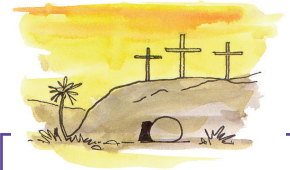




April 2008



Meet the Moderator !

Reverend Elder Nancy Wilson will visit MCC Newcastle on Friday 25th April. Rev. Elder Wilson is the elected Moderator of our whole denomination worldwide. She is the church's spiritual leader and represents MCC at the World Council of Churches. It is a great honour for MCC Newcastle to host her, as she is only in the UK for a limited period of time.

Nancy is respected theologian and a great preacher. She has written "Our Tribe – Queer Folks, God, Jesus and the Bible". This powerful book has the capacity to move you to tears of sadness and of laughter, often within one story. It also tackles some vital theological issues, such as misuse of the Bible to hurt and oppress.

We are still awaiting confirmation of travel arrangements, so cannot give exact details of Nancy's visit at the moment. We are hoping that she will give a talk on Sexuality and Spirituality, which will be open to the community and others with an interest in theology. We also want to organise time for people in MCC Newcastle to meet with Nancy socially and spend time in worship with her. This is a very exciting opportunity for MCC Newcastle, so let's make our Moderator welcome!

**Bible Feature -
What Does
Christ's Execution
Mean?**

**Diary and Dates
for
April**

**Pastor's Round-up
of Events**

**Cass Tells Us
About Her Journey
to
Walk Again**

**Margaret on the
LGBT History
Conference**

**Barbara tells us all
about the moving
Maundy Thursday
Service**

Annual General Meeting of MCC Newcastle

Every year, the church has its AGM, where Members vote on the budget for the new financial year, agree aims and elect members of the Board of Directors. The AGM will be on Sunday 27th April at 4pm. It is important that all Members attend and share in the decision making process of the church.

The Board of Directors is responsible for the finance and administration of the church. Board members develop policies to ensure that the church is well run and are responsible for making sure that we use our finances and other resources wisely. The Board also keeps the vision of the church alive and works with the Pastor to make sure that we are moving towards our vision.

If you would like to find out more about standing for the Board, please see Ian Martin. Formal nominations need to be in writing and must be given to Ian by Sunday 13th April.

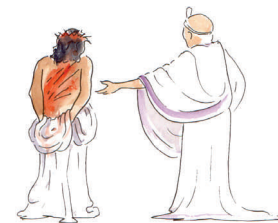


"ACTUALLY, I DON'T THINK I'M
GOING TO LIKE IT HERE - I'M
TERRIFIED OF HEIGHTS..."

The Angel Rodney
© Ron Wood



Bible Feature



What Does Christ's Execution Mean ?

For most of my life I've felt a deep sense of grief and loss at Easter time. I can recall, as teenager, locking myself in my bedroom for hours on end playing a cheap vinyl cover version of the musical 'Jesus Christ Superstar' over and over again. I would literally cries my eyes out and almost feel Jesus' anguish as they nailed my Lord to the cross !

I put this down to raging teenage hormones and of course, a passion for Christ's message and works. When I found myself doing the same sort of thing at 25 years of age, that concept was wearing a bit thin. I had to admit to myself, that I found the whole Easter period (Lent included), but excluding Easter Sunday, made me feel pretty miserable. Ok enough said about me....

What did Jesus say about crucifixion ?

Jesus certainly predicted His own death at least three times. In *Mark 8:31, 9:31 and 19:33-34* plainly tells the disciples that the killing would come by the prophesy of the passion. Clearly, Jesus' death was an important overall message, and the people had to understand just how important it was ! Nothing sad about that then.

What the gospels say about it ?

Matthew makes no bones about it; Jesus did not want to be killed (*26:39 "May this cup be taken from me"*). The veil was a symbol of where God lived, it kept people out of that part of the temple. The significance of the ripping was to tell the people that God's presence would be entered into another way. (*27:51-53 the veil of the temple was ripped in two*)

Mark describes how darkness came over the land (*15:33*).

Luke provides an account of Jesus' attitude to the crucifixion as forgiving and praying one (*23:34*).

John is the only gospel, in my opinion, that treats the crucifixion in a non emotional, almost matter of fact way.

John depicts Jesus as being in total control of the whole event. And when Jesus cries out "It is finished" just before dying, this lets us know that it had all been a mission with one major goal; Jesus' death (*19:29-30*).

