

HARVEST GONE WILD

October 2010

I like the traditional harvest 'hymns that I used to sing as a child. We plough the fields and scatter the good seed on the

land/ But it is fed and watered by God's almighty hand' is a lovely sentiment. But my experience as it takes out the utter rawness, the toil, and the elemental nature of trying to grow food. The backbreaking work of harvest. The of-control dimensions of a harvest gone wild.

In the past three years I have kept an allotment. I am not a natural gardener. I do not have green fingers. Every time I dig something up, I am thankful that my family are not reliant upon my efforts in order to be fed. But I do enjoy having a go, and every year I try something new. It's taken years to clear the soil from a patch that was reasonably well-tended before I took it on, and I've had the help of friends and family along the way. Even on this small scale, the responsibility of looking after a patch of land can be overwhelming. Leave it for even a short time and despite all that cultivation nature will take over again - you'll soon be waist-high in weeds.

During the Harvest service, I showed everyone what happens when you take a courgette plant, and leave it unattended for just two weeks while you go on holiday. You get... marrows! I presented a big box of them in church. They were slightly scary. Some marrows you could carry with two hands, but others had reached the dimensions of a small whale. I invited everyone to take one home, and handed out copies of a marrow recipe for people to try. They may have wanted Kentucky Fried Chicken, but they got marrows. In these lean times, we have to learn to work with what we've got in plentiful supply.



There is sometimes an overwhelming aspect to growing and gathering things to eat. The sheer abundance tells us something about God's generosity towards us, the never-ending cycle of our relationship with the Earth, and with our

Creator. So at Harvest we celebrate the fact that we will not starve this winter. It is also natural and right that we think of those people who go hungry – here in the North East, as well as in those communities around the world where the harvest has failed. This year especially, we wonder how the victims of the earthquake in Haiti and the floods in Pakistan will fare as winter draws in. Though the world could be fed, the greed of the developed world keeps others in poverty and hunger. There's no sign of that changing any time soon, but it doesn't mean we should stop petitioning our governments, or making donations to help those in need. On Harvest Sunday at MCC, we collected together food donations for the People's Kitchen in Newcastle, which feeds the hungry in our own community.

(cont. p8)

By Helen Berry



**All Your Diary
Dates, Events for
November**

PLUS

**Thoughts about
Harvest from
Helen B**

Staff Reports

and

**Bible feature:
If you Walk with
God**

**Operation
Christmas Child -**

**Creating a Life
that Matters**

Art and God

**YAM's first
birthday
celebration**

**Helen's Harvest
Article continues
on page 7
including a
Recipe for
'Baked Marrow
Stuffed with Two
Cheeses'**

Staff Reports

LOTS OF LISTENING!

Wow! What a month! I can't believe so much has been squeezed into a few weeks since I started as Congregational Care Coordinator. Thanks to everyone for your support as I (very nervously) took up post. Special thanks to the patient souls who helped guide a clueless woman around the hidden parts of the city and to others who made sure I wouldn't be alone at meetings and events. You are superstars! One of the amazing features about MCC Newcastle is that there is almost always someone who can help with something if you need it; from dry stone walling to carpentry and dress making to jam making; we are such a practical bunch!



Thanks to all who came to the first Listening Lunch at the Tyneside Coffee Rooms. You shared ideas for future pastoral ministry work and social events and I listened! You told me drinks are too expensive there and I immediately set about finding an alternative venue. The Age Concern cafe at Mea House proved to be a fantastic venue for the second Listening Lunch held on 18th Oct. Even more of you came and again we made great progress. Look out for details of another lunch on 15th November and a special Christmas Listening Lunch in December (Santana Restaurant in Jesmond, £7.95 pp for three course meal).

Our congregation has suffered somewhat this month. We have dealt with the deaths and celebrated the astonishing lives of two beloved friends; Brian and Stuart. Both will be deeply missed and never forgotten. Some members have suffered car accidents, surgery, loneliness and more. The greatest privilege of the CCC role is that I have opportunity to offer support (and hopefully comfort) to all; they are never truly alone in this wonderful community and God, of course, is surely holding us up too. Much of the work I do goes on quietly and privately; supporting those who need a listening ear or a friendly shoulder to cry upon for a minute or an hour or a day.

There have been many meetings (with staff from Age Concern, Mesmac and Newcastle Council LGBT Community Development department). All focused upon developing relationships between MCC Newcastle and wider community organisations; potentially critical links between our church and our LGBT brothers and sisters in the wider community. I was particularly touched by the very warm welcome we received, not least at the first meeting for the transgendered community held at Newcastle City Library. The group will hopefully become a monthly forum for empowering transgendered people in our city and I am proud that MCC was represented at the first event. I will continue to ensure that we maintain a presence. Special thanks to Susan M who accompanied me and supported my involvement at this meeting as a non transgendered person.

