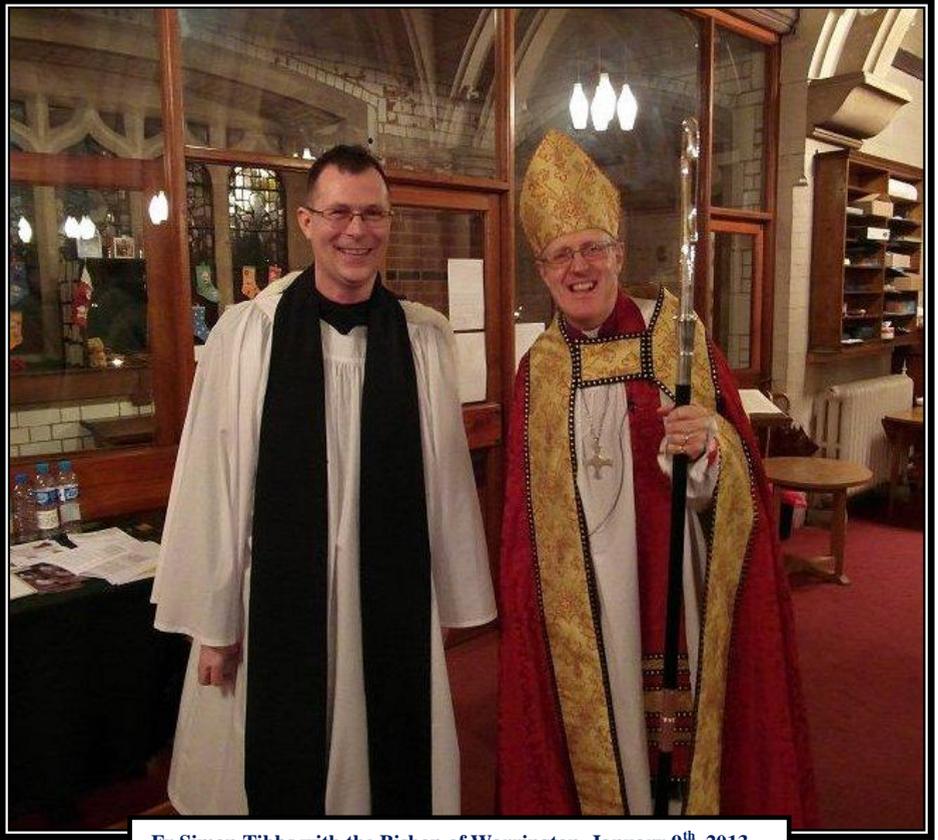


# Newslink



Fr Simon Tibbs with the Bishop of Warrington, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013

St Faith's Church, Great Crosby  
Parish Magazine

**FEBRUARY 2013**

# Worship at Saint Faith's



## SUNDAY SERVICES

<b>11.00am</b>	<b>SOLEMN MASS and Children's Church</b>
1.00pm	Holy Baptism (2nd Sunday)
6.00pm	Evening Service (1st Sunday)

## WEEKDAY SERVICES

Monday	9.30am	Morning Prayer
Tuesday	9.30am	Holy Eucharist
Wednesday	10.30am	Holy Eucharist ( <i>at S. Mary's</i> )
Thursday	6.30pm	Reflections Prayer Group ( <i>at S. Mary's</i> )
Friday	6.30pm	Evening Prayer
Saturday	10.30am	Holy Eucharist

*Please consult the website or weekly sheets for any variation in service times, particularly for weeks where there is a Holy Day.*

## SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

The Clergy are available by appointment to hear confessions or to talk about any matter in confidence. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is always available in preparation for Christmas and Easter and at other advertised times.

## HOME VISITS to the sick and housebound and those in hospital

If you, or someone you know, are unable to get to church and would like to receive Holy Communion at home the Eucharistic Ministers are happy to undertake this - please call 928 3342 to arrange this. Likewise, to arrange a visit to someone in hospital or at home, please call 928 3342 to arrange this.

## IN A PASTORAL EMERGENCY

Please contact the vicarage (928 3342) or a member of the ministry team.



## **From the Ministry Team**

Dear Friends,

We have had the blessing of celebrating Christmas together, finding time for prayer and fellowship with one another. It is a deeply emotional time for each of us, as we reflect on our relationships in the world. For some it will have been a happy time, for others not. For some there may have been mixed experiences – both happy and sad.

It is our hope that we will have experienced a renewal of faith and a new beginning in our journey towards deepening our relationship with God. The liturgical services, with their mystery and spiritual power are integral to this. The work of all the people at St Faith's has both been powered by the Holy Spirit and brings strength to the United Benefice.

During the time of interregnum the congregations realised more than ever how they must continue to work one another, giving mutual support and strength in all their endeavours. This culminated in the joint service on Christmas Day at St Mary's.

It was with great joy that the United Benefice welcomed Fr Simon Tibbs as its Priest-in-Charge on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2013, at his licensing service at St Mary's Church. It was a truly memorable and moving event for everyone. There was evident happiness and excitement amongst the congregation. The lesson, taken from Isaiah (Ch 61) was full of fantastic imagery, describing the release from suffering upon hearing the good news from God. Luke (Ch 4) describes how Jesus echoes these words from scripture, saying how they are now fulfilled.

It is for us as God's people to realise this truth and to live our life fully in faith. The time of doubt and uncertainty, which inevitably comes with interregnum (which was mercifully fleeting!) is now past. Fr Simon is with us, and we give thanks for his ministry. Let us journey together, renewed in faith and strength – to indeed spread the good news of Jesus Christ.

With every blessing,

*Paua*

# Ministry



Ministry has been very much on our minds over these weeks. Thank you all for the all the extra work undertaken in preparation for my new ministry, and for the wonderful services on 9th and 13<sup>th</sup> January, which were dignified, moving, uplifting and encouraging.

We are lucky in our United Benefice to receive the ministry of a talented, committed and diverse ministry team. On the clergy side, we all owe our thanks to Fr Dennis and Mtr Denise for their sterling work during the vacancy (Denise has told me, by the way, that she doesn't mind being referred to as 'Mother', but is unsure about being addressed thus. It would be discourteous to force the issue, but it seems to me that equal titles denoting equal respect are fitting, at least for formal or public speech. We will all have our own views on that!).

