



This year Newcastle's Gay Pride celebrations held on 17th July were bigger and better than ever – and so was the contribution of MCC Newcastle! It looked like another washout as we set up the stall early on Saturday morning. The weather was as grey as last year to begin with, and the rainclouds were gathering. Undeterred, a group of vibrant, fabulous MCC people congregated outside the Civic Centre to take part in the parade through the City Centre. A colourful assortment of *thousands* - drag queens, whistle-blowing marchers and rainbow-draped LGBT folk of all ages rubbed shoulders, pretended it was Rio, and tried to ignore the light rain... We gathered behind the MCC banner – Charlotte Norton's sombreros and maracas from her Mexican-themed fundraising evening ensured we were unmissable! Our Pastor Cecilia was up front wearing a particularly colourful dog-collar combo for the day. It's always such a positive experience walking down Northumberland street – I especially enjoyed waving at the smiling grannies who seemed to be having a ball and at the girls in hijabs taking photos and their mobile phones. I do feel a bit sorry for the people stuck on buses and in cars as the roads are closed – but hey, one or two of them cracked a smile as people blew kisses and waved riotously.

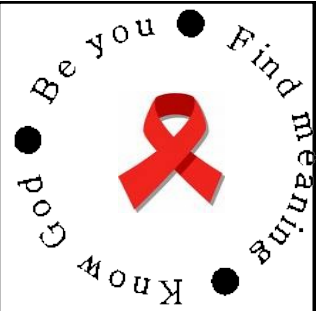
In Leazes Park, our stall attracted crowds of people. We gave away our entire stock of leaflets about MCC. On the front line, Kate in a pink boa, Ernie in his fishing chair and Mr Eric with his no-nonsense sales technique soon had passers-by enthralled. Hannelie and Charlotte did a fantastic job in making our new display boards look really attractive with photos showing MCC worship and social events. Keith went forth into the crowds and yea, gave out more leaflets. So many other people provided essential backup. Katie and Sue baked enough pink cupcakes and gorgeous fairy cakes to feed (almost) the entire park. 'Yummy!' said those who stopped and sampled their baking. Sarah did some fantastic rainbow-coloured designs for the signage. Kate and Helen brought water and sweeties after a raid on a superstore (I believe they paid – Jesus was watching). Our rainbow-coloured wristbands bearing the legend 'Find Meaning: MCC Newcastle' soon disappeared. Behind the scenes, Helen poured tea as the frontliners grew hoarse with talking to people. Best of all THE SUN CAME OUT, making it a truly memorable festive day.

On the Sunday, our special Pride service was packed, and the party vibe continued, right through to the squash at Mikee and Johnny's house. Festooned with balloons and still wearing her sombrero, Charlotte led a fantastic, music-filled service, and Cecilia's sermon rocked. We saw new faces in the congregation, and countless others besides heard that MCC Newcastle is well and truly a presence in our local community. They may come and find us in God's time...

Thanks to everyone named here, and those other special people whom I haven't named, but who by their presence made it a safe, positive place for LGBT people, and witnessed to our fabulous and beautiful existence in our local community. The point was to reach out, not to fundraise, but through donations we made enough money to cover our costs, and add a little extra to our publicity funds, which will go towards future outreach events.

THANK YOU and HAPPY PRIDE!

By Helen B



All Your Diary Dates

PLUS

Pride 2010!

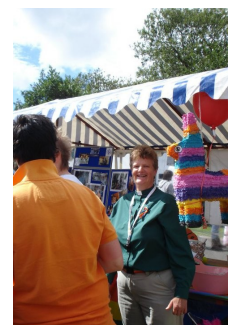
Pastor's Letter to the Congregation

Bible feature: 'The Real World'

What did Charlotte actually DO in Acapulco?

MCCN Pilgrim's Walk

And some more fabulous pride photos...



Pastor's Reflection • August 2010



It was a real joy to be with you all for MCC Newcastle's fabulous presence at Pride and then for our uplifting Pride worship service. Every day, it is possible to find good news stories about how LGBT people are being accepted and valued within today's society – adopting children, winning TV talent contests, having our relationships recognised and supported. You don't need to look too hard though to still see the ugly traits of prejudice and homo/trans phobia. Recently Claire Balding, a well known and respected broadcaster, was subjected to a very personal and homophobic review of one of her programmes by a newspaper journalist.

