



Making A BIG NOISE Against Homophobia!!!



Grey's Monument is a great gathering place. Many people also use it to raise the profile of particular issues. On Saturday 17th May, it was our turn to make a Big Noise to mark International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia or IDAHO, as it's more commonly known. The steel band that were playing and the those raising awareness of life in Palestine obligingly made way for rainbow flags and displays about homophobia. There was an information table, giving details of lots of local organisations and several passersby stopped to see what was going on.

The Bangshees drumming group set the tone, giving an upbeat and lively feel to the event. The rain held off as our very own pastor climbed the steps to stand in front of the monument. Her speech told the history of IDAHO, how it marks the date when the World Health Organisation stopped calling homosexuality a psychiatric disorder. She reminded us that the WHO **still** classes being transgendered as a psychiatric disorder though. Although the microphone died in the opening few sentences. Cecilia put on her "big" voice, and continued to address the crowd. Although Eurovision was being held in Moscow that weekend, the Moscow city Council had refused permission for a Pride march, even though they had given permission for anti-gay protests to take place. So many countries still have laws which condemn homosexuality, some even have the death sentence.



Cecilia speaks

Finally it was the moment we had been waiting for.....Whistles and hooters at the ready, we counted down to the BIG NOISE. We cheered and whistled and hooted and drummed for a full minute. We found out later that we could be heard all over the city centre!

After the rally, several of the MCC group made their way to the Side Cinema to enjoy the two films that were put on. The first one featured images of last year's Pride and World AIDS marches. It was great to see MCCers in so many of the photos!

It's a very powerful feeling to be part of the BIG NOISE. It makes me feel as though I am really standing up for something that I believe. Why don't you join us next year?



Anthony , Alison & their whistles

All Your Diary Dates, Events

Pastor's Report for the month on IDAHO & Pentecost Service

Bible Feature - Am I really a sinner ?

All Events & Activities for the month inside

Worship in the Main Church -

Read just what you have to say page 5

Abbey and her furry pals latest walk. pictures inside

Church Day Retreat – Your Last Chance to Book!

Our church day retreat is on Saturday 27th June, at St Anthony's Priory in Durham. The final deadline for bookings is Sunday 21st June. Please let Cecilia know if you would like to attend.

Pastor's Report – May 2009



This month I have been supporting a family that want to have a naming ceremony for their little girl. It came as a source of shock and sadness to them that so many churches turned then down before they got in touch with MCC Newcastle. Many of us will have voted in the European elections this week. Our fabulous newsletter editor, Claire, spotted that there was a Christian Alliance Party standing in the election. She checked out their website and found that they disapproved of same sex relationships. As you may imagine, she has written them a storming letter about their views!!

These are just two examples of why we need to make a BIG NOISE on International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia. I was very honoured (and rather nervous) to be the speaker at the rally this year at Grey's Monument. It is one thing to stand up in church, in front of a friendly crowd, it is quite another to stand in the middle of the city centre, giving a speech!! However, as I stood there in my clergy collar, trying to make sure that I scanned the whole crowd whilst I was talking, there was a part of me that was just thrilled by the experience. Thrilled that for all the things that people read and hear about the Christian church, here was a local church pastor, and many of the congregation showing that God didn't invent homophobia and does not condone it. I wonder how many passersby thought I was doing a rant against LGBT folk and then listened and found I was being supportive???

In our Board meetings, we have been discussing ways of engaging everyone in the process to discern what God is calling us to be and do in the years ahead. What is it that MCC Newcastle is called to be and do that is unique to us? Who are we called to serve? What are we asked to do, to bring a bit of heaven to earth? My experience at IDAHO tells me that we are uniquely placed to reach out to the LGBT community and beyond. It is great that there are an increasing number of affirming churches; however MCC is the only Christian denomination that was founded in, and reaches beyond the LGBT communities. We speak from a place of experience that is unique!