Denise has borne a heavy load during the vacancy, and has done so, from what I have been able to learn, with extremely good grace. From our brief acquaintance, I can see that she is a priest of special quality, warm, compassionate, and extremely dedicated. I am happy to announce that Denise will be taking a very well-earned Sabbatical for three months later this year, from 1<sup>st</sup> May to 1<sup>st</sup> September. I hope that this will prove a rich time for her to rest and re-charge. We will value her all the more upon her return to active ministry in the autumn.

Alongside our excellent clergy, we are also blessed in a great team of readers. Paula has been licensed only in the last few months. I am particularly pleased to be taking on the support of someone just starting out in licensed ministry, and I know we will all want to encourage her and engage with her generously as she continues to grow and develop. Fred has also received his Permission to Officiate for a further three years. By the time you read this, that will have been marked (without great ceremony, at his request) in our liturgy. Thanks to Paula, Fred, Cynthia and Jackie for their ministry among us.

Important as is the particular work undertaken by clergy and readers, ministry is a function, not just of those individuals who dress up on Sundays, but of the whole people of God. It was good to be reminded in the Bishop's sermon at the Licensing Service on 9<sup>th</sup> of January of the stirring command given to Isaiah that the whole people, and not just those ordained or licensed, were called to be 'priests of the Lord' and 'ministers of our God'.

It has been a busy time for many at St. Faith's and St. Mary's. As the dust begins to settle, let's turn our thoughts to how our life as congregations can best honour that priestly commission we all received in our baptism.

Fr Simon

# Licensed to Thrill?



This writer has witnessed, and indeed often been closely involved in a number of interregnums (interregnae?) since the one following the departure of Fr William Hassall many years ago. The one from which we just thankfully emerged was blessedly brief: from Fr Neil's installation at Bushey at the end of last July to January 9<sup>th</sup> is under five and a half months. Scarcely had we settled into the routine of being without an incumbent than the process of profile writing and advertising began, and very soon after that rumours of a possible – nay probable – appointment began to circulate. And then it was almost time for the Great Announcement – and soon the fun and games of getting ready to greet our new vicar. The rest, as they say, is, a few days after January 9<sup>th</sup>, is almost history. The church website carries pages of pictures of the happenings at the induction (sorry, licensing!): these extra words are an impression of the evening.

Since Fr Neil (first vicar of the United Benefice) had been inducted at St Faith's, Fr Simon elected to use St Mary's, and our sister church played host to a goodly number of both congregations, visitors and representatives of other churches and organisations. The first thing perhaps to be said about the service was that it was significantly shorter than previous such events. The liturgy had been updated, rewritten and simplified and the end product, despite the obligatory legal and diocesan processes, seemed more friendly, relaxed and informal.

Part of the reason for this was the fact that, owing to the illness of Archdeacon Ricky Panter, some promotions and transfers were called for. Area Dean Roger Driver was Archdeacon for the day, and his deputy, Tom Rich, stepped up to become Area Dean. All of this prompted Fr Simon to reassure us that he was the real thing and no substitute, and set the tone for the evening's proceedings.

From the church website you can access the service order for the evening. There was the entry of crucifer, choir, readers, clergy, officials and incumbent-elect, and then the sequence of processes whose purpose was to turn The Revd Dr Simon John Tibbs into our priest-in-charge. The use of this latter term, despite its aura of impermanence, is standard practice in our Diocese - and doubtless others as well – in these days of falling congregations and incumbents and the need to close churches or combine livings: it carries no particular message for St Faith's and St Mary's at this time. Indeed, Fr Dennis recently won from Archdeacon Ricky Panter the admission that the familiar term of Vicar was acceptable and in any case impossible to eradicate in common parlance!

And so, as the order of service made clear, we worked our way through what was a legal ceremony and an act of worship. Our almost-vicar was presented to the Bishop of Warrington by our four churchwardens and a patron. The Bishop preached to us, and the large and impressive augmented choir sang an Elgar anthem aptly entitled 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me'. Thus encouraged, Fr

Simon swore oaths of allegiance to the Crown and Obedience to the Bishop before agreeing to toe the line doctrinally and liturgically. Thus reassured, Bishop Richard formally Licensed him and anointed him for office.

The Ministry Team came forward, and all PCC members present stood to offer support and receive a blessing, after which the Archdeacon-substitute led our new vicar to his stall and Installed him. Assorted worthies, clerical and lay, then stepped up to welcome Fr Simon, before more worthies brought up a map (in case he was uncertain of his whereabouts), water, bread and wine. With the service drawing to an end, young people led the prayers, and it was time for the episcopal blessing. During the recessional hymn, the procession moved to the back for the final symbolic actions. The Bishop placed the hand of the 'new minister' on the door, before, in an extravagant and satisfyingly loud gesture, the vicar flung wide the doors to symbolise the church's readiness to reach out to our parishes.

The refreshments beckoned at the end of a splendid act of worship, which successfully combined formality with a degree of fun, and provided the perfect launch pad for a new ministry full of promise and anticipation. The rest is, for the time being, silence – apart from the heartfelt welcome to Fr Simon (and his dog Poppy – our back cover girl!) and the assurance of our loyalty and prayers in the new chapter about to be written in the story of the United Benefice.

*Chris Price*

## **Christmas Tree Festival 2012** **– the final instalment**



As the new year begins and the old year is left behind, the Tree Festival has only just drawn to an end, in other words the accounts are now complete, which really means the figures are available to share.

It is a pleasure to advise that, although slightly down on last year's figure, the charities taking part shared £2,698.28, and this, together with such an exceptionally convivial atmosphere throughout the week, made the event very well worthwhile. Also, thanks to much hard work and advanced planning, the church has benefited by just over £3,000.

This sum was raised by the phenomenal work of the Jam Factory, the gift stall and culinary delights offered by the refreshment team, together with some generous donations. Well done everyone and thanks to all who gave their time to support our special week.