It has been an exciting and inspiring first month. I pray daily for an open mind and an open heart for whatever challenges the next month brings!

Much Love and Prayers to you All,

Kate
Congregational Care Co-ordinator



Bible Feature

If You Walk with Jesus...



You may recall last month I wrote about the 33 Chilean miners trapped half a mile underground in a mine. It seemed the whole world watched as they were all

eventually, as some say miraculously, brought back up to the earth's surface. I had prayed that the men would be faithful enough to ask for God's help, and if they did, there were sure to receive it.

You can't imagine how delighted I was to read the following in the BBC news website:-

Miner Omar Reygadas: "I am a new man, and I think I've been born again". Omar was the seventeenth to be freed in an operation that drew the world's attention. Mr Reygadas, 56, is a heavy equipment operator who has been a miner all his working life. His children Omar, Ximena and Marcela kept a diary for the BBC, describing their long wait to see their father again. In one of their entries entitled **'I cried and he wept'** it read:-

"I was chosen to be the first to greet my Dad after he climbed out of the capsule. It was awesome when they opened the capsule. I was really touched to just see him there. He was whiter and a little thinner than I remembered. I was moved when I hugged him. I cried a little and he wept. *He knelt down to thank the Lord.* I told him I loved him very much and did not say anything else. I was so excited."

What struck me most was the faith of each miner that came to the surface. My dad is a believer and he came out with a much stronger faith in God because he was given another chance at life. For me the main lesson is that God does exist and took pity on the miners and their families.

There are miners who were not believers and now believe in God.

Another lesson is that you have to spend more time with your family."

Omar revealed to the world why he had taken longer than all the others to be brought to the

surface in the capsule "I had insisted I should finish the prayer I had started all the way to the top and I was also singing and praising God."



The lesson to be learned by all of humanity is that if you walk with the Lord and have genuine faith, nothing is beyond the control of Almighty God !

You can watch a video of Omar being interviewed on the BBC News website on www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-11475156. Be prepared to see someone who has quite obviously had a real experience with God. It is truly inspirational !

Omar is interviewed in his humble house with children running riot in the background. He told the interviewer ***"in the Bible it says when you surrender to Jesus Christ you are born again. I think I am born again and getting back to God's family."***

When asked how all the men seemed so remarkably healthy he simply replies ***"we got our health from God."*** He added ***"we kept strong because God was with us."*** Suddenly a little girl appears and kisses him on the cheek followed by a little boy. They then go out of shot and the children's playful noise recommences. Seemingly encouraged by this impromptu sign of affection he insists he will be back down the mine again because it is "his job, his life."

Despite his ordeal and his age, at 56 years old, Omar appears extremely relaxed, confident and sure. I don't think for one minute that God would create a situation similar to that of the Chilean mine disaster. However, these men have shown the world of the power of prayer, faith and constant belief in God even through the most horrific, potentially fatal or dangerous times in life. Maybe it's those times when you just simply don't want to go on living and would just rather give up, that if you sincerely believe in God you have hope. You have strength. You have eternal life.

Amen

By Claire





Can hope and love fit into a shoe box???
The Answer: Yes it can with Operation Christmas Child!

Once again Christmas is fast approaching at MCC Newcastle and many of us will be thinking of turkey and tinsel, Christmas shopping, special time spent with family and friends and exchanging gifts and cards. For the previous two years, our congregation has taken part in Operation Christmas Child. Some may ask what is it and why do we do it?

Operation Christmas Child is the largest children's Christmas Project in the world and is run by the Christian charity Samaritans Purse. It involves a shoebox appeal and you giving a gift to a child in the world who is in need. These children are living in difficult circumstances overseas, where there is war, poverty, natural disaster, famine or where they have become orphans due to disease. You can send a child in need a powerful message of love and hope, by packing it into a shoe box with some gifts and goodies, allowing them to experience God's love at Christmas. The shoe boxes which are part of this are filled with items such as a flannel, soap, tooth brush, tooth paste, a hat, gloves, toys, sweets, colouring pencils and a colouring book. These simple items will help a child's basic needs to be met, bring much pleasure and a great big smile to a child's face. Just magic!

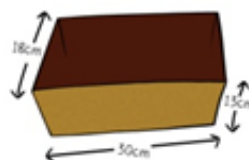
I would like to encourage every member of our congregation, our host church, friends and family to take part in the appeal. We understand that everyone has different pockets and funds and we will be collecting both completed boxes and popular "top-up" items which are used in the warehouse when boxes are checked and packed to be sent to their destination. Throughout October and November 2010 we will be collecting two different sets of items a month (Please try and provide pairs of items):

October - Tooth Brushes and Tooth Paste and Flannels and Soap Bars.

