

## Hosanna in the Highest!



The 22<sup>nd</sup> February saw a very special occasion in the life of MCCN as our very own lovely Anna ('Hosanna') Coombs was baptised. The event took place amid much celebration, and some 60 people came along to support her. Katie Marsh was Anna's sponsor, and the rest of the congregation was invited to renew their

baptismal promises and asked to support Anna as she walks her spiritual path.

Baptism is a powerful symbol of commitment and new life, and I'm sure I speak for everyone who was present in saying that it was a very moving occasion. We had some wonderful music and particularly enjoyed the medley of popular Christian songs which was done Greenbelt 'Beer and Hymns' style (but without the beer!) thanks to Mikee, Jonny and Katie's enthusiastic leading and Hannelie on guitar. Thanks also should go to Eric and his team, who, as usual, rustled up quite a feast.

Anna is a valued friend and a great person to have in church. We will all be thinking of Anna and praying for her as she starts her PhD in Edinburgh. Good luck and visit us soon!

Charlotte N

### Your Chance to be Internationally Famous!!

Patrick Lin is our new Webmaster and wants to have a fabulous photo gallery of MCC Newcastle folk engaged in different aspects of our life together. The website and its contents, including this newsletter, can be accessed by anyone and so only those people who are happy for their photos to be displayed on the web site will be used. Over the next few weeks at church, there will be forms to you to complete, if you wish, to give your permission to use your photo on the website and in other publicity.

When people look at our website, they often look at the pictures to get a sense of who we are as a faith community and also to see if there is anyone like them (gender, age, ethnicity etc). It is important that we are able to get a wide range of photos. If you are willing to be part of this aspect of our outreach, please ask Cecilia or Barbara for a form.

You will find them on the MCC table at church, next to the serving hatch.

### Thank You!

Once again, we have received an anonymous donation for the ministry of the church. Thank you to you, whoever you are, for your generous support of God's work through MCC Newcastle!

### Keeping in Touch

These days, people often change their email address or mobile number. Have you changed your contact details lately? Perhaps you may even have moved home. Please remember to let us know at MCC Newcastle by phoning/texting 07770 543407 or emailing [admin@mccnewcastle.org.uk](mailto:admin@mccnewcastle.org.uk) That way, we can keep in touch with you better. Many thanks.

**All Your Diary Dates, Events & Activities for March & Lent**

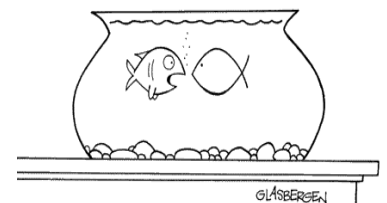
**Pastor's Report for the month**

**Bible Feature; - Just another Lent**

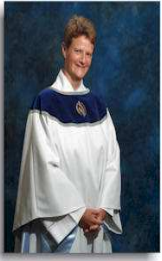
**Exciting New Ministry Opportunities at MCC Newcastle page 4**

**Read all about "Churches Together" for Lent**

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Cartoons and Illustrations for Christian Publishers



GLASBERGEN  
"Can't we talk about something besides religion for a change?"



## Pastor's Report – February 2009

Everywhere you can start to see the arrival of Spring. Crocuses and snowdrops are making way for daffodils. There are buds on the trees and even some blossom. On the Board, through the Pastor's Tea Parties and during our Leadership Day we have also been discerning what new things are going to grow at MCC Newcastle over the next year.

13 people attended the Tea Parties, sharing their ideas. I also led a Leadership Day for members of the Board and people who lead different ministry areas. Two key themes have emerged from the Tea parties and the Leadership Day:

- we need to find as many ways as possible to help people to grow in God
- we need to reach out to as many new people as possible, to enable them to know God, perhaps for the first time, perhaps to rediscover God in a new way through MCC Newcastle.

There are different ways to grow in God – through worship, through prayer, through study and discussion groups and through serving one another in ministry. In this coming year, there will be greater opportunity to explore each of these things. We are all unique and so we will have different ways of growing in God. Some of us love silence, some of us like worship to be loud and fast paced. Some of us find it easy to pray by ourselves, some of us prefer to pray as part of a group. Whatever works for us, it will only bring us closer to God if we make a commitment to it. Our relationship with God is like any other relationship, it requires effort, time and some thought to make it a healthy one. During Lent, there are two such opportunities – we have a Lent discussion group in Teesside, hosted by Ann and Lorraine, and we are joining with other city centre churches in Newcastle to share our Lenten journey through film and TV.