*Margaret Houghton*

# 'At the Gate of the Year'



One of the best-known, yet least known poems was published in 1908. It is the poem quoted by King George VI in his Christmas Day broadcast in 1939. It came at the end of the nine-minute radio broadcast:

'I feel that we may all find a message of encouragement in the lines which, in my closing words, I would like to say to you:

I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year, "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown." And he replied, "Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light, and safer than a known way." May that Almighty Hand guide and uphold us all.'

The King's broadcast was specifically Christian in content. He identified Christmas as "above all, the festival of peace". But Britain was of course at war (and, it is worth noting the obvious fact, obscured by hindsight, that at the time no one knew if Britain would win the war). "I believe from my heart," George VI said, "that the cause which binds together my peoples and our gallant and faithful Allies is the cause of Christian civilisation."

The mysterious-sounding words with which he finished this broadcast were by Minnie Haskins (1875 - 1957). They came from a poem of hers called "God Knows", in a collection, *The Desert*, published in 1908. Neither the poem nor its author was well known. Indeed, Miss Haskins did not realise the King was going to quote her words. She didn't hear the broadcast. "I heard the quotation read in a summary of the speech," she subsequently told *The Daily Telegraph* when contacted by the newspaper. "I thought the words sounded familiar and suddenly it dawned on me that they were out of my little book."

The poem had been drawn to the King's attention by his wife Queen Elizabeth, and the lines were to be recited 63 years later at her own funeral. They were wisely chosen to stand on their own, for the remainder do not possess such a compelling quality.

Immediately after the lines that George VI quoted, the verse form changes: "So I went forth, And finding the hand of God, Trod gladly into the night. He led me towards the hills And the breaking of day in the lone east. So heart be still! What need our human life to know If God hath comprehension? In all the dizzy strife of things, Both high and low, God hideth his intention.'

An error that was widely circulated was that Minnie Haskins was an American. In fact she was a grocer's daughter brought up at Warmley, Bristol. As a Congregationalist, she taught at a Sunday School there. It is said that the image in

her poem came to her at Warmley when she was standing at an upstairs balcony window, looking down the lit driveway to the gate.

Pamela Emy, a former pupil of Minnie Haskins at the London School of Economics, wrote to The Daily Telegraph in 2002. “My abiding memory is of her asking me in a tutorial, ‘And how is your personal philosophy getting along, Miss Emy?’ As a naive 20-year old, I remember being somewhat floored.”

*Christopher Howse*

*‘Sacred Mysteries’ column, The Daily Telegraph, August 2008*



## **In Memoriam, Mona Turner, R.I.P.**

### **Fr Martin Jones's funeral address, January 9th, 2013**

We have come here today, to acknowledge the life of Mona Turner. We are here to recognise and to express grief and sorrow. But as well as being here to mourn, and it is right that we do so, we are also here to celebrate a life and to remember how Mona's life touched the lives of those around her.

So Paul, Miriam (her children) and I (her son in law) have been remembering those times and we would like to share some of those memories with you today...

Mona was born in 1925 in Boswell Street, Bootle, the youngest of three girls. The family church was St Leonard's Bootle, but Mona started going to St Faith's aged five with her Auntie Lily, some 82 years ago, and enjoyed it so much she attended on her own from the age of 10.

Mona attended Rockcliffe College in Seaforth, run by the 'Misses Pride', her favourite subjects being history, English and all things drama, music and performance related. Acrobatic dancing was her forte and she was known to do cartwheels to 'liven things up' at varied church functions, right until she was into her late fifties.

Mona became a Sunday School teacher at the tender age of 16 and soon rose to Superintendent. Several of her 'pupils' obviously listened well and took their studies to heart, later being called to ordained ministry, some of whom are here today. During the war she worked in the munitions factory and later in Passmore's in South Road and 'The Bon Marche' in Liverpool.

She married George in 1949 and enjoyed over 50 years of very happy marriage.

Mona gave up work in 1953 when Paul was born and dedicated the rest of her long life to being wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, all of which she excelled at.

Since its dedication, St Faith's has had 9 incumbents, Mona being a member of the congregation for the last seven – Reverends Brierley, Schofield, Hassall, Billington, Goodrich, Capper and Kelley – and she had been planning on attending Fr Simon's induction this evening. As for curates, there have been many, a lot of whom Mona had a story about. Take the tale about Mark Way... at the time, the family had a black cat, whose trick was being able to use the door knocker when wanting to come in after his neighbourhood prowling. One evening there was a knock at the door, Mona's mum opened it, looking down at the step, saying 'come in, you little black devil' and then saw the shoes, cassock, cloak and curate! Mona, apparently, was mortified.

Peter Cavanagh's curacy was also memorable - Peter bought his mother an uncontrollable dog called Toby, which he vowed to 'tame'. He then went away for a weekend and Mona agreed to look after said dog. All was fine until Toby decided whilst out one day that he'd had enough, didn't fancy going any further, and Mona was seen walking along Stuart Road, carrying an Afghan hound! Interesting...

Mona also terrified some vicars and curates by telling them she had seen many clergy in a state of undress – this was, of course, due to her penchant for plays, revues and pantomimes. She herself played Principal Boy, then helped produce, provide costumes and make-up for productions in the '50s, '60s and '70s. Only a few years ago, whilst living at Homedove House, she played the role of 'The Emperor' in their production of Aladdin.

Mona's contributions to life at St Faith's have been many and varied over the years. She was a founder member and chairman of 'The Horsfall Ladies' (named after the church's founder) – a wonderful group of ladies who met weekly, had serious, not so serious and downright fun nights of discussion and fellowship. The Horsfall Ladies (also affectionately known as The Donkey Drops) were usually responsible for catering for the many functions at St Faith's and earned Mona the title of 'Our Lady of the Teas'.

Following the death of husband George in 2000 and her sister Marie in 2002, Mona moved from Galloway Road to her flat in Homedove House. This proved to be a great decision. She made new friends, started a new hobby of card making, and with her famous knitting skills helped raise, along with other residents, thousands of pounds for charity – a different one each year, and mostly local. This year's charity is Riding for the Disabled in Crosby, a cause very close to Mona's heart – giving people independence was very important to her, and she did say that she had also been inspired by this summer's Paralympics. Mona herself was very

independent, right until the end. The weekly trips on the Sefton Helping Hands 'Little Bus' have been a lifeline – going each week to Morrisons or Tesco to get her own shopping meant she didn't and wouldn't have to rely on anyone else.

