St Faith's has long-standing connections with this organisation. The bouncy castle adorned the sunny vicarage garden, where folk could relax on the lawn.



There have been many happy family baptisms over the years. At this one, as at most others during Fr Neil's tenure of office, we were reminded of our own baptisms by being sprinkled liberally with holy water as the sanctuary party processed back up the aisle.



**In June 2002, Fr Neil sent a message to the Family of St Faith's**

“Before I came to S. Faith's I'd heard from a number of people what a marvellous reputation S. Faith's had for looking after their clergy. All I can say is that the reputation was very much understated! As I give thanks for being Parish Priest here for three years can I please take this opportunity to thank all those who have kindly supported me by their prayers, encouragement and in so many practical ways. Nor must I forget as well all those who have put up with my mistakes! It is such a joy to be here and I hope that remains so for very many years to come.”



Nearly forgot to mention... the Palm Sunday procession in 2002 featured a real donkey – and a constable to tell it where to go!