John and I continue to lead the "Creating a Life that Matters" course. In February, the group started its second module "Rediscovering Relationship with Myself". Ten people

completed the first module "Rediscovering Relationship with the Sacred". For several folk, it was a chance to really look at the images of God that we are taught and whether these truly reflect the God that each of us experience. This second module concentrates more on our own lives and faith journeys. It is a joy and a privilege to lead this course and to see people grow in God through it.

As we continue to grow in number, it can be a challenge to know how each person is. At MCC Newcastle, we want to celebrate the good news and be there for people when life is not going so well. The Office Angels – Margaret and Bob, have a wonderful ministry making sure that people feel connected with the church. We are currently looking at how we can improve this aspect of our ministry, so if you have any ideas, please let me know!

We had two significant worship services at the end of February. On Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> February, it was a real honour to baptise Anna and to welcome her family and friends to our church community. Anna is continuing her studies in Edinburgh, but it was important to her to be able to publicly express her faith and her Christian commitment at MCC Newcastle, her faith community.

On 25<sup>th</sup> February, we had our Ash Wednesday reflection. MCCers come from many different Christian traditions and some may not feature Ash Wednesday at all. For many, it marks the beginning of Lent, the time commemorating Jesus' time in the wilderness. We had the opportunity to examine the wilderness places in our own lives, to look for refreshment and to be creative in writing or drawing, as part of our reflection time together. To end our reflection, we blessed each other with the ashes from last year's palms, marking our foreheads with the sign of the cross.

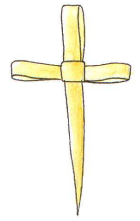
I wish you a blessed Lent. I hope that you are able to commit yourself to a daily action or prayer that helps you to draw closer to God, during this time of reflection.

God bless



# Bible Feature

## Just Another Lenten Season



**I've been really poorly since Christmas, not been to church and I'm ashamed to say, not spent much time with God. So when I went to Ann and Lorraine's home for the first Lent Group, I felt like it was someone else sitting there instead of me; it was a weird and strange feeling and I didn't like it.**

I had also recently attended Brian's funeral after his unexpected death. I loved Brian. Although he was born with muscular dystrophy and therefore disabled, he was one the most contented and humblest man I've met. It was a pleasure to give him a lift to church every week and we became good friends.



His sudden death had made me turn my mind towards immortality and the fact that it is the things we are saying and doing **now** that matter. You never know when God's going to end your time on earth.

Anyway, with all this doom and gloom and my own illness, I kind of lost my way.

On 9th March I returned to MCC Newcastle for the first time since Christmas. I was so warmly welcomed that it felt like I'd never been away. Obviously Lent was mentioned and for the first time this year, I really felt, deep inside my soul, that it was Lent.

The reading was from *Mark Ch 8 V. 31-33* which tells us of the first time Christ tells the disciples of His prophesied and torturous death. Helen gave a deep and moving preach on this reading and on finding space in our busy lives for reflection.

She analogised Lent with Jesus' forty days in the wilderness over coming temptation from Satan. listening for God's voice and hearing the journey and mission that was to be taken to fulfil God's wishes. Further, Helen proposed that by calling Peter Satan after he had rebuked Jesus for even thinking He would die

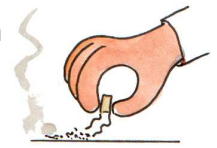
in such a horrific way, Jesus was recalling a deep insight He learned during His time in the wilderness; the ability to say "No" to His deepest temptations.

She concluded by advising us that we should all take two things away from our Lenten journey.

- To find some space where we can quietly listen to God
- Once you've had your quiet moments for spiritual reflection, make your path and stick to it

### THIS WAS A PROPHETIC REVELATION TO ME!

Little did Helen or indeed anyone know that I had been pressing with the idea of stopping smoking for Lent. I had bought a copy of Allen Carr's 'Stop Smoking the Easy Way' book, read it and was almost convinced I could do it. The nicotine demon in the back of my mind was telling me that after forty three years of smoking, "Who are you kidding?" I needed something more.



I've resumed talking to God whilst walking my dog and as I did, I pondered whether I should ask for help. Now you may well wonder why I pondered to ask help from God? Well I knew, if I involved God, that made the whole issue of stopping smoking for real. I didn't want to disappoint God now did I?