Since my ordination, Mona has enjoyed 'dual nationality' of both St Faith's and St Oswald's Winwick. It is safe to say that her new church family adopted her very readily – testimony not only to St Oswald's welcome, but also to Mona's outgoing personality. Her knitting prowess also helped raise much needed funds for the St Oswald's church roof fund.

To Miriam and Paul, she was not only a wonderful mother, but also a best friend, confidante and most of all, someone with whom to share a laugh, the odd rude joke and every other emotion possible. She may have been elderly in years, but (like her own mother) she never thought of herself as old – 'young at heart' may be a cliché, but it is exactly the right description. Of course, like most parents, she did manage to embarrass her children at times – Miriam and Paul took her to see folk-rock group Fairport Convention (we said she was young at heart!) – imagine their faces at the interval to see their Mum holding the bass player's pint for him while he signed autographs! Actually, they were probably jealous...

And of course, Mona was a wonderful grandmother to Josh and Ben, step-grandmother to Charlotte and David, and 'Great-granny Mona' to Charlotte's four children. They all loved her very much.

For my part as her son-in-law, more than one person has said 'we each have a Mona-shaped hole in our lives' - that is true - and that her death heralds the end of an era - that is also I feel true – as at this time St Faith's finds itself at the beginning of a new year and a new chapter with Fr. Simon.

But for me, amidst the pain of loss there is also a feeling of joy, the joy and privilege of having Mona in my life. We have recognised our pain and grief, we have celebrated the life of Mona and now we look forward in hope. Hope for healing, healing that allows us to live with our grief, healing that lets us love, smile at the good memories, cry and carry on. That's the sort of healing that Fr. Colin told us about in our reading from Philippians (4:4-9) that for people who have a faith they can give every situation they experience to God finding in a returning relationship with God, a kind of peace in those everyday experiences.

Christians believe that death is not the end of what we are, that we move on to a different existence, one in which they perceive as whole. We are not whole here in our earthly life and we can only become whole when we are united with our loving heavenly Father.

Mona is now whole, resting in paradise.



# Memories of Mona



On page 25 of Chris Price's "A History of Saint Faith's Church Crosby 1900 - 1975" there is a picture of a 1951 Mothering Sunday Procession in which Mona, holding a child's hand in each of hers, can be seen in the vanguard of the Sunday School as they follow Fr. Hassall and servers, Raymond Clarke and Derek Clawson, around the church grounds in the traditional "clipping" ceremony.

As a teenage boy in the mid 1960s I can recall Fr Hassall telling me that it wasn't long after his arrival as Parish priest in January 1948, that he conducted his first funeral service at St Faith's, which was that of George Becton Turner, Mona's father-in-law, and that subsequent to George's death the Turner family had donated a gift of gates at the Kingsway entrance to the church.

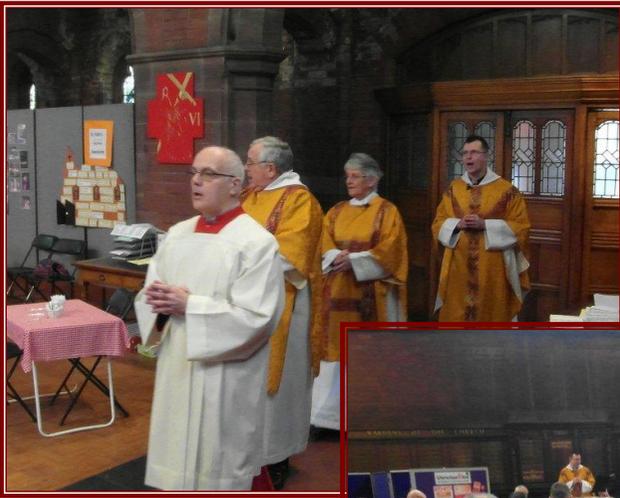
Over a number of decades Mona was to be found at the heart of the life and worship of the church she loved. A gregarious, warm, welcoming and cheerful lady with an engaging smile and lovely sense of humour, Mona endeared herself to young and old alike.

In the mid 1960s, when the St Faith's branch of the Mothers' Union was in a somewhat moribund state, Mona and Fr. Charles Billington's wife, Heather, began a new organisation for the women of the parish, which they called the Horsfall Club. For many years Mona was the leading light of the popular club and besides fortnightly meetings, day excursions, parties and various other trips and events were a regular feature of the club's social calendar.

On a personal level I shall always chuckle when I recall the various occasions upon which Mona took on the role of "dresser in chief" in order to facilitate my appearance "in drag" at one of the parish socials in the late 1960s and early 70s. In particular, my manifestation as a female Hawaiian native dancer at the 1970 St Patrick's night party required all the skills at her disposal, as yet another of Fr. Charles' initiatives was brought to fruition.

Mona could always be relied upon to enter into the spirit of an event and to give it her maximum commitment and effort. Over a number of years she was instrumental in galvanizing and encouraging the support that was needed for the success of the parish bazaar and she did so with characteristic energy and enthusiasm.

It was always a joy to chat to Mona in recent years and to share in her eightieth birthday celebration in the parish hall. With her death there is the end of an era at St Faith's, for she was the last of those whose memory went back to the days of Canon Brierley and the church of the 1930s. Our dear sister in Christ will be remembered with much love and affection and our thoughts and prayers are with



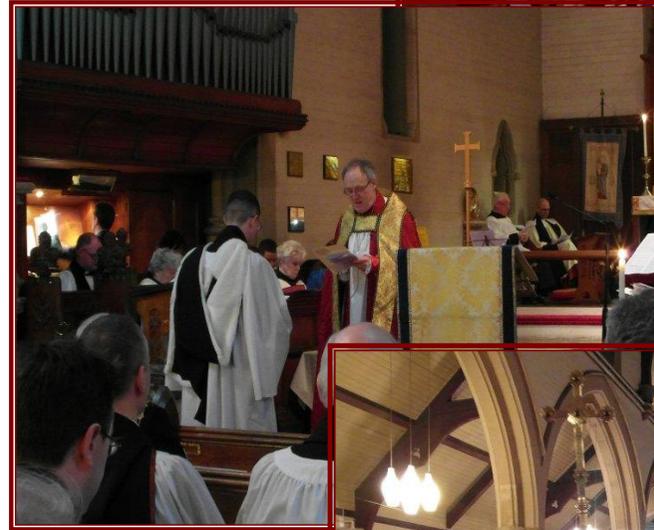
**Sunday at St Faith's**  
*Left*  
On the way into church  
*Below*  
Reaffirming our baptismal vows around the font



*Above*  
Three generations marking Ruth's special birthday with flowers  
  
*Right*  
'More tea, vicar?'