At end of May, we celebrated Pentecost. Some call this the beginning of the Christian Church,

when the disciples came out of hiding and really started to proclaim the Good News. Our Pentecost service was very powerful, and I personally really felt the presence of the Holy Spirit. At one point, there was a time of silence, and I didn't want to break it, the atmosphere was so incredible.

Someone commented to me recently how folk in MCC Newcastle talk about their faith and how refreshing it was to see opportunities like the Creating a Life that Matters course, where people could really go deeper. This year's course will soon be at an end. It has been an amazing journey, with people being really willing to share, learn and grow. It has been a privilege to tutor the course along with John Lawson. The course will start again in the autumn, so watch this space for more details.....

Another chance to "go deeper" will be the church day retreat on Saturday 27th June. This will be an opportunity to try out different ways of praying and coming into God's presence. I hope that everyone will be able to experience at least one activity that is familiar to them and one way of praying that is new. God has many different ways of being present to us, if we are willing to take the risk of trying something unfamiliar. Booking forms are available at church and have been sent out via the email list.

My Spiritual Direction course finishes in June. This has been a great learning experience with me and an opportunity for me to go deeper too. It is a source of joy for me to accompany individuals on their faith journey. Some people think that you have to be very holy or religious to have a Spiritual Director. This really isn't true! The role of a Spiritual Director is walk alongside you in everyday life, listening together to the story of your life and helping you to discern where God is in all of it. Most people see their Spiritual Director once a month, or every 6 weeks. It is another way of "going deeper" and giving yourself permission to stop and listen to God in your own life. If you want to know more about Spiritual Direction, let me know.

God bless

Pinkia



Bible Feature

Am I Really a Sinner ?

We all, from time to time, do or say things we regret. Thankfully, we have a pathway of communication with God, through Jesus Christ having died for our sins, to say sorry and being forgiven. However, sometimes saying sorry doesn't seem enough and I'm left with a sense of great shame, I think maybe because Lucifer has been able to tempt me.

Don't get me wrong, this is not a common event; I'm pretty much a good Christian girl most of the time but, like most of us I guess, I'm only human. And that is my point; our very humanity is what Lucifer feeds off and relies upon.



You may recall that I have recently been trying to stop smoking. You remember in Matthew Chapter 16 Verse 23 when Jesus is trying to explain to the disciples that He was to suffer and be killed. Peter says to Him "this will never happen to you." Jesus rebuked him and replies "get behind me Satan" realising it was Satan not Peter speaking. Ok stay with me on this one. To help me out with the cravings, I would imagine myself as the disciple Peter (I wish) and every time I'd get the urge for a cigarette, I would say "get behind me Satan". It kind of worked.

Anyway, that was my most recent battle with the devil but, regrettably, it didn't end there. I would look for packets of cigarettes whilst walking Jess and blow me, I found a packet of cigars and a half packet of cigarettes. Now I was really confused. Was the devil himself tempting me or, was God trying to give me a helping hand?

And then, I found a full pack of unopened cigarettes ! What was a good Christian girl suppose to make of all these very 'spooky' goings on?

My mind firmly stuck on the issue of Satan tempting or God helping me, I went on holiday

and found a trilogy of books called 'The Chronicle of the Brothers'. The books are all about Lucifer, Michael and Gabriel and the changes within their relationship together when Lucifer defies God. He is so jealous with God for creating humans in His own image and what is more, loving them more than anything He has loved before. Smashing read that I recommend. So all holiday I found myself immersed in this battle between good and evil.

All these issues just seemed to heighten my fixation with the devil and being able to withstand his temptations.

Once home, I settled into normal daily life and was watching the television. To my amazement there was a party political broadcast for the European elections on behalf of 'The Christian Peoples Alliance Party. I didn't even know they existed and listened intently persuaded by their manifesto and promises.

Excitedly I sought more information about them on their website (www.cpaparty.org.uk) only to be disappointed to find the following;

Christian Democrats Call for Conscience Clause in Sexual Orientation Regulations

Editor's notes:

7. We do not believe that sexual orientation, and the actions that result from this, are the same as race, gender or disability. Sexual orientation is subject to choice and change. Furthermore, acting from sexual orientation is also subject to choice and is no different in that respect to other behaviour held to be sexually immoral in religion such as adultery or fornication.