I walked a mile further, looked up and there it was...a half arc rainbow. I stared at it for a couple of minutes and cried because God was listening and more important, was willing to help me should I need it.

On 9th March 2009 I became a non smoker. I don't want to disappoint God so I know I will never smoke again. When I feel that nicotine demon telling me to have a cigarette, I just say "get behind me Satan"

I've made my path and I'm going to stick to it!

How about you?  
Amen

Claire Liebig-Denham



## Ministry Opportunities at MCC Newcastle

### Opportunity 1

The Board of Directors of MCC Newcastle is responsible for the finance and administration of the church. The Board sets policy, develops and oversees the budget, and holds the vision for the long term planning for the church. Within the Board, there are the posts of Treasurer, Secretary and Vice Moderator, which are appointed within the Board. Do you have the spiritual gifts of wisdom, discernment, administration? Perhaps you have the gift of faith or knowledge or leadership? We need a good mix of spiritual gifts and life experience on the Board. The Board meets once a month for about 2 hours and Board members are expected to carry out tasks between meetings.



The elections for Board members will take place at the AGM on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April. To be eligible for nomination, you have to be a Member "in good standing" of MCC Newcastle and be nominated by another Member. All Board members are asked to undergo a background (CRB) check. If you would like to know more about serving as a Member of the Board, please talk to any of the current Board members: Andy, Katie, Alison, Mikee and Cecilia.

### Opportunity 2

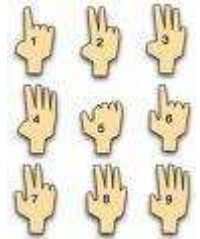
We are very blessed at MCC Newcastle to have a close partnership with our host congregation James URC. One of the members of the St James congregation is taking responsibility for the flower beds around the church and would like some help. You won't need to be an experienced gardener, as Kathleen "knows her stuff". It would be great if this could be a regular commitment, but even if you are able to offer a "one off" session to get the work started, that would be great!



Are you physically fit and able to do digging, weeding etc? Are you willing to work as part of a team, led by Kathleen from St James? Do you have the spiritual gift of service? If you would like to know more about this ministry opportunity, talk to Cecilia.

### Opportunity 3

Do you have a head for figures and an eye for detail? Do you enjoy making sure everything is in order and all the columns add up? Do you have experience in using Excel or similar computer programmes? Do you have the spiritual gift of administration? Our Treasurer, Katie, needs a book-keeper to help her manage the day to day ministry of the church accounts. The time commitment will probably be one day per month, which could be split into two half day etc. If you would like to know more, then talk to Katie.



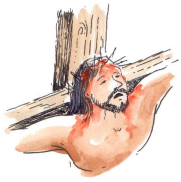
### Lent Fundraiser

For many people, Lent is a time of self discipline, when we try and give something up or do something extra. This year at MCC Newcastle, we are doing both! When you come to worship during Lent, we will invite you to have a full tube of Smarties to enjoy. Once you have eaten the scrummy chocolate, we are asking people to fill up the empty tube with 20p pieces, or £1 coins, if you feel able. On Easter Sunday, we will present our coin filled tubes to members of **Parents Enquiry NE**.



Parents Enquiry provides support and advice to the parents and families of LGBT folk, especially during the "coming out" period. There is a helpline, opportunities for parents to share their stories with others in a similar position and a chance to be supported through their own process.

This is a really worthwhile organisation and by giving up a few coins each, we can all make sure that many families are blessed this Lent.



## Take my Son

**This is great, take a moment to read it, it will make your day!**

**The ending will surprise you.**

**A wealthy man and his son loved to collect rare works of art. They had everything in their collection, from Picasso to Raphael. They would often sit together and admire the great works of art.**

**When the Vietnam conflict broke out, the son went to war. He was very courageous and died in battle while rescuing another soldier. The father was notified and grieved deeply for his only son.**

**About a month later, just before Christmas, there was a knock at the door. A young man stood at the door with a large package in his hands.**

**He said, 'Sir, you don't know me, but I am the soldier for whom your son gave his life. He saved many lives that day, and he was carrying me to safety when a bullet struck him in the heart and he died instantly. He often talked about you, and your love for art.' The young man held out this package. 'I know this isn't much. I'm not really a great artist, but I think your son would have wanted you to have this.'**