Pride is a great opportunity to celebrate who we are, it is also a reminder to others that there are many, many of us and together we cannot be intimidated or bullied. Our presence as a faith community at this event, and other similar ones, shows people that we are with people in their celebrations and their struggles. In fact, it was a real joy for me to meet people at Pride who have come to MCC Newcastle in order to bless important times in their lives, such as a baby naming ceremony and weddings.

There is always a balance to be struck between supporting those who are already part of our faith community and reaching out in service and witness to others. Many of you will already know that we have made a huge step forward in developing both these aspects of our ministry at MCC Newcastle. The Board has just appointed two new paid staff members to make sure that the internal life of the church continues to develop and grow. These positions were advertised to all the MCCs in the UK and there was a rigorous application and interview process.

I am delighted to tell you that **Charlotte Norton** and **Kate Hall** have been appointed to these two positions.

Charlotte will be the **Church Administrator**, responsible for the day to day administration of the church office and also for improving our communication inside and outside the church.

Kate will be our **Congregational Care Co-ordinator**, overseeing the Welcome team, social activities and co-ordinating pastoral care where needed.

Having these two posts will give me more time to be active in the wider community and also to develop more opportunities for spiritual and personal development within church.

My thanks go to the Board for all their hard work in developing the job descriptions and recruitment process, and to each of you for your generosity in financial giving, so that we have the resources to create these two posts.

I firmly believe that MCC Newcastle has so much to offer our wider community and Pride just reminded me of how much we still have to do, to so that every single person understands that God loves them unconditionally. Remember our mission statement?

Be yourself • Find meaning • Know God

People came to Pride to be themselves. Our presence there may just have helped some of them to know God.

God bless



News from Bath

Thank you for your continued prayers and kind enquiries. Monica continues to do well. Her medication is keeping the pain from the cancer under control. Her energy levels are gently declining; however she remains active and busy with family and friends. The COPE course run by the hospice physiotherapists was a real success. We have made some friends and the hospice is now organising social activities for the group to attend. I hope to see you all again



Bible Feature

What is Your 'Real World' ?

It might sound like a very strange question to you, but you'd be amazed how different people or even different groups of people, can often hold a totally diverse perspective of their world! For example there are still a few remaining tribes - people that live in the Amazon forest - who rely upon and revere the wildlife, animals and vegetation in their day to day life. Unlike you and me, they have probably never seen a mobile phone, radio or television, let alone know or need to use one. The Forest is only religion they know and need.

Still, in other countries people live in wretched poverty, fear or lack of personal freedom.

My mother is really down at moment having cared for my father who has had Alzheimer's for eight years. She was crying the other day and said to me "I know I should be grateful for the things God has given me, look at all those poor people in Pakistan at the moment, and all the little babies who are affected too." The contrast in the lives of 'real people' in the 'real world' couldn't have been any less stark.

We often pray for some these people and their worlds, asking God to make them safer, freer, less hungry and scared and to know the loving child/parent relationship that God offers to anyone, anywhere at any time. I find it hard to grasp that there are still people in our world that don't even know about Christianity, for all kinds of reasons. Ownership of a bible is still a punishable offence in some parts of our world. Our very own member of MCCN, Mazi, could tell you some consequences of being a Christian, or gay for that matter, in modern day Iran.

However, I believe that this is God's world !! I'm currently reading a book called 'The Bible Jesus Read' by Philip Yancey, in which he advocates the poignancy of the Old Testament and avers you cannot understand the God of the New Testament without knowing the God of the Old Testament too. He says the Jews have a common wisdom: that the world is God's property and that human life is sacred. In effect, it's God's to do with as the Creator wills. As Yancey points

out, that doesn't sit neatly with the western world's ideals of right to life, liberty, happiness. And more poignantly, he states that in our secularised, industrialised environment, we can go for a whole week without bumping into a reminder that it is God's world. He reminds us that the God of the Old Testament is like a dotting parent proudly taking a video of a love struck infatuated teenager, reviewing every second of your day. Now isn't that an awesome thought!