8. There is therefore a significant element of freedom both in sexual orientation and resulting lifestyle and in this respect it does not equate to those things fixed at birth such as race, gender or nationality, and other things beyond choice such as disability.



I was naively saddened and also infuriated by their stance, and not one to take injustice lightly, I sent them the following email:

“Whilst I wholly concur with your view as to matters that are fixed by birth as God made them so. However, I had no choice about the sexuality, I was born with and I certainly have no wish to change from that which the Almighty God sought fit to make me. I am also disabled and proud to be so, as was also the creator's wish. I would never, as a practicing Christian, ask a heterosexual to have sexual relations with a member of their own sex as it would repulse them to do so; where is the love in that request?”

I and my church believe that Jesus Christ was the son of God and He was crucified to death so that my sins may be forgiven thus, allowing me to ask the Creator for forgiveness when I have sinned. As a forgiving and loving Creator, He will forgive me so I may continue to have relations with Him.

In the Gospel of John Chapter 13 Verses 34-35 Jesus said

“I give you a new commandment: love one another, you must love one another just as I have loved you. It is by your love for one another, that everyone will recognise you as my disciples.”

Jesus loves me and I love Him and through His love I can communicate with and able to reciprocate love with the One and only Almighty God.” Finally I said “I wish you luck and will pray that you may discern wisdom from this message.”

Now I am not a political creature by nature but like Jesus, I detest judgmental ignorance and will make a stand for my views. Needless to say, by voting day on 4th June I had not received a response from them.

This opened up a whole new concern for me as to whether I was a sinner and Satan was working within me once again. After much

discussion with God and a lot of honest soul searching I realised I WAS a child of God, that God HAD made me gay and did love me very, very much.



And so it was with a renewal of belief and great sense of faith, I went to the Pentecost service on Sunday at MCC Newcastle on 31st May. I wasn't to be let down. The service was brilliant, music was excellent, prayers were moving and when Cecilia spoke of letting the Holy Spirit into your life, I could physically feel my whole body filling up with her presence. It felt so good, I didn't want to move and break the moment. I sat there tears streaming down my face. I had had my own Pentecost experience!

I've had the odd cigarette since then, but no longer see it as Satan's work, rather, it is my own weakness. I certainly do not believe I am a sinner because of my sexuality and I know it is not Satan that is making me gay, but that it is God who created me gay.

Amen

Claire Liebig-Denham



MCCN FACEBOOK GROUP

In other news, the Facebook group is up and running, and we have almost seventy members! The idea is to have an online community which discusses, prays and posts photos and videos related to the church. If you are on Facebook, you can find the group simply by searching for 'MCC Newcastle UK' in the search box and clicking on 'join group.' The admins also send out regular reminders about upcoming events, so it can be a great way to keep up to date and in contact if you can't make it to church often. It is also a great potential tool for evangelism, so if you know of anybody who is interested in coming to church, you can point them towards the group and they can check us out before visiting. Check it out at www.facebook.com

Charlotte Norton

Worshipping in the Main Church – Your Views!

Many of you will have been at our Easter service and at the worship service after the Annual Congregational meeting. Both these services were held in the main church sanctuary, instead of the hall.

The hall and the church are very different spaces, with both advantages and disadvantages.

We put up a flip chart at the back of the church and invited people to comment on what they thought about worshipping in the sanctuary. Here is what you wrote!

What do you like about worshipping in the main church?

Wow! What a fantastic place to worship. I feel more connected to God here, surrounded by Spirit.

The atmosphere

The main church reminds me of the reverence of God and allows for a space for prayer and reflection – it's pretty!

More space is good

No-one has to put out 70 chairs and put them back at the endwho wants to be on that rota?