**The father opened the package. It was a portrait of his son, painted by the young man. He stared in awe at the way the soldier had captured the personality of his son in the painting. The father was so drawn to the eyes that his own eyes welled up with tears. He thanked the young man and offered to pay him for the picture. 'Oh, no sir, I could never repay what your son did for me. It's a gift. The father hung the portrait over his mantle. Every time visitors came to his home he took them to see the portrait of his son before he showed them any of the other great works he had collected.**

**The man died a few months later. There was to be a great auction of his paintings. Many influential people gathered, excited over seeing the great paintings and having an opportunity to purchase one for their collection. On the platform sat the painting of the son. The auctioneer pounded his gavel. 'We will start the bidding with this picture of the son. Who will bid for this picture?'**

**'What about the paintings?'.....There was silence 'I am sorry. When I was called to conduct this auction, I was told of a secret stipulation in the will. I was not allowed to reveal that stipulation until this time. Only the painting of the son would be auctioned. Whoever bought that painting would inherit the entire estate, including the paintings.**

**The man who took the son gets everything!**

**God gave His son 2,000 years ago to die on the cross. Much like the auctioneer, His message today is: 'The son, the son, who'll take the son?' Because, you see, whoever takes the Son gets everything. FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, WHO SO EVER BELIEVETH, SHALL HAVE ETERNAL LIFE...THAT'S LOVE**

# Churches Together

One of the questions that I am frequently asked about MCC is “What do other churches think of you?”. The truthful answer to this question is “It varies!”. We are very blessed to have a great relationship with St James URC, and through this partnership, MCC Newcastle has also been introduced to events with other local churches. As you know, I attend the monthly City Centre Clergy Breakfasts. These are a great opportunity to meet other clergy, visit different churches and share ministry ideas.

In Lent, we have two additional opportunities to meet with other Christians and share our common faith.

**City Centre Churches Together in Newcastle** is sharing the Lenten journey, through film and TV. “Seeing God - Encountering the Divine in Film and TV” is mixture of discussion, a talk and watching clips of familiar and not so familiar films and TV shows.

Each week, the talk is at a different church and on a different theme, so you do not have to attend every one, in order to participate. The evening starts with tea/coffee at 7pm and finishes at 9pm.

Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March - St. Andrew’s Church of Scotland, Sandyford/Grantham Rd – *Calling/ Vocation*

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March - St. Andrew’s Roman Catholic Church, Worswick St – *The Church – real and ideal*

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March - St. Dominic’s Roman Catholic Church, New Bridge St – *Redemption and Christ-types*

Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March - Brunswick Methodist Church, Brunswick Place – *Evil and innocent suffering*

This is a great way to see different aspects of our faith in a new light.

On **Maundy Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> April at 8pm**, MCC Newcastle has been invited to share the Tenebrae Service with St James URC and its sister congregation St. Andrew’s URC in Kenton. The Tenebrae (Gathering Darkness) service is one which the St Andrew’s congregation finds very meaningful and will be held at the Kenton church. This is a communion service, conducted in candlelight, sitting around tables placed in the shape of the cross. St. Andrew’s is on Wyndham Avenue, Kenton.

Please let me know if you would like to attend this service, so that St. Andrew’s can set out their space accordingly.

Cecilia

## Our Mission

The Metropolitan Community Church in Newcastle upon Tyne is a Christ-centred and inclusive community, with a commitment to spiritual and personal growth through worship, prayer and action. We seek to provide a welcoming and accepting atmosphere, and aim to proclaim Christ's message of liberation for all. We work towards a transformation in the understanding of Christianity and its relevance to contemporary society.

**Registered charity number 1093009**

MCC Newcastle would like to extend a very warm welcome to all readers. We hope you enjoyed our newsletter which is published on a monthly basis and can be found in colour on our website at [www.mccnewcastle.org.uk](http://www.mccnewcastle.org.uk)

However, we are obliged to state that nothing in this newsletter either; written, said or otherwise, purports to represent the Metropolitan Community Church in general. If you have any comments about either content or presentation please contact the Editor who welcomes any contributions but reserves the right to edit as deemed appropriate.

# Events and Activities

## **Sunday Worship**

MCC Newcastle meets **every Sunday** for worship at 6.30pm. We meet at St. James United Reformed Church, Northumberland Road, Newcastle NE1 8JF in the church hall. Our worship services are open to all.

The **Scarborough Group** meets on the **second Sunday** of every month at 4.30pm at the Westborough Methodist Church, Scarborough. Join us for worship and a fellowship meal.