What is the meant by it ?

For me, it is crucial to believe that Jesus suffered humiliation and pain on the cross for *our* sins. Jesus received the punishment that we ought to have for our own sins. Now I'm not saying because maybe you said an unkind word to someone during the week, you should be crucified, but this notion is what I find so troubling about Good Friday; my Lord Jesus Christ actually suffered for *me* ! Put quite simply, I feel intense embarrassment and humility.

However, I accept that Christ's death sentence is the secret to us all having a relationship with God. Your sins can be forgiven by God because, and only because, of Christ's death.

The most imperative thing is that Jesus is resurrected ! He is brought back to life ! All that Jesus told us would happen, came true. There is no lies or fantastical predictions; just truth. It is amazing to think the one man, albeit the Son of Man and oh yeah, the Son of God came at such a backward time without, television, telephones, radio, mobiles or even the basic systems for printing a book. Essentially, no real form of communication as we understand it today. And yet, here we all are today, 2,000 years later still loving, worshipping and following this person's ideals, teachings and commandments !

In the musical 'Jesus Christ Superstar during the questioning of Jesus Pilate sings a line:-

"...an amazing thing, this silent King...."

Jesus Christ is not only 'amazing' but my brother, my friend, my saviour, my master and my life !

Thus, would you all say with me:-

"Christ is alive...Halleluiah !!! "











Claire Denham

Notice and Diary Sheet for April 2008

If you would like more information about any of the events below, please contact us on 07770 543407 or admin@mccnewcastle.org.uk

Join us for worship every Sunday at 6.30pm,

St. James URC Church Hall, Northumberland Road, Newcastle

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|--|---|
| Wed 2 nd April | 7.30pm | The Good Book Club – a refresher course in Bible study Church Office, Pink Lane, Central Newcastle |  |
| Fri 4 th April | 8pm | Taizé worship service, St. James URC | |
| Sat 5 th April | 2 – 4pm | Tea with Dorothy, afternoon tea at Martha and Mary's Chillingham Road, Heaton, Newcastle |  |
| Thur 10 th April | 7.30pm | Singing Kettle – a time of song, chat and a cuppa Emily's home, Heaton, Newcastle |  |
| Sat 12 th April | 8pm | Karaoke Party – to celebrate George's birthday! George's home, Stockton |  |
| Sun 13 th April | 8.15pm | Squash – church social at Mikee and Jonny's home Heaton, Newcastle |  |
| Sun 13 th April | | Deadline for submitting nominations for Board elections and items for AGM agenda |  |
| Thur 17 th April | 7.30pm | Meditation Group – a time of quiet, at Anna's home, Ryton | |
| Sat 19 th April | 10.30am | Dog Walk – no dog needed! Tynemouth Longsands. Meet outside Crusoe's café on the beach. Contact Abby for info. |  |
| Mon 21 st April | | Praying People – An opportunity to share prayer experiences. Venue to be confirmed |  |
| Thur 24 th April | 7.30pm | Singing Kettle – a time of song, chat and a cuppa Emily's home, Heaton, Newcastle |  |
| Fri 25 th April | | Visit of MCC Moderator, Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson to MCC Newcastle |  |
| Sun 27 th April | 4pm | MCC Newcastle Annual General Meeting at St James URC. | |

UPDATES AND CHANGES!

Keep an eye on the website <http://www.mccnewcastle.org.uk/diary.htm>
rolling presentations before and after services and your weekly service sheet for
changes, new events and more information!!

**MCC Newcastle is an ARCH reporting and referral centre.
You do not have to tolerate hate crime. Report it. arch@mccnewcastle.org.uk or tele-
phone the 24 hour confidential freephone 08000 32 32 88**

Dog-Walking at Saltwell Park



Saltwell Park was bright and breezy as I struggled to find my way to the meeting point at the bandstand that Saturday morning. I happened to stumble upon the group of MCC people going on their way, as they had already set off, so I strode across the grass to meet them. Although it was a dog-walking social, there were only three dogs in attendance. There was Abby's dear Maggie, and two other very small dogs indeed... Eric had brought Dog and Cecilia had brought Algernon (AKA Fifi!), and both of these happened to be tiny little mascot cuddly toys tied to walking sticks! Well nobody said the dogs had to be live ones...