**Welcoming Father Simon**  
  
Images from the January 9<sup>th</sup> Licensing service at St Mary's  
  
*Left* The Wardens present...  
*Below* The Readers look on...



*Above*  
The paperwork – 'I solemnly swear'  
  
*Right*  
On the way out 'Lift High the Cross'



Miriam, Paul, Martin and all Mona's loved ones. With her enjoyment of parties and her penchant for fun, one can imagine the popping of corks as Mona takes her seat at the heavenly banquet.

Fr Dennis



## Mona remembered

I remember a very glamorous young woman with wonderful red hair, immaculate make up, sparkling nails. She was power dressed in smart two piece suits that were the height of fashion. I also remember her a being very strict as well, and she was a woman with authority. Of course I wouldn't have put it like this when I was in the little Sunday School. There were other teachers I can also remember, but they didn't have the look or authority of Mona. No wonder she started off so many priests with her teaching! We sang "pennies dropping, pennies dropping" for our collection, listened to stories and had out own teachers' pantomime. I have a special memory of "Babes in the Wood".

I remember asking her earlier last year about this wondrous list of priests she had set on the road of faith. Had she ever made a list ? No! She hadn't. I don't suppose for a minute she even thought of it after I had asked her. She had simply and faithfully done her job. Like so many people at St. Faith's she just got on with it. She told that after she was widowed, she moved his chair so that it wasn't there, empty as a painful reminder. Very practical as well as thoughtful.

Thank you Mona for a dedicated life of service in good faith, at St. Faith's.

Fr Colin Oxenforth

## 100 Club Winners: January 2013

- 1 Joan Tudhope 162
- 2 Peggy Mattison 125
- 3 David Clark 17
- 4 Fred Mackert 118



## Good will at Christmas – thanks to you!

The Waterloo Partnership has once again been greatly encouraged by the generosity of our donors and supporters, especially our church members at St. Faith's and St. Mary's, during the Christmas period, The response to our seasonal fundraising activities has been truly heart-warming, in spite of all the doom and

gloom in our economy In all, the charity has received a total of over £9,000, a sum which will go directly to fund our projects in Waterloo, Sierra Leone, and which will be greatly valued by the Waterloo SL community.

Our **CHRISTMAS GIFT SCHEME** remained popular. This year it helped to provide farming tools and seeds, well-building, school uniforms, and educational and health care facilities. A big thank you to our many individual donors, and to those of you who so kindly helped to deliver the appeal literature by hand. The scheme was well supported by members of seven other local churches, and we were also very grateful for the contribution of the schools in our community, many of whom have now established their own links with partner schools in Waterloo Sierra Leone.

By New Year's Eve, the Christmas Gift appeal totalled £6,130. Our thanks to everyone who made this possible.

The Waterloo Partnership shared in the general success of the **CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL**. Carol Lloyd decorated our tree with her hand-embroidered 'African huts', and this year (in response to popular demand) also made a supply for sale to visitors. We are indebted to Carol, to the volunteers who sat by the tree and welcomed visitors and enquirers, and to everyone who helped to make this whole event so heart-warming. The charity benefitted by well over £100 in donations and sales, and gained much from the community 'networking' and free publicity.

The annual **BAGPACKING** at Crosby Sainsbury's took place on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> December, and raised the magnificent sum of £2,880. Our thanks go to all our volunteer bag packers, especially those from St. Faith's and St. Mary's, and to Chris Price for counting the money. To give up valuable time just before Christmas, and to risk repetitive strain injury at the check-outs in the cause of international development, deserves a New Year's honour! Thank you, all of you, for your commitment, courtesy and good humour. Hope to see you in Sainsbury's next Christmas!

There is a wonderful store of goodwill among our church members, and not just at Christmas. That generosity, channelled by the Waterloo Partnership and Medic Malawi, can be quite literally life-saving in an African setting. Perhaps it is not too trite to say 'bless you' for it. I hope that in the words the words of the familiar carol:

'Ye who now will bless the poor,  
shall yourselves find blessing'!

*Fred Nye*





### The After-Show Party

*Left* At the back of St Mary's the Bishop hands over to the vicar

*Below* Raising a glass to the new arrival

*Right* Meeting the mayor



*Left*  
Spot the family likeness  
(on the left!)

*Right*  
Hard at it in the  
Church Hall



# The Baptism of Jesus

Fr Simon's first sermon to the United Benefice:  
Sunday, January 13th, 2013



The baptism of Jesus is a problem for the Gospel writers; somewhere between a puzzle and a downright embarrassment. John's baptism, after all, dealt with sin. Earlier in Chapter three, Luke records that '[John] went through the whole Jordan area proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins'. The New Testament writers agree that Jesus was unique among human beings in being without sin. Why then should he submit to baptism by John?

Matthew's Gospel deals with the problem head on, adding in a dialogue between Jesus and John in which the Baptist questions Jesus about whether it is fitting for him to baptise one who is his superior. John's Gospel goes so far as to miss out altogether the reference to Jesus being baptised (check it out at home if you don't believe me).

Luke seems to skate over the difficult issue of why Jesus should need to be baptised by John, or not needing it, should *choose* to receive it. Instead, he puts the main emphasis on the voice from heaven that affirms Jesus's special relationship to the father.