Pretty to look at the windows etc

Not having to set chairs up/away

Larger projectors easier to see

Big stained glass windows, lots of light

Church setting more atmospheric and lends itself to worship. I'm ok with worshipping in church. I love singing in here

I like the stained glass and churchy things around me

Flexible seating

What needs to improve in the main church?

Cold (*Note – heating is an issue, but the pastor forgot to put it on before the ACM, which didn't help!*)

When I sing, I sound like the only person in the congregation doing so – it's also freezing

As a tall person, I don't feel comfortable in the pews – it's cold, even in spring

Digital projector training needed

People don't have bibles to look things up during services (*Note – there are bibles in the church, not in the hall*)

Sound system will improve acoustics

Better heating

Can't hear others singing

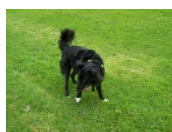
More people need to speak to new people after worship

Seats not comfy

Thank you for all these comments, the Worship Team will work on the ones that can be fixed by us, such as improving the sound system and power point training. There are no plans to move into the main church immediately, but as we continue to grow in number, there will be a point where we no longer fit comfortably in the hall.



What A Woofy Time



If you went down in the woods on Saturday.... you would of had a big surprise six crazy puppies. The Chopwell Woods Dog Walk 30th May 2009



Chopwell Woods dog walk what a fabulous day, the sun was shining the dogs were barking. The adults almost had heat stroke because it was a wonderful hot day. Scrappy did lots of chasing because he loves Princess. Lucy was dragging Lesley, Mo was pulling Abby and Mags was very chatty especially with Vicki.

Elaine was walking Princess the ex racer Greyhound. Cecilia was like a steam train walking very fast with Jem trotted on beside her, enjoying the sunshine and lots of different smells.



It got a little bit too hot so after a while we needed to go home for a nice cool drink of water, after our sandwiches, sausage rolls, cake and biscuits of course sorry! We had a long lie in the shade. We had a very lovely time and I am sure our owners and their friends did too. We can't wait for the next one. We would love to have more human pals to join us when our little paws go for a walk.

Come and enjoy the company, chatter, gentle exercise and some scrummy human treats that we happen to like too! Paws for a walk the **next one will be in July, so look out for the new diary!**
Love and Barks Lucy, Scrappy, Princess, Mo, Maggie and Jem.



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

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.

Events and Activities

New!! - Church Day Retreat Saturday 27th June

We encounter God in many different ways. Come and spend a day at St. Anthony's Priory in Durham, and try "Going Deeper". The retreat day starts at 10am and finishes at 4pm. Registration forms are in church. Cost for the day, excluding transport is £8 or £16. For more information, talk to Cecilia.

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** 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.

Wimbledon Wii gives you a chance to take part in the world's most famous tennis competition from the comfort of your armchair!! Claire and Annette are our hosts in Thornaby. The fun starts at 7.30pm. For directions, email Claire newsletter@mccnewcastle.org.uk

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 Calendar June 2009

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	2	3	4 CLM course 7pm, main church	5 Movies with Mikee – 7.30pm, Heaton “Save Me”	6 Tea with Dorothy Heaton 2 – 4pm A social for the more mature among us!	7 Sunday Worship 6.30pm, church hall
8	9	10 Taizé Service 7pm, main church Tea with Dorothy, Sunderland 5 – 7pm	11 CLM course 7pm, main church	12	13 Dog Walk and Chips! South Shields 11am Wimbledon Wii! Claire and Annette Thornaby 7.30pm	14 Sunday Worship 6.30pm, church hall 4.30pm Scarborough Group meets
15	16	17 Tea with Dorothy, Sunderland 5 – 7pm	18 CLM course 7pm, main church	19	20	21 Sunday Worship 6.30pm, church hall Summer Squash – after worship Mikee and Jonny's, Heaton
22	23	24	25 CLM course 7pm, main church	26	27 Church Day Retreat 10am – 4pm St. Anthony's Durham	28 Sunday Worship 6.30pm, church hall
29	30					