The majority of people these days are looking to be special, for community, peace, justice, love and a sense of 'why am I here' and yet, some of us lucky ones who have been told about the Creator's free offer of grace, forgiveness and eternal love, have rejected it out of hand. Maybe we think it's an offer too good to be true, maybe we think it's all baloney. Maybe some used to believe until something awful happened in their lives. Maybe sometimes we just don't like the God depicted in the Old Testament where there are stories of physical, financial or emotional punishment to sit aside the loving parent act.

Or just maybe there is too much treachery, murder, rape, incest or war in the Old Testament. Well I've got some news for you all; look around you at our world, our world right now, today. Watch the news about floods, volcanic ash, deep set poverty, prejudice, and all sorts of human abominations going on EVERY DAY!

Not that much different to the Old Testament is it? What can the Creator do to convince us? Send Jesus to die for us! The 'real world' belongs to Almighty God. Yielding to God's will is an essential part to being in it.

AMEN

SO, what did Charlotte actually Do in Acapulco anyway?



The million dollar question! It is going to be hard to sum up General Conference in an A4 page; hopefully some of you were able to catch me in person at my presentation in July or my “preach” in August. So, this is for those of you who couldn’t make it! I am also around most Sundays to answer any further questions you might have...

First things first. IMAGINE. Acapulco is paradise. Think palm trees, beach, sunshine, piña coladas and getting kissed in the rain (okay, so there was also a tropical storm, a minor earthquake, and no kissing actually happened, but allow me some artistic licence!) Delegates stayed in a beautiful hotel looking out to sea. I arrived late due to flight mix-ups and an unplanned overnight stay in Mexico City (don’t ask!) but got there just in time for a quick swim before getting down to business.

And what a business it was! The Business Meeting is epic, lasting more or less a whole day while by-law amendments are debated, positions elected and points hotly contested. There are two houses who can vote, lay and clergy. We were given cards to vote with – green for “yes”, red for “no” and yellow for abstention or to call a point of order. We did such a lot it is hard to

sum it up, but the gist is that the General Conference approved a new structure for the denomination, elected a Board of Governors and re-elected Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson as Moderator. The congregation of MCCN had mandated me to vote “yes” to the new structure – we played a part in putting this into place! The new structure will hopefully allow for greater communication between UFMCC and our church, and between our church and other churches in our “network group” (our group includes Brighton, Stuttgart, Bath and Dorchester as well as the “Our Tribe Ministry” in Edinburgh.)

Members of MCCN also mandated me to ask some questions about the intriguingly named “International Task Force,” a part of the new structure that was left somewhat unexplained in the papers we received. Ask I did, and to summarise the responses, the ITF is GOOD news for us, because its aim will be to ensure that MCCs from all around the world are represented at all levels of the denomination. This will involve a consultation of local churches. Watch this space! After business came pleasure...in the form of worship and workshops, theatre, music, trips out and socialising. I participated in workshops about inclusive language, facilitating discussions of theology in local churches, church growth, trans inclusion and rethinking Sin and Grace for LGBT people. I am really keen to share what I have learnt with all of you!

Worship was fantastically uplifting – some 1,500 people, a HUGE choir from MCC Toronto, a signing choir, Taize, modern worship and dance! The healing service and getting baptised in the pool were my personal highlights. The Youth Service included a cookie and milk communion so watch out the next time I am doing communion, I might just surprise you! Two keys symbols permeated the morning and evening worship all week – the brick wall behind the stage which was gradually peeled back, removing the bricks of prejudice, greed, privilege etc to reveal a beautiful rainbow canvas underneath, and the glass jar which started off empty but was filled gradually with different layers of coloured sand throughout the week by different participants, revealing our diversity as a denomination.

The theme of the conference was “Imagine.” We were invited to imagine MCC in three years time, to imagine greater inclusivity, to imagine breaking growth barriers, to imagine spiritual development, to imagine communication. In short, to do all we can to bring UFMCC’s mission statement to life:



(Continued from page four)

The challenge, the calling, is to do our best to IMAGINE the things we could do to bring about the transformation that God offers to all people, to all lives, and to churches, especially our church. So, instead of imagining sunshine and palm trees (tempting though that is!), I've been trying to imagine the answer to these questions:



What can WE do:

- To make our church even more INCLUSIVE, reaching out to ALL folk on the margins?
- To help UFMCC in its work on Social Justice throughout the world?
- To inspire the next generation of MCC?
- To break growth barriers?
- To encourage spiritual development in our church?
- To communicate and co-operate with other churches? (MCC and beyond!)