In asking the question, 'why did Jesus receive the baptism of John?', we are really thinking about two different things. We are thinking about what it meant to the authors who tell the story – this morning, Luke. But we are also thinking about what it meant to Jesus himself. We are twenty-first century men and women, after all, and we cannot help wondering about the psychology.

So let's think for a moment about Jesus. A young man, perhaps not fully formed as a person (which of us would ever really say that of ourselves?; I hope, in a sense we would never say it, or there would be nothing to learn, nothing to grow into.) A young man, but an adult, shaped by the experience of growing up in a family, and by whatever relationships were significant for him in those hidden years between his childhood and the start of his ministry. Shaped also, I should think, by his experience as a working man, a craftsman trading in the environment of an occupied country, with all its complex cross-currents and tensions, and its economic possibilities. A young man, but I would guess he knew a lot about life already. Added to this, he must have had some special kind of self-awareness, a sense of being set apart.

He hears about John the Baptist, and something wakes up within him. This is it, my moment, my destiny. I must go there.

I wonder if the problem about receiving baptism that we have noted for the Gospel writers is there for Jesus himself. He is not a theologian in our modern sense;

perhaps he doesn't think of himself as sinless, exactly. I rather hope he doesn't (such a person could hardly help but be unbearable). I think he receives baptism because his intuition tells him it is a good thing to do.

Two aspects of Luke's account I think show us why it is indeed a good thing for him to do, despite the Gospel writers' difficulty in unravelling it. First the act of doing it brings about for Jesus a deep and perhaps new intensity of spiritual experience. In Luke's account the appearance of the spirit descending and the extraordinary, resounding voice, are somehow linked to the intensity of Jesus's prayer after his baptism.

Secondly, Luke's account of the baptism of Jesus seems to emphasise his oneness with all the other people who came along to be baptised by John.

The way I interpret it, the intensity of the prayer and the wonder of affirmation by the Father are things that just couldn't haven't have happened in a completely private context. Deep down, I think Jesus has come down to the Jordan in search of the truth of who he is. It is in his sense with other people that I believe he finds it. It is no different for us. We go wrong if we make spirituality too personal, and salvation more of an 'I' thing and less of a 'we' thing. As regards our spirituality and our salvation, we need each other, and that is the way God intended it.

And if Jesus has made us one with him in receiving the water, we are one with him too in receiving the affirmation of God. The voice is for us also that says, 'beloved'.

The book says that this is a service of 'renewing our baptism promises'. We've dutifully reproduced that form of words in our Order of Service. But today isn't really about any promise we might make. Our promises, we know too well, are easily broken. What today is really about is God's promise to us, the promise that he will truly enable us to be brothers and sisters of his beloved divine Son, and children together of the one heavenly Father.

But you cannot have one thing without the other. To accept Jesus as our brother, is to put ourselves on an equal footing with all the baptised, the old and little children, the wise, the foolish, the charming, the annoying, the wise, the headstrong. To build a community in which none is greater, none less, in which compassion, forbearance and forgiveness routinely triumph over back-biting and power-plays, in which there is never any want of fellow-feeling. In baptism he has given us one another as gifts. He has bound us to one another, making our sameness more important than anything in which we may differ. Differences of opinion or of temperament, controversies over change or the failure to change, and others' failings – the stuff of which rows in church are so often made – these things are God's gift to us as He challenges us to grow in holiness in the training-ground of the church.

The water is one thing, but truly it is the spirit and the fire that we seek. Water alone will not convey the new life that is the content of the good news. We need to grow into our baptism, a task that if we engage with it seriously will prove joyful, unnerving, and life-long.

The great occasions of the liturgical year can be wonderfully moving and inspiring. Wednesday night was for me, a moment of hearing with great clarity the resounding voice. Perhaps we will look back on this morning as another such high point. But let us be clear. This way that we follow, the way of Christ, is not just about procuring spiritual highs. Our daily lives must bear out the vision of ourselves and our place in God's world that we receive here, and so must the relationships within the church.

We say to the newly baptised, 'Christ claims you for his own'. On this joyful day, on which we pray for a renewal of the promise of baptism, let us ask for grace to honour that claim. Starting with each other.

## A Lenten Reflection



The Lenten march towards Easter is the story of what happens when God comes in power. That sovereign rule that we call the Kingdom of God is on the field. However much we may find scripture obscure, here we are back on familiar ground. We know where we are when there is talk of Kingdoms. Flags to be planted, bugles to be blown; trumpets to be sounded; enemies to be engaged; Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance" as background music. It's just a question of making sure you are on the right and winning side.

Would that it were that simple! The trouble is that already two yellow lights are flashing, warning us to proceed with caution. In the first instance, it is an odd kind of power that God seems to favour. The bearer and embodiment of the Kingdom is this Nazareth carpenter whose regions seem conspicuous by their absence. His fire power seems oddly ineffective, by whatever slide-rule you measure it. He comes to engage Jerusalem, so the Gospel writer would have us believe, with tears in his eyes! That of course strikes a chord. The weapon of love. You can't get more Christian than that. Only, just when we feel that after all we have got it taped, the tears become a prelude to driving money changers from the Temple. So that even the power of love has somehow to be redefined, ceasing to be some warm emotion that has forgotten how to be severe, even with itself.

By the time we have interpreted that yellow light, our triumphant victory train has slowed to a crawl. Now that other yellow light is flashing. Are we, after all, in the right carriage? Are we even in the right train? On the face of it, the scriptural

travel agents seemed to have given us clear instructions. In the clash of Kingdoms, the conflict between God and his world, we knew just where we were and who we were. We were faithful Noah, piling into the Ark in unqualified obedience, ready to float beyond judgement. We were “little children assured by letter writer John that we were “of God, backing the “spirit of truth” against that “spirit of error”. Certainly we were among those weeping with Jesus over the unrepentant Jerusalem city. Unthinkable that we insiders could be outsiders, that we could be part of heedless Jerusalem, resistant to the spirit of truth, with the flood waters brushing our ankles – when God comes in strange and curious power. Unthinkable?

