



What an Easter Service & a New Member too !



After stuffing my self with chocolate all day, the last thing I wanted to do was make the hour long trek up the A19 to church on Easter day – but I'm so pleased I did!

Charlotte, Mikee & Cecilia

The evening service took place in the main church in St James' and was extremely well attended. The praising that our Lord

Jesus was raised from the dead was an amazing occasion, made even better by the service also including a membership ceremony. Three parts of the service really stood out to me. Charlotte becoming a member was a great thing to see, it reminded me of last Easter when I became a member. It was great to renew those vows I made a year previously as well as celebrating a new member in Charlotte.

Mikee's sermon really spoke to me, apart from it being based on the theme of one of my favourite TV programmes (Doctor Who), it also really made me think about what the world would be like if Jesus hadn't died and come back to life. It challenged me much more than any other Easter sermon has in a long time, which was really good.

The third thing I really liked, and the thing that I have always liked about MCC Newcastle is the part at the end of the service where everyone moves to the back and chats whilst being provided with an excellent cup of tea and some beautifully prepared cake! But the chance to get to chat to everyone was great, and it gave me a really good chance to catch up with everyone I hadn't seen for a long time, which was a real treat!

There were many other good points to the service too – I loved the MCC Choir, the worship on both piano and organ and the other usual MCC brilliance! I must not forget that we presented North East Parents Enquiry with all the Smarties tubes we had collected. Each tube contained pound coins or twenty pence pieces and we managed to collect a total amount of over £180.00 for this vital service to continue.

If you are looking for something to do next Easter Sunday – COME ALONG! As a famous cartoon tiger says –



Presentation of Smarties to Joan from Parents Enquiry

ITS
GRRRRRRREAT!



Written by George

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Need some prayer?
Just fill in the slip!

Pastor's Report – April 2009

We have just held our Annual Congregational Meeting. The ACM is a time for really taking stock of all that we have done together over the previous year and agreeing what we are going to do together in the next twelve months. The non voting delegate at our ACM each year is God. We need to listen carefully to what God is saying to us, as we make our decisions.

In this year's ACM pack, there were 16 pages of ministry reports! 16 pages packed with ways in which we have served God and each other over the past year. Some areas of our church life reach inwards – the study groups and courses, where we focus inwards on our own faith journey. In other ministries we have reached outwards, from Pride parades in the NE to reaching across the world to the Dominican Republic. For the first time, we passed a balanced budget, which did not rely on the church's reserves. The budget reflected our ministry priorities for the coming year, which the meeting also passed. In summary, these are:

Worship - We will provide more opportunities for regular worship during the week, which offer a range of experiences

Spiritual and Personal Growth – “Going Deeper” We will develop a year plan of different opportunities for spiritual and personal growth

Outreach - We will continue to improve the way that we let people know about MCC Newcastle and help them to become part of our faith community

Planning for Our Future - The Vision Statement which the church currently uses was developed as part of a strategic planning process several years ago. It is now time to start “dreaming with God” again. What is God calling us to be and to do over the next few years? How will this impact the ministries that we offer? What does it mean for us in resources – financial, human, physical? These are all questions to be explored prayerfully and with as much input from as many people as possible over the next 12 months.

I would like to personally thank Katie Marsh, Mikee Wardle and Andy Lumsden who have all stepped down from the Board. They have served during a time of great transition in the church and have been a great support. I look forward to ministering alongside Helen Berry, Richard Cullen and Charlotte Norton, who were elected at the SCM. Alison Kaine remains on the Board and will be a great asset in maintaining continuity.



In other news....It is always a great joy to facilitate the Enquirers and Membership classes. Once again, it was fascinating to share our faith journeys together and to explore what it means to be part of MCC Newcastle and MCC worldwide. Congratulations to Charlotte West on becoming a Member. The classes will run again in June, for those who were unable to attend the previous ones.

By the time you are reading this, the Multifaith Chaplaincy at South Tyneside College will be up and running. I have been permission by the Board to serve as Chaplain one day a month, which I will be using as two half days. This is a great opportunity to engage with young people about celebrating diversity and encouraging discussion on the bigger questions of life.

Several people in the congregation and beyond have agreed to complete an evaluation form about me and my ministry. Thank you to Morgan McClintock who is co-ordinating this process and will guide me through all the feedback. It will be a chance for me to continue to learn and grow as our pastor, so a BIG thank you to all those who are taking part.