We had a leisurely stroll around the lake, feeding ducks and taking photos. We came across some interesting sculptures. There were some balls of stone that looked a little like something you'd see the contestants lifting on 'World's Strongest Man', as well as a wooden bed-like structure. Some of us couldn't get past the 'bed' without making a few jokes...



We saw a diverse range of creatures at the pets' corner, including birds, guinea pigs, and rabbits. Amongst the rabbits, there was the cutest little baby sitting *under* the hutch, it was so small! And, just across the enclosure, there was one keen little chap doggedly chasing a lady rabbit... she made a nifty little escape!

We got to see some beautiful wildlife, such as squirrels running through the trees, and the sun even shone for a moment, here and there. We had coffee and scones and cakes, a chat and a laugh, as we sat in the cosy café. It was a very pleasant excursion indeed. You should have been there!



~ Serena E Watson ~

I Have Some Exciting News...Abby Brown

Forgive me please if I need scraping off the ceiling! I have been given an opportunity to go on a short-term mission trip to the Dominican Republic with a team from the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) Youth Ministry Team. This is the first ever MCC Youth Ministry Trip and the international team will be made up of fifteen young people aged 16-25 years of age and five adults. As far as I know, I am the only young person in the UK and all of Region 4 to gain a place on this trip, which is a scary thought, but a privilege as well!

The Dominican Republic is the eastern two thirds of a Caribbean Island known as Hispaniola, shared with the country of Haiti. Our week long mission trip will begin on 21st June 08. We will be working at a school located in El Tamarindo where we will run a Summer Bible School with the children as well as helping to work on building and maintenance projects on the school building. We will be distributing much needed school supplies and funds to support scholarships for students in the greatest need. Also, we will have the opportunity to meet and worship with those working to plant a MCC church in Santa Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic.

Now I need your help! The first thing that the whole Youth Ministry Team needs is your prayers! We need to do prepare well for this trip—getting vaccinations, learning Spanish, organising travel etc.

The second thing that we need to do is to raise funds to pay for the ministry itself. Each team member has been asked to raise funds to get them to the Dominican Republic and to cover our costs whilst we are there. I have already raised £1000, but still have approximately another £1500 to go! I will be doing various sponsored and fundraising activities, so please watch this space! I would be grateful for any support that you are able to offer, large or small. I am also asking family, friends and work colleagues to support me.

We will be posting regular bulletins on the church website, www.mccnewcastle.org.uk, and I will be making a presentation to our church. You will be able to keep in touch with the MCC Youth Ministry Project to the Dominican Republic 2008 by visiting our blog: <http://mccyouthproject.blogspot.com/>.

At this website, you'll find lots of pictures, stories and comments from team members. Plus we'll post daily updates during our week long mission trip in the Dominican Republic!

Thank you to all the people who have already offered their support to make this trip a reality!

John 5:8-9:- Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

I had M.E from the age of 11, until one month ago. During this time I was confined to the house for 7 years. While this was an extremely difficult time and I'm still feeling the effects from it, I did have plenty of time on my own to think without outside influence, and found myself being drawn to God. As I was raised in a very non-religious home this was both a difficult and liberating time. I remember the first time I thought of myself as a Christian I thought my heart would burst with joy.



Cass walking

As time went on my health slowly improved and finally I was able to attend church in November '06. As 2007 drew to a close, I felt it was time to try a different treatment for my M.E, I'd tried various treatments and remedies in the past and had always been left disappointed. But finally in February, along with Alison, I travelled down to London to undergo the Lightning Process. I was cautious about it to say the least, but it was probably the best decision I've ever made. After 11 ½ years of illness and 9 years of wheelchair use, I walked after the first day of treatment and haven't looked back, all my prayers were answered. There was six students in my group for the LP and we all achieved recovery we were all given new lives. I have so much to thank God for I couldn't have come this far without Him. God carried me when I needed it, and finally healed me.

Praise God !

Cass

In Out Shake It All About (nothing to do with the hokey cokey)

On Saturday 23rd February from 3.00 – 10.00 pm Newcastle's Discovery Museum hosted the LGBT history conference and the launch of the LGBT Federation North East. Almost the first person I saw when I came into the hall was Katie Harris at the MCC info point. Chris Wardale, John Lawson, Angela, Roger and Cecilia were also there.