Maybe everything depends on where you join the train and how you identify your place in this topsy-turvy scenario. Maybe this clear-cut controversy and conflict, between God and his world, calls for some searing self-questioning, if you are to locate where in reality you belong. Maybe discrimination between arks and escape-hatches, discerning where truth actually lies, and identifying where Jesus the Christ currently stands on the Long March of the Kingdom, demand a sensitive openness to scripture’s challenges and a constant willingness to be surprised.

Fr Dennis



## Registering the Past *episode 7*

The first major happening of 1913, as recorded in the first service register of St Faith’s, has already been reported more than once in our magazine and elsewhere: the dedication, on the Feast of the Epiphany, of the memorial plaque to Joseph Bell, Chief Engineer of the ill-fated *Titanic*. The Bishop of Liverpool did the honours, and the plaque, in the south aisle of the church, has attracted a steady stream of visitors ever since, and never more so than in 2012, centenary year of the sinking.

Following this milestone, reality returns when at the Conversion of St Paul, there was ‘no-one present at 7 am’ to honour the event. It was ‘wet’ for Quinquagesima (splendid ancient name), and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent Mr Baxter annotates: ‘Mr Edward Sherwood died Feb 16 suddenly at Waterloo. A regular attender at S. Faith’s’

‘F.J.Liverpool’ returned Thursday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, to confirm 1 candidate from Sefton, 19 from St Mary’s, 10 from Christ Church and no fewer than 44 from St Faith’s. Soon after there were services of Evensong and Readings during Holy Week weekdays – and a total of five services on Good Friday, including the Three Hours and an evening performance of ‘The Crucifixion’ (presumably Stainer’s) by the united choirs of our church and that of St Luke’s. Following this there were three separate Holy Communion services on Easter Day: at 6.30 (46 communicants),

7.30 (126) and 8.30 (131), while at 11.00 there was Mattins and H.C. (72) – grand Easter Day total 372. Despite it being ‘Very wet’ early on, it cleared up later, and Mr Baxter proudly records ‘The largest morning congregation we have had was present at 11.00 am (and they parted with no less than £8.7.2).

There was a ‘Men’s Breakfast’ at 7.45 m in the Parish Rom, following the 7.00 am celebration (52 communicants). June 10<sup>th</sup> records the death of Dr Gay – he is commemorated by a plaque near to the *Titanic* memorial in church. The splendidly named Harcourt Lightburne officiated twice around this time. The next happenings of note come in July. On the 6<sup>th</sup>, T.H.B. preaches a second sermon on The Holy Grail, this time focussing on Sir Perceval. On 11<sup>th</sup>, the ‘Choir went to Gladstone Dock, opened by the King’. In late August, the vicar’s holiday period, E.B.Smith takes over; his succession of services is entertainingly punctuated on St James’ Day by the appearance of D.G Fee Smith, a familiar name from earlier years, who inscribes at the 7.30 H.C. ‘turned up by chance – took service – forgot collection’. Even odder is that there are no communicants recorded, and all the words save the last two are neatly crossed out, though clearly legible beneath. We may never know what happened...!

Mr Baxter’s return in August is followed by an orgy of housekeeping. On St Bartholomew’s Day it was ‘Organ cleaned – out of use on Aug 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>.’ Then it was Church cleaned and iron grids fitted Aug 25<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>’ – and, if this were not enough ‘4<sup>th</sup> Sept. Oiled the bell.’

There were interesting autumnal activities. St Faith’s Day (October 6<sup>th</sup>) passes unnoticed, apart from it being ‘wet’ around the time, but the Sunday Young Men’s Bible Class began anew in October, teaching about ‘Betting and Gambling’ on 12<sup>th</sup>. A sad minuscule marginal note records at this time ‘2.15 Funeral. Mr Eves - infant boy’. More cheerfully, on October 27 ‘King’s Messengers started’. Preachers around this time include clergy from St Anne’s, Stanley, the S.P.G and St Catherine’s Tranmere.

All is quiet until the year’s end. There was an ‘Infants Sunday School Party on December 27<sup>th</sup> in the Parish Hall. Christmas Day communicants totalled 245 (far fewer than at Easter), and four days later we read ‘8 pm Decr 29th. Meeting in the Parish Hall to welcome Rev. and Mrs T.R.Musgrove’. The new curate had first celebrated on Christmas morning, and he was to see the turning of the year, taking the Watch Night Service on New Year’s Eve at 11.15 pm, followed by the first services of 1913: in his sloping writing he records ‘Jan 1<sup>st</sup> Feast of Circumcision 7.30 Holy Communion – 5 communicants, 7 present and on the same morning – 12 communicants – 17 present. Mr Baxter takes back control of the vestry fountain pen the next day, as 1914 begins.

The King’s Messengers crop up again on Monday, January 9th, when there is recorded a Commission Service for them at 7 pm. The day before the Sunday afternoon Men’s Service was taken by S.J.Sykes – was this the very long-serving

local vicar of that name?

Ash Wednesday was 'Very foggy'; at the 11.00 am Holy Communion Mr Musgrave enters 18 in the 'No. of communicants' column, adding in the right hand margin '19 present, one did not communicate'. Among signatures around this time and throughout Lent we read those of R.J.Herring, W.Harry Roberts, E.E. Marshall (marginal annotation reads 'Church League for Women's Suffrage'), Frank J. Powell and several repetitions of the indecipherable signature of the Canon Missioner of York.

On Good Friday evening the 'Crucifixion' performance was given by the 'United Choirs of Holy Trinity, Wavertree and St Faith', while the four celebrations of the Holy Communion on Easter Day netted 388 communicants between them. At the Easter Vestry on April 20<sup>th</sup> it is recorded that J.Cook and S.R.Taylor were reappointed as Churchwardens, with the former joined by R.H.Thomas as Lay Representatives.

Thereafter the even tenor of weekly worship has few landmarks. E.R.Hayes of Halsall put in an appearance in May, there was a 'Day of Intercession for the Church in Wales', it was 'Very hot' on June 14<sup>th</sup> but 'very wet' on 21<sup>st</sup>. T.H.B. and T.R.M. soldier on through the early summer, with the latter noting on July 25<sup>th</sup> that it was 'very stormy. Had ante-Communion service with collects' for the 1 communicant (presumably Mr Musgrave means 1 in attendance, if indeed it was ante-communion). A few days later, J.B.Lee takes the Sunday afternoon Children's Service and records the 'Text or Subject' as 'St Faith' – a rare outing for our patroness.