God bless

Linkia



Bible Feature

Resurrection, Eternal Life and all that jazz



Well, we have all survived the extra burdens we've put upon ourselves during Lent and, come out the other side into Easter Sunday. Hopefully, cleansed and with a deepened sense of spirituality. Oh yes... and more alive !

I had a very personal Lenten time having lost a close friend and a close aunty thus, finding myself attending two funerals in a very short space of time. I always find funerals dreadful things to attend. I find seeing the coffin always brings the mortality of the person's life on earth to an end in the most dramatic of ways. There always feelings of sadness and loss as you know you will miss the person being around, to love you, and for you to show them love in return.

Despite the priest reminding you as the coffin enters the church of John Chapter 11. Verses 25-26:

"I am the resurrection and the life, said the Lord; they that believe in me, though they were dead, yet shall live; and whosoever lives and believes in me will never die."

And hearing the final committal words:-

"Forasmuch as it has pleased Almighty God in great mercy to take under Godself the soul of our dear brother /sister here departed, we therefore commit their body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust: in the sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Know doubt most of you will be thinking to yourselves that this all seems a bit morose and solemn. And, if you've ever been to a funeral, which most of you will have, it is !

The point I'm trying to make is, it is only at a time of death of someone you know you really care for, do these deep and precious words of hope that Jesus gave us all, by dying on that cross, actually mean something to us !

I usually get emotionally involved in Holly Week. I find it difficult to get a good night's sleep on Maundy Thursday. I cry every Good Friday service and Mikee's and Jonny's. I find myself watching The Passion on the television and crying some more. I listen to my c.d. of 'Jesus Christ Superstar' and sing whole heartedly imaging I'm each character as they sing their part. In short, I live that final week of Jesus' life as if I were there. Some may call me a bit mad for putting myself through this year after year. Yes, as I spiritually mature, I should be spending more time in prayer talking to the Creator or Jesus or even the Holy Spirit. Alas, I admit, that is just not my way of doing things. One year, I can recall the sadness and loss I felt on Good Friday even extended to Easter Sunday. Although I tried, I could just not shake out of it.

Thank goodness I've got to grips with the whole 'Jesus had to die issue' or else I think I would drive myself to madness with guilt. I rely to a great extent on the prophet *Isaiah Chapter 53* for this. Isaiah tells the people of Israel that is going to bring them a Messiah to deliver them freedom. In Ch 53 he states "The Lord says, it was my will that he should suffer, his death was a sacrifice to bring forgiveness... and through him my purpose will succeed....."

So during my Lenten time I've tried very hard to concentrate on the 'hope of resurrection to eternal life' side of things. Whilst walking Jess (my dog) there have been some wonderful, dry, warm spring days that were full of sunshine, birds, blossom, daffodils and of nature sprouting into life once more. One such day I glimpsed a queen bee and a red admiral butterfly together on a branch of white blossom. Ah, what a wonderful sight. It seemed to me that God had given 'the go ahead' as it were, for the whole earth to come alive!



He has risen, He has risen indeed. Halleluiah ! Amen

By Claire Liebig-Denham



Congratulations to our New Board Members

At the Congregational Meeting, three people were elected to the Board of Directors.

Helen Berry is a long standing Member and editor of Wilderness People, the MCC Newcastle book. **Richard Cullen** brings gifts of administration and leadership to the Board. Both Richard and Helen have wide experience of working with budgets, policy and strategic planning. **Charlotte Norton** was elected as Lay Delegate, to ensure that the congregation is kept informed about MCC activities around the world and to carry the MCC Newcastle vote to MCC conferences. She is a great evangelist and communicator.

Congratulations to all three!!

Alison Kaine remains on the Board, and Cecilia continues to chair the Board. Positions, such as Secretary and Treasurer, are decided within the Board.

As well as Board members, we have other leaders with responsibilities for specific areas of ministry:

Welcome – John Lawson
Worship – Mikee Wardle
Music – Jonathan Caudle
Socials – Abby Brown
Newsletter – Claire Liebig-Denham
Prayer – Alison Kaine (See article on page 6)

Please contact one of these church leaders, if you would like to get involved in their ministry area.

Fabulous Photo Response!