## **Socials**

The Monthly **Squash!** – How many people can you squash into Mikee and Jonny's home? Once a month after the worship service, we have a social in Heaton, and enjoy great hospitality from M and J. Don't be shy! – come and join us for a drink and a little something to eat. See Mikee or Jonny for directions.

**Tea with Dorothy (TWD)** is a group for the more mature amongst us. We have two TWD groups.

**Tea with Dorothy in Newcastle** meets on the **first Saturday** of every month, from 2 – 4pm at Martha and Mary's Cafe, Chillingham Road, Heaton. Pop in for a cuppa and a chat.

**Tea with Dorothy in Sunderland** meets on the **second and third Wednesday** of every month from 5pm -7pm at the Activage cafe, Stockton Road, Sunderland. For more information, contact Age Concern on 0191 5141131.

## **Study and Discussion Groups**

**Lent Study Groups** – We have two groups this year, offering two different approaches to Lent.

The **Teesside group** are meeting on Wednesdays at Ann and Lorraine's to discuss "Face to Faith".

In Newcastle, we are joining with **Newcastle City Centre Churches Together** for a series of illustrated talks called "Seeing God - Encountering the Divine in Film and TV". Each week, the talk is at a different church  
Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March – here at St James URC!

Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March – St. Andrew's Church of Scotland, Sandyford/Grantham Rd

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March – St. Andrew's Roman Catholic Church, Worswick St

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March – St. Dominic's Roman Catholic Church, New Bridge St

Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March – Brunswick Methodist Church, Brunswick Place

**Movies with Mikee** is an opportunity to watch a (secular) film together and then discuss the theological themes that emerge – even if the movie makers didn't have God in mind! This event is a "moveable feast" so check the calendar each month to see if the popcorn maker is on. At Mikee's home in Heaton, Newcastle

**Creating A Life that Matters (CLM)** – this is a year long course that looks at three aspects of our faith journey: Rediscovering Relationship with the Sacred, Rediscovering Relationship with Myself, Rediscovering Relationship with My Passion

The course is full for this year, but please talk to Cecilia or John if you would like to know more for the next time we offer CLM.

**The Good Book Club** is for those of us who perhaps used to do bible study, but haven't done it for a long time, or for those of us who would like to know our bible a bit better. **GBC will be back after Easter!**

For more information, phone/text the church phone (Cecilia or one of the church leaders) 07770 543407  
or visit [www.mccnewcastle.org.uk](http://www.mccnewcastle.org.uk)

MCC Newcastle, c/o St James Church, Northumberland Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8JF

# MCC Newcastle March 2009

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
						<b>Sunday Worship</b> 6.30pm, church hall 1
<b>2 Churches Together Newcastle Lent Course</b> "Seeing God" – The Divine in Film and TV 7 - 9pm venues vary See back of sheet	3	4	<b>5 CLM course</b> 7pm, main church	6	<b>7 Tea with Dorothy Heaton</b> 2 – 4pm A social for the more mature among us!	<b>8 Sunday Worship</b> 6.30pm, church hall 4.30pm <b>Scarborough Group</b> meets
<b>9 Churches Together Newcastle Lent Course</b> "Seeing God" 7 - 9pm venues vary See back of sheet	10	<b>11 Lent Group – 7.30pm</b> Teesside <b>Tea with Dorothy, Sunderland</b> 5 – 7pm.	<b>12 CLM course</b> 7pm, main church	<b>13 Movies with Mikee</b> – 7.30pm "But I'm a Cheer-leader!" Heaton	14	<b>15 Sunday Worship</b> 6.30pm, church hall
<b>16 Churches Together Newcastle Lent Course</b> "Seeing God" 7 - 9pm venues vary See back of sheet	17	<b>18 Lent Group – 7.30pm</b> Teesside <b>Tea with Dorothy, Sunderland</b> 5 – 7pm.	<b>19 CLM course</b> 7pm, main church	20	21	<b>22 Sunday Worship</b> 6.30pm, church hall
<b>23 Churches Together Newcastle Lent Course</b> "Seeing God" – 7 - 9pm venues vary	24	<b>25 Lent Group – 7.30pm</b> Teesside	<b>26 CLM course</b> 7pm, main church	27	28	<b>29 Sunday Worship</b> 6.30pm, church hall <b>Squash</b> – after worship Mikee and Jonny's, Heaton
<b>30 Churches Together Newcastle Lent Course</b> "Seeing God" – 7 - 9pm venues vary	31					

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