Then, almost incidentally, in the margin of the register for August 2<sup>nd</sup> – which is oddly entered by Mr Musgrave as being '8<sup>th</sup> after Sunday' (rather than after Trinity) – we read the fateful annotation 'War Declared'. The months that follow will see the prolonged absence of Mr Musgrave, and the departure for pastures new of Mr Baxter. But that is another story...

Chris Price



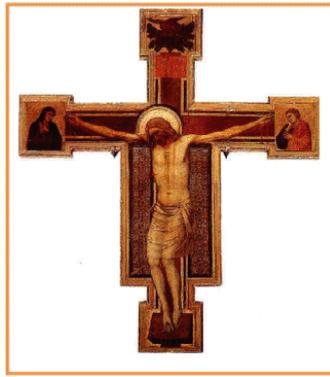
## Crosby Symphony Orchestra Concert

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> February at 7.30 pm in St Faith's

Programme - Rimsky-Korsakov: Easter Festival Overture; Debussy: two Nocturnes, Elgar: 1<sup>st</sup> Symphony. Conducted by Robert Sells.

**Admission £10 (£9 concessions) at the door.**

# The Parish Directory and Church Organisations



## **VICAR**

Fr Simon Tibbs, The Vicarage, Milton Rd, Waterloo. L22 4RE. Tel 0151 928 3342

## **PARISH OFFICE**

32 Brooklands Avenue, L22 3XZ . Tel: 0151 928 9913

Parish Office Manager: Geoff Dunn; email: sfsmparishoffice@btinternet.com

## **ASSISTANT PRIESTS**

Revd Denise McDougall, 27 Mayfair Avenue, Crosby. L23 2TL. 924 8870

Canon Peter Goodrich, 16 Hillside Avenue, Ormskirk, L39 5TD. 01695 573285

Fr. Dennis Smith, 16 Fir Road, Waterloo. L22 4QL. 928 5065

## **READERS**

Dr Fred Nye, 23 Bonnington Avenue, Crosby. L23 7YJ. 924 2813

Mrs Jacqueline Parry, 21 Grosvenor Avenue, Crosby. L23 0SB. 928 0726

Mrs Cynthia Johnson, 30 Willow Ho, Maple Close, Seaforth, L21 4LY. 286 8155

## **CHURCH WARDENS**

Mrs Margaret Houghton, 16 Grosvenor Avenue, Crosby. L23 0SB. 928 0548

Mrs Maureen Madden, 37 Abbotsford Gardens, Crosby. L23 3AP. 924 2154

## **DEPUTY CHURCH WARDENS**

Mrs Christine Spence, 52 Molyneux Road, Waterloo. L22 4QZ. 284 9325

Ms Brenda Cottarel, 6 Lawton Road, Waterloo. L22 9QL. 928 4275

## **TREASURER**

Mr David Jones, 65 Dunbar Road, Birkdale, Southport PR8 4RJ. 01704 567782

## **PCC SECRETARY**

Mrs Lillie Wilmot, Flat 7, 3 Bramhall Road, Waterloo. L22 3XA. 920 5563

## **DIRECTOR OF MUSIC**

Mr Daniel Rathbone. Tel: 07759 695683

## **GIFT AID SECRETARY**

Mr Rick Walker, 17 Mayfair Avenue, Crosby. L23 3TL. 924 6267

**TUESDAY OFFICE HOUR:** 6.30 – 7.30 pm (wedding and banns bookings)

Mrs Lynda Dixon, 928 7330

## **BAPTISM BOOKINGS**

Mrs Joyce Green, 14 Winchester Avenue, Waterloo, L22 2AT. 931 4240

## **SACRISTANS**

Mr Leo Appleton, 23 Newborough Avenue, Crosby. L23 3TU. 07969 513087

Mrs Judith Moizer, 1 Valley Close, Crosby. L23 9TL. 931 5587

**SENIOR SERVER**

Ms Emily Skinner, 1 Valley Close, Crosby. L23 9TL. 931 5587

**CHILDREN'S CHURCH**

Sunday 11.00 am in the Church Hall. Angie Price 924 1938

**CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER**

Mrs Linda Nye, 23 Bonnington Avenue, Crosby. L23 7YJ. 924 2813

**CHURCH CENTRE**

1, Warren Court, Warren Road, Blundellsands

**UNITED BENEFICE MEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

James Roderick 474 6162

**BEAVER SCOUTS**

Thursday 5.00 – 6.15 pm Mike Carr 293 3416

**CUB SCOUTS**

Thursday 6.30 – 8.00 pm. Mike Carr 293 3416

**SCOUTS**

Thursday 8.00 - 9.30 pm. Mike Carr 293 3416

**RAINBOWS**

Monday 4.45 - 5.45 pm. Geraldine Forshaw 928 5204

**BROWNIE GUIDES**

Monday 6.00 - 7.30 pm. Sue Walsh 920 0318; Mary McFadyen 284 0104

**CHOIR PRACTICE**

Friday 7.15 pm - 8.30 pm.

**MAGAZINE EDITOR and WEBSITE MANAGER**

Chris Price, 17 Queens Road, Crosby. L23 5TP. 924 1938

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The **March 'Newslink'** will be distributed on or before **Sunday, February 24th**. Copy by **Sunday, February 10th**, please (again a week later than usual!) - but all contributions are welcome at any time.

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THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND





**'And Poppy came too ...'**  
The Vicarage Dog wants to be in the  
picture

**Online extras...**

Two more pages of photos below



## The online bonus pages...

**Mona Turner, R.I.P, pictured recently and at her wedding to George in 1948.**

**The serried ranks of clergy (with various quantities of hair) at the licensing service**



**Right** After the licensing service, two catering ladies wonder if they can effect a quick getaway...

**Centre** Four days later, the sanctuary party and choir lead off down the aisle at the end of the service

**Below** Fr Ged Callacher, Sunday emergency supply choirmaster, greets an old friend