Thank you to everyone who has so far given us permission to use their photo on the church website and in the newsletter. 24 people have so far given their permission and we suspect that there may be more. If you are willing for us to use your photo, please complete a form on the MCC Newcastle table at church and give it to Cecilia – thank you!!

A Big Thank YOU

We raised over £180 for Parents Enquiry NE through the Smartie tube collections during Lent, and there are still tubes of coins out there! If you still have your Smartie tube, please bring it to church in the next week, so we can hand over the stragglers to Parents Enquiry.



Church Retreat – Going Deeper

What helps you to experience God? Are you willing to try some new ideas, as well as what you know works for you? MCC Newcastle is having a **Day Retreat at St Antony's Priory in Durham, on Saturday 27th June**. It will be an opportunity to try out different ways of opening ourselves to God. For those who are new to the idea, a retreat is a chance to take time out from our everyday lives and intentionally make time for God. It does not have to be solemn or silent, although being quiet for some time in the day is often a good thing!

Our retreat day will start at 9.30am and finish at 4.30pm. The cost, including all materials, refreshments and lunch will be £8 or £16. You choose what you can afford to pay. This does not include transport to and from St Antony's, but car sharing could be arranged. If you would like to come on the retreat, there will be booking forms at church and sent out on the email list. Please return them to Cecilia.

Pride Stewards Needed

Pride in Newcastle will take place on Saturday 18th July and MCC Newcastle will be there with bells on...and tutus and T-shirts and halos, if last year's experience is anything to go by!! Some of you will recall that there were limits to how many people were allowed to march last year. In order to ensure that everyone can march this year, Northern Pride is asking for each group to provide stewards to walk alongside the march through Newcastle centre. You can still walk as alongside the MCC contingent, you just need to wear an attractive day-glo vest whilst you do it!

Please consider volunteering to be a steward – we want to march proudly and safely. Let Cecilia know if you would like more information.

From Drinking Games to Jesus in Five Clicks



You may have noticed already that this is not a book review! Reading a new Christian book every month proved to be pretty challenging, and although I will still do a review every other month, you will have to put up with my ramblings in between!

The BBC reported recently that 65% of British people believe in God or ‘a higher power.’ This must have been a blow for the British Humanist Association whose agnostic campaign on the sides of London buses caused such a fuss, and it certainly surprised the BBC. Despite this trend of believing in God, less than half of Brits in the same survey believed in Jesus, though 90% had heard of him. It is fair to say that Jesus is a much more controversial figure than God or ‘a higher power’. Yet perhaps no other figure in history has had such a huge impact on western society. There is a simple online game called ‘*Five clicks to Jesus.*’ The idea is to go to the ‘Wikipedia’ website, which is a sort of online encyclopaedia which anyone can contribute to, click on the ‘random article’ button, and then from there try to navigate to the ‘Jesus’ article in no more than five clicks of the mouse. Nine times out of ten it is possible, and to prove it here is one I made earlier: the random article I got was ‘Drinking game’ (very apt!) which linked to ‘Wine’, from which I clicked ‘Medieval Europe’ which led me to ‘Christianity’ and then, of course, to ‘Jesus’. Easy. All roads on Wikipedia lead to Jesus. But do all roads in life lead towards the same hub?

Because Wikipedia can be edited by anyone with a computer, the Jesus article is modified almost every day, and even had a warning to anyone wishing to edit, that ‘discussions on this page may escalate into heated debate.’ And they do, because no one seems to agree exactly who Jesus was, from the big topics of Redemption and Divinity, down to the minutiae of what year he was born exactly and did he turn the water into a Merlot or a nice Chardonnay? But all this proves that people care, and so Jesus is definitely not dead. We know this, literally, because we celebrate his rising from the dead, but he is also not dead to our culture, not irrelevant or ignored and very few people are actually apathetic about him. Is Jesus the Messiah? Or just ‘a very naughty boy’? (if you’ll forgive me for quoting Monty Python!). This question is still relevant, and there are people who are waiting for an answer, online and offline, around the world.

Whatever we believe about his divinity, Jesus was also a human being who was infinitely complex and unique. People wanting to put Jesus into a box, a category on Wikipedia, are not able to, which can be said for most individual human beings. We are complex creatures. Ask two people on the street to describe Madonna and you will get two different answers based on their perception and knowledge of the singer and her work. Ask two people to describe a mutual friend and the complexity will be even deeper, as they know him or her personally.