Our brand new core values say that we value the “fabulous and the beautiful.” And we are fabulous and beautiful! When we realise this, we are one step closer to helping others to realise it too. CLM graduates will be familiar with the following quotation. I think it really sums up the challenges ahead:

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light, not our darkness that frightens us.

We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous?

Actually, who are we not to be?

You are a child of God.

Your playing small doesn't serve the world.

There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.

It's not just in some of us, it's in everyone.

And as we let our light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fears, our presence automatically liberates others.

(Marianne Williamson)

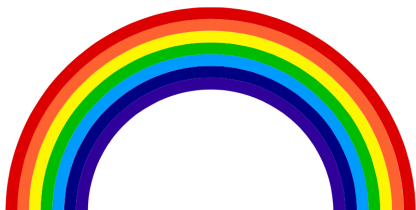
By Charlotte N

LISTENING LUNCHES

Kate, your Congregational Care Coordinator, would love to meet our congregation !

On the 20th September, she will be available to share lunch with anyone who wants to join her at

**THE TYNESIDE CINEMA COFFEE ROOMS,
PILGRIM STREET
from 12 noon until 2pm**



Come along for fellowship and lunch, caring and sharing.

Everyone very welcome

A Reflection on MCC Pilgrims' Walk



This year's walk from Durham Cathedral to St Michael's Church in Witton Gilbert via the ruins of Beaurepaire was well attended: apparently twice as many people as last year, much to the delight of the guides!

After a short tour of the Cathedral and the cloisters we headed down to the picturesque banks of the Wear and saw *that* iconic view of the Cathedral. We walked on fuelled by religious fervour (actually, M&Ms and dark chocolate!) The sight of the cathedral from the river bank is a very strong reminder of faith and the timelessness of it. We meandered our way out of the city of Durham, and in a short time found ourselves in woodland and pretty dells awash with summer colours and sounds. Our resident art expert, Hannelie, encouraged us, even the less talented pilgrims like me, to make colour boards using the flora which was abundant around us. This proved to be very relaxing and calming. It is amazing just how many colours and hues we managed to find.

Our journey had some lovely wildlife too, including a frog, baby toad, moth caterpillar, and lots of butterflies. Another interesting task for our journey was to use a piece of string to collect and tie onto it any objects that we found. These described our travels that day. Some were very well executed and personal, others like mine, where just one large Sycamore branch, this represented my love of God's creation and the firm base it provides in our daily trials.

We came to a fork in the road, and our field craft expert suggested we should leave a sign. This would enable any other followers to know which way we went. These had to be personal, so people would recognise who had left them. They had to be made out of natural objects found in the locale. Some great creative works of art appeared, from Elands (a type of antelope) to a prison break and from a tortoise to a lady in a pretty skirt. Very interesting how people portray themselves!!

We reached Beaurepaire ("beautiful retreat" in French) about lunch time. This now ruined 13th century manor house was used by the monks of the cathedral for retreats for hundreds of years. It was set in 1300 acres of hunting land. Up to 40 monks stayed here at one time. The nearby village of Bear Park is named after this retreat. After lunch Hannelie asked us to meditate over two tasks. The first was to try to draw the sounds we could hear in expressive art form or words. The second, which proved to really challenge our inner souls, was to represent how we feel and where we are in our lives in art or words. We did this quietly and alone; this to me was a very cathartic exercise. It involved delving deep into our inner self in this inspiring location. We discussed with each other the meaning of what we had produced, some insights into our psyche proved fascinating. I can highly recommend this to all of you, who while on life's journey, take time to reflect and analyse what we really feel deep down.

We then slowly meandered through fields of grass and oats, along the banks of streams, with thread like footpaths clinging to their banks. The pace was leisurely (I was built for leisurely!) the companionship was a joy, the chat irreverent. This all makes for a pilgrimage that will never be forgotten. With both souls refreshed and brains challenged we ended our journey at St Michael's in Witton Gilbert. This quaint little 12th century village church offered in charm what Durham Cathedral had offered in majesty. A perfect end to one of the better days in my life. Thanks to Hannelie, Charlotte and Kate, my fellow pilgrims.

Right: Some of the artwork made on the walk ("Artist's Palette's" made from different things found on the journey.)