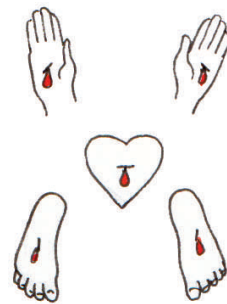
Nick Forbes opened the day with a welcome. He explained how he balanced living as an openly gay man with his leadership of the Labour opposition on Newcastle City Council and working for a health charity in Newcastle. Caroline Airs talked about the political content of her personal memories as a lesbian feminist. She'd worked as an activist helping under-represented people to engage more meaningfully in life. Steve Paske works currently as a specialist promoting gay men's sexual health. He is a vegetarian gay activist and gave us a personal look at homophobia/homophilia through the ages. He said that he'd had electric shock treatment to rid him of his homosexuality. For him it had clearly not worked! He explained that he'd survived the experience better than some he knew.

Friends, coming out, justice, politics, fashion, campaigning and transgender were issues that we got to grips with. We had to choose 4 and spend 15 minutes on each. Facilitators were on hand to keep discussion going and answer our questions. It was good to get together, swapping talk and stories with people I'd not met before. The photographs we'd brought for the montage were either displayed on board or hung on what were supposed to be washing lines down one side of the room. After the chilli and rice that comprised our refreshment break (plus tea or coffee) we should have discussed in small groups the federation action plan. That was the idea, but I seem to remember talk was of a much more general nature. A further chance to get to know the people behind the name badges. Interest was shown in "Tea With Dorothy" so we'll have to see if this is borne out by increased numbers turning up on Saturday at Martha and Mary's.

Margaret Bell

Maundy Thursday Service – 20th March 2008

On the evening of Maundy Thursday, worshipers from MCC and St James URC met together to remember the last meal that Jesus shared with the disciples, and to reflect on Christ's journey towards the cross. We sat around tables arranged at the rear of the main church which helped us to share together and to reflect on the intimacy of that last supper. Cecilia welcomed us and led us into a time of worship. We sang together the hymn '*I come with joy to meet my Lord*'.



The reading from the Gospel of *John 13: 3 – 14* talked of how Jesus washed the feet of the disciples. Cecilia reflected on how Jesus washed away the grime and dust of everyday living as a sign of love and service, and on how we are called to love and serve one another. She then explained that there were bowls of water and towels at the side of the worship space and that, if we felt comfortable, we were invited to have our hands washed and dried, to take away the grime and aches of our day. As a sign of love and service we were then invited to do the same for the next person. As we remained in a spirit of worship, quietly singing the Taize song, '*Ubi Caritas*', those who wanted to took part in this time of cleansing and serving.

We continued with the hymn '*Meekness and majesty, human and Deity,
In perfect harmony, the Man who is God.
Lord of eternity dwells in humanity;
Kneels in humility and washes our feet.*'

As we remembered the night before Jesus died, we too shared bread and wine with each other. Cecilia explained that the tradition in St James was for the bread to be passed around, then the wine in individual glasses, then we would all share of the bread and wine together. We prayed that we would share our blessings with others in this Holy week as we sang our final hymn, '*An upper room did our Lord prepare*'. The service closed in prayer as we held hands and said the grace together.

It was a moving and reflective service and an opportunity for the congregations of MCC and St James to share together. After the service tea, coffee and what seemed like a never ending supply of hot cross buns were served, as everyone had a chance to chat and to speak to friends from their own church and to get to know new friends.

Barbara Green

A Easter Service....with a difference ! Claire Denham

I always look forward to the Easter service. The blues of Good Friday are gone and Jesus Christ has arisen. Halleluiah ! But there was an extra twist to this years service at MCCN. We had Serena and Angela baptised and Shyam, Raj, Angela, Serena, Barbara, George, Annette, Andy, Helen and Caitlin all committed themselves to the church by coming into membership.

After our Easter service new members were given a certificate, card and rainbow beads each of the colours representing a different prayer to hold up to God:-

RED - Justice: Amos 5:21-24. Pray for people who are oppressed and living in fear.

AMBER- Community: 1 Corinthians. Pray for unity in all our communities here in North East England. Pray for MCC Newcastle.

YELLOW - Outreach: Matthew 28:28:16-20. OUTREACH. Pray for our outreach to the people of North East England. Pray for those whom your life touches.

GREEN - Stewardship. Psalm 24:1-2, 25:4-5. Pray for our world and the natural environment.

TURQUOISE - Wholeness. Romans 8:28-32. God calls you a beloved son or daughter. Pray for healing for yourself and others.