November - Hats and Gloves and Colouring Books and Pens/Pencils/Crayons

So when thinking of turkey and tinsel please don't forget the little shoe box you could send that will share a little bit of hope and love with a child. We will be collecting the boxes and top-up items in at the end of November and will be delivering them to the Operation Christmas Child Warehouse in Byker. Watch this space for the date to come and help out with the checking of boxes and to see our gifts packed for shipping overseas and find out where our boxes will be going. Please ask Abby or Kate if you need any help. Leaflets are available at the back of church to help you with preparing your box.

God Bless Abby x





The next airing of the course 'Creating A Life That Matters' (CLM) is due to start in November. This will be the third time the course has taken place and as an attendee of the last course I would strongly urge you to think about taking part in it.

My initial reaction regarding being asked if I would like to do the course, round about this time last year was, 'NO WAY'. I asked Cecilia to give me more details of what I would be letting myself in for and she spent some time with me going over the 3 modules of the course. This made me even more reticent about doing the course but I agreed to give it a go on the understanding that I may not see the course through to the end. However, it was presented in an extremely interesting and non-threatening way and everyone felt comfortable with what we worked through. It mattered not your degree of spirituality or what your religious background was. What was said was done so in confidence and everyone's opinion was valued. The fellowship between each of the course members was really important and I really looked forward to our weekly meetings.

The course leaders, initially Cecilia then Charlotte W and Hannelie, were excellent and they put a great deal of effort into presenting the materials and guiding our passage through them in a step by step, precise way. They explained points that we did not understand and brought different perspectives to discussions as did all of the course members. Part of the beauty of the course was to listen to the views and opinions of others. There was a great deal of mutual support between members and leaders alike.

The course consists of 3 modules each of which is split into 6 weekly sessions. The first module begins with a shared meal and then each module ends with a shared meal. Each session lasts 2 hours and I must say that the time passes really quickly.

Module 1 is Rediscovering Relationship With the Sacred.

Module 2 is Rediscovering Relationship With My Self.

Module 3 is rediscovering Relationship With My Passion.

Please don't let these 'high powered' names put you off because as I said earlier the material is presented in a non threatening and user friendly way. I think you will enjoy it a lot.

By James L



Prices for the complete course are:

£80 (High waged), £60 (Waged), £30 (unwaged).

Module One (Rediscovering Relationship with the Sacred)

begins on Tuesday 2nd November. If you are interested, please pick up a CLM booking form from the back of the church, near the coffee hatch.

Art

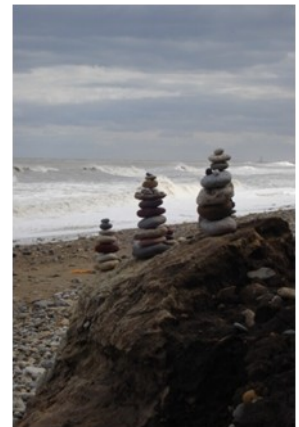
God

Land Art on Seaham beach...

By Hannelie

In her book, 'Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain', Betty Edwards writes: "Drawing is not very difficult. Seeing is the problem.....shifting to a particular way of seeing". She goes on to explain that you need to set up favourable conditions for yourself that'll cause you to make a "mental shift to a different mode of information processing that enables you to see well", so that you can draw as well as you are able to.

In making Land Art, we are lucky in this respect, as the actual place where we are to 'draw' and make art, helps make 'conditions favourable': instead of a blank piece of paper, we have shapes and patterns and a variation of textures to use/copy/shift about as we feel. In fact, it makes us see these familiar scenes/landscapes in a very different light. We look for patterns to copy. We see a shape, and a work of art presents itself in our mind's eye. And on that Friday in September when MCCers got together to make land art on the beach, it became clear that the environment God created (and humans have shaped a bit) has an impact on people intent on creating land art, as ideas and art-works unfolded for both rookies and freshers to this fantastic state of being creative.



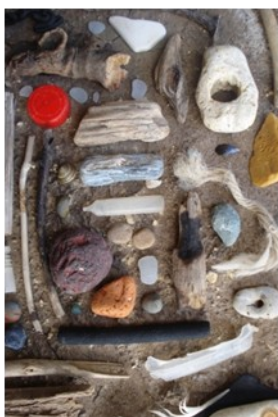
It was a cold and windy, but dry day. Susan generously played taxi for the day and picked Cass, Charlotte and myself up from our homes and drove us to Seaham (via the scenic route) We courageously ate our packed lunch/chips in the bracing wind but shifted back into the cosy warmth of the car for a little talk on Land Art and an introduction to some of the masters thereof (Andy Goldsworthy, Richard Long, Strydom van der Merwe....)