By Susan Musgrove

The Keeper

Sometimes, what we care about most gets all used up and goes away, never to return. So, while we have it, it's best we love it, and care for it, and fix it when it's broken, and heal it when it's sick.

This is true for marriage, and old cars, and children with bad report cards, and dogs with bad hips. And aging parents, and grandparents. We "keep" them because they are worth it, because we are worth it. Some things we keep. Like a best friend that moved away or a classmate we grew up with. There are just some things that make life important, like people we know who are special. And so, we keep them close!

TEN THINGS GOD WON'T ASK ON THAT DAY... BUT THOSE SHE WILL

- 1... God won't ask what kind of car you drove. She'll ask how many people you drove who didn't have transportation..
- 2... God won't ask the square footage of your house, She'll ask how many people you welcomed into your home.
- 3... God won't ask about the clothes you had in your closet, She'll ask how many you helped to clothe.
- 4... God won't ask what your highest salary was. She'll ask if you compromised your character to obtain it.
- 5... God won't ask what your job title was. She'll ask if you performed your job to the best of your ability.
- 6... God won't ask how many friends you had. She'll ask how many people to whom you were a friend.
 - 7... God won't ask in what neighbourhoods you lived, She'll ask how you treated your neighbours.
 - 8... God won't ask about the colour of your skin, She'll ask about the content of your character.
 - 9... God won't ask why it took you so long to seek Salvation. She'll lovingly take you to your mansion in heaven, and not to the gates of Hell.
 - 10... God won't have to ask how many people you have shared this with, She already knows your decision.

MCC Newcastle Financial Report

Every week, people give generously to the ministry of MCC Newcastle through the offering plate at Sunday worship, or through the bank by Standing Order.

We also receive donations from time to time.

Thank you to the person who regularly sends anonymous donations to the church office. We know that you read our newsletter!

Thank you for your most recent donation.

Sunday service	Attendance in July
Week 1	23
Week 2	28
Week 3 (Pride)	47
Week 4	26
Week 5	N/A
Average Sunday attendance	31
No. of different individuals attending over month	45
Offering in plate	£295.34
Offering through standing order	£1950
Total monthly offering	£2245.34
Budget for 2009/2010	£35,520.00

Thank you to everyone who completed a Gift Aid form, which allowed MCC Newcastle to claim back the tax that you paid on your offerings to the church. We were able to claim back **£5011.74** in Gift Aid for 08/09.

If you would like to start a Standing Order or want to sign a Gift Aid form, they are available every Sunday, by the kitchen hatch!

If you would like more detailed information, please contact our Treasurer, Katie at treasurer@mccnewcastle.org.uk

***Thank you for all that you give!!
If 10 people increased their giving by £10 per month, that would be £1200 over the year.
Could you be one of the 10?***

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.

Worship on Wednesday – W.O.W!!!

Kairos Service – Kairos means “God’s special time.” This is our free flowing worship experience. We meet in Room 1 above the hall to pray, sing and listen to God. Ring the MCC doorbell to get in! Come along, all are welcome! Contact Mikee, Hannelie or Charlotte West for more details.

Socials

YAM (Young Adults Ministry) is for everyone from 18 – 30s. We have a social once a month. In August we will be going to the cinema. Get onto the facebook group (just search ‘MCC Newcastle UK’) to suggest films we might like to see and to chat about future socials. Further details will be sent out closer to the date.

Greenbelt Festival

Greenbelt is a Christian festival with a difference. The Festival is a family-friendly celebration, inclusive and accepting of all, regardless of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, background or belief. There will be a lively an eclectic mix of music, visual and performing arts, spirituality, comedy and talks and discussions. 21,000 campers are expected this year! People from many MCC churches regularly visit Greenbelt. If you are going to Greenbelt, look out for the MCC Newcastle flag! For more info on the festival see www.greenbelt.org.

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 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
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.

August 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Sunday Worship 6.30pm, church hall CLM Graduation	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Sunday Worship 6.30pm, church hall	9	10	11 WOW Kairos Service 7.30pm Room 1	12	13	14
15 Sunday Worship 6.30pm, church hall	16	17	18	19	20 YAM @ the movies	21
22 Sunday Worship 6.30pm, church hall	23	24	25	26	27 Greenbelt Festival	28
29 Sunday Worship 6.30pm, church hall	30	31				