BLUE- Service: James 1:22-25. Pray for your use of your time, money & skills.

PURPLE: Spiritual Growth. Acts 2:42-47. Pray for your spiritual life and that of MCCN.

Pastor's Report March 2008



Happy Easter to you all! I hope that you are experiencing blessings in your life, as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus.

Teaching has always been one of my great passions, and it has been a real joy to share the Lenten Bible studies and the Enquirers/Membership classes. 13 people attended the Enquirers classes and ten chose to become MCC Newcastle members. God may have brought these people to MCC, but it is you, the congregation, that have made them welcome, helped them to settle in and feel at home. Now they have made the commitment to do the same for others. Congratulations to Shyam, Raj, Angela, Serena, Barbara, George, Annette, Andy, Helen and Caitlin. Serena and Angela were also baptised as part of our service on Easter Sunday. Thank you to everyone for making it such a special service! Thank you to Mikee and Jonny for preparing and leading the Good Friday reflection, which was excellent.

Both in the Enquirers classes and in other conversations, several people have said that they used to study the Bible, but it has been a while and they lack confidence to start again. On Wednesday 2nd April, the Good Book Club will start! This will be a monthly refresher course for those who want to get reacquainted with the Bible!

Our relationship with St. James URC goes from strength to strength. The Board of MCC Newcastle has approved moving the church office from Pink Lane to St. James' church building. Hopefully this will happen at the end of April, but building work still needs to be finished. We thank Newcastle Lesbian Line for letting us share their office with them all this time.

I was honoured to lead worship and preach for St. James' this month. We have been asked to support St. James with worship on a monthly basis, as Rev. James Breslin is now working with two United Reformed Churches in the city. I am continuing to get out and about around the region. John represents MCC Newcastle on the Middlesbrough Council of Faiths and invited me to attend a consultation meeting at the Town Hall. It was very interesting to hear about different ways that faith groups could co-operate and learn from each other. In a similar vein, I had a meeting with the Newcastle LGBT Community Development Worker to discuss the possibility of a spiritual space within an LGBT community centre. I have been invited along to the meeting of the Community Centre Steering Group in April.

One of the great things about being part of MCC Newcastle is that there is so much to do! As part of my own spiritual growth, I have joined the Praying People. We each got a card with a rainbow reminder of different things to pray for. This is really helpful, especially if you just have a few minutes for prayer. Thanks to Emily for this! I also had a great time on the first official dog walk. It was fun just to spend time with other church folk and be sociable. Thanks to Abby for all the preparation.

God bless

Pinkia

Phone or text
07770 543407

MCC Newcastle
PO Box 105
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE99 1HT

Registered charity number
1093009

**PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT ANY OF THE
CHURCH LEADERS BY EMAIL OR LEAVE A MESSAGE/TEXT
ON THE CHURCH PHONE 07770 543407**

| | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Abby Brown | Social team | social@mccnewcastle.org.uk |
| Jonny Caudle | Pastoral Care/Music | pastoralcare@mccnewcastle.org.uk |
| Claire Denham | Newsletter Editor | newsletter@mccnewcastle.org.uk |
| Cecilia Eggleston | Pastor | pastor@mccnewcastle.org.uk |
| George Gardner | Social Team | social@mccnewcastle.org.uk |
| Katie Harris | Outreach Tyne/Church Admin | outreach@mccnewcastle.org.uk |
| Alison Kaine | Board Member/Set Up Team | setup@mccnewcastle.org.uk |
| John Lawson | Outreach Tees/Welcome Team | welcome@mccnewcastle.org.uk |
| Katie Marsh | Treasurer | treasurer@mccnewcastle.org.uk |
| Ian Martin | Secretary/Lay Delegate | laydelegate@mccnewcastle.org.uk |
| Morgan McClintock | Board Member | contact@mccnewcastle.org.uk |
| Jessie Shang | Board Member/Pastoral Care | contact@mccnewcastle.org.uk |
| Michael Wardle | Board Member/Small Groups | smallgroups@mccnewcastle.org.uk |

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Prayer requests | prayer@mccnewcastle.org.uk |
| Counselling Team | counselling@mccnewcastle.org.uk |
| Stewardship | stewardship@mccnewcastle.org.uk |
| Photos and history | photos@mccnewcastle.org.uk |
| Library, DVDs/CDs and Study packs | resources@mccnewcastle.org.uk |

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.

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 appropriate.