We can’t reduce Jesus to the ‘meek and mild’ model, as Cecilia reminded us during Lent, because there is recorded evidence of him being angry at those who used God’s temple to make a profit. Nor can we decide all by ourselves that we know ‘what Jesus would do’ in a specific situation, as if he were completely predictable. As Christians, instead of guessing what Jesus might say, maybe we should ask God to reveal the complexity of Jesus’ character to us. We may be surprised by what we learn in getting to know him better, for like in all relationships, this communication will allow for a deepening of intimacy between us and God.

By Charlotte Norton

P.S. I tried this and thought I was being clever by entering ‘mars bars’ as my search. Blow me if it didn’t come up with the mini Easter eggs sold around Easter. Next click ... I got Jesus in 2 clicks!
Claire (Editor)

Prayer Ministry gets a Makeover!

A new way of asking for prayer will be on offer at MCC Newcastle from the beginning of June. As you come into our worship space, you will be able to pick up a prayer request slip and a pen. Fill in the slip with your prayer request (it can be anonymous) and then place it in the offering plate when it is passed around. The prayer requests will be given to our Prayer Ministry team, who will hold your requests in prayer. If you would like to be part of the Prayer Ministry team, talk to Alison or email her at prayer@mccnewcastle.org.uk.

IDAHO – International Day Against Homophobia

Come and join the BIG NOISE at Grey's Monument, Newcastle on Saturday 16th May from 12pm, as we mark IDAHO. It is a chance to publicly show our support for the millions of people around the world who experience threats, intimidation, violence and even the death penalty simply for being who they are.

This year's theme is 'End Transphobia: Respect Gender Identity'. At the Monument, there will be music from the Bangshees, a guest speaker and a one minute's noise—so bring your whistles!

After the protest at the Monument, there will be a chance to see the film made through the LGBT Network for Holocaust Memorial Day. It is a great montage of all the different Pride and other events in the NE in 2008 and you may see a few familiar faces! There will also be another film showing and other entertainment at the Side Cinema on the Quayside from 1pm.

Come along and make a BIG NOISE!

A Day In Hand

IDAHO is also the launch date for a new campaign "A Day In Hand".

"You know that magical feeling you get when you see two women or two men holding hands in public? Imagine if you could see and feel that every day."

A Day In Hand seeks to promote equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bi & Trans (LGBT) people by inspiring same-sex couples across the globe to hold hands publicly. Anybody, on any day, can take part. The idea is simple: take a photo of a same sex couple holding hands in public and upload it onto the campaign website www adayinhand.com

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

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

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.

The monthly **Taizé service** starts again this month. Taizé is a quiet reflective style of worship involving singing of simple chants, often in Latin, and periods of silence. It is a perfect way to take some quiet time out from a busy week. Jonny is leading this worship, so see him for more details. The Taizé service is in the main church every **second Wednesday**.

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 Age Concern office, Stockton Road, Sunderland. For more information, contact Age Concern on 0191 5141131.

Dog Walks – You don’t need to own a dog to go on our monthly dog walks. These are held across the region, so there will be one near you at some point in the year. Contact Abby at social@mccnewcastle.org.uk for more information.

Study and Discussion Groups

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 and 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.

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

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

MCC Newcastle May 2009

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
				1	2 Tea with Dorothy, Heaton 2 – 4pm A social for the more mature among us!	3 Sunday Worship 6.30pm, church hall
4 Church office closed	5	6	7	8 Cecilia on leave 9th – 15 th May	9	10 Sunday Worship 6.30pm, church hall 4.30pm Scarborough Group meets Squash – after worship Mikee and Jonny's, Heaton
11	12	13 Taizé Service 7pm, main church Tea with Dorothy, Sunderland 5 – 7pm	14	15	16 International Day Against Homophobia Rally 12pm Grey's Monument	17 IDAHO service Sunday Worship 6.30pm, church hall
18 Cecilia on leave 18 th – 20 th May	19	20 Tea with Dorothy, Sunderland 5 – 7pm	21 CLM course 7pm, main church	22	23	24 Sunday Worship 6.30pm, church hall
25 Church office closed	26	27	28 CLM course 7pm, main church	29	30 Dog Walk 10.30am Chopwell Woods	31 Pentecost Sunday Worship 6.30pm, church hall