We each were handed a carrier bag, in case we found some 'artistic debris' we wanted to take home, and descended onto the beach down some thoughtfully placed steps. An amazing calm descended as well, as we were sheltered from the wind by the cliffs and we shortly dispersed, each entering into their own sanctuary of seeing and experiencing and creating, lulled and calmed by the rocking of the waves, crashing on the beach, swirling the stones...

The conditions were perfect for 'seeing'. God in our hearts, in our minds, in the created around us and the material we worked with. As the tide was mostly in, we were confined to a strip of beach close to the cliffs, and each found a nook, cranny or cave to play and explore land-art in. After about an hour, we came back together to 'show and tell', and it was clear that for each it was a profound experience of being themselves and being with God in that space, that safe place:

(Cont. overleaf)

(cont. from p6)



Hannelie G



Charlotte N



Cass J



Susan M

It was felt that the perfect end to a lovely day would be an afternoon tea-experience, and we drove – via the other scenic route – to Saddlers in Durham for just that.

ART & GOD is an opportunity for getting to know one another better in a creative environment, and to experience God in the safe space created by camaraderie and creativity. You don't think you're artistic? ART & GOD is not about being artistic, it's about exploring an aspect of ourselves, of being 'created in the image of God', of being creative since God is Creativity. Keep an eye out for the Art & God slots—the next one is knitting in November! - and dare to come and SEE for yourself.

By Hannelie Grobler

YAM Birthday Spectacular!



The entire extravaganza of the YAM (Young Adult Ministry) birthday social can be separated into two parts. My evening included both parts, obviously, as if there is an excuse for a party then I will be there!

We started with a meal in the amazing Stateside Diner. It is like walking back to 1950s America with the red and white vinyl seats, the soda floats and range of burgers, hotdogs and fries. There were seven of us in total, young and young at heart!

Once we were full of burgers and the obligatory ice cream sundaes, we headed off into town to meet some other folk. @ne bar was where we started - Charlotte got the lollies out and Mikee and Jonny got the drinks in! Many jokes and conversations later we decided to move on before the (in my personal opinion) dodgy looking drag queen came on to perform. After a quick drink in Switch and having observed a few altercations with some drunks and the bouncers, we ended the evening in the Dog, which is my favourite place on the scene, due to the excellent Karaoke!!! MCCers gave the loudest applause as I performed "All That Jazz" from the Chicago musical. After much applause, we decided to depart on a high. It is safe to say that YAM's First birthday was sufficiently celebrated!

If you've never been to a YAM social before, make sure you do – its great! Come along to the next, following its first year it can only improve further and further! In November we are going ice-skating. Meet at 2pm outside the Centre for Life, Newcastle and get ready to don your skates. We will be warming up with Hot Chocolate afterwards! All are welcome to come, whether you are a regular YAM-mer or not!

By George G

(cont. from p1) We also admired the amazing display of flowers and greenery from Ernie's garden, which temporarily transformed the stage into 'Sherwood forest'!

The marrow recipe in case you missed it is reprinted below. If marrow-eating isn't your thing, you could try eating at least one meal this week with mindfulness of the Harvest. Think about the elements of the meal, where they came from. Imagine who grew them, and the miles that were travelled to bring the food from where it was grown to your table. And, behind all this, be mindful of the source of all creation, Creator God, whose harvest gone wild is tamed, for now, into the humble potato, or the slice of bread, on your plate. For such small acts of grace are we thankful indeed.

Blessed is God, who upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry.

AMEN.

[From Psalm 146]

Baked marrow stuffed with two cheeses

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 celery sticks, trimmed and chopped,
- 1 red or yellow pepper, deseeded and chopped
- 50g (2oz) frozen or tinned sweet corn
- 50g (2oz) frozen peas
- 50g (2oz) fresh breadcrumbs
- 100g (4oz) Lancashire or Cheshire cheese, grated
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh chives or parsley
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 marrow, cut into 8 rounds, with the seeds taken out of the middle

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas mark 6. Lightly grease a large baking dish or baking sheet with a teaspoon of olive oil.
2. Heat the remaining oil in a large frying pan and gently fry the onion, celery and pepper for a few minutes until softened. Remove from the heat and stir in the sweetcorn and peas. Reserve a couple of tablespoons of the breadcrumbs, then stir the rest into the veg with the Lancashire or Cheshire cheese and chives or parsley. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Arrange the marrow slices in the baking dish. Pack with the veg mix. Sprinkle with the reserve breadcrumbs and grated cheese.
4. Cover with foil and bake for 25-30 mins, removing the foil for the final 10 mins so that the tops go brown.

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 September
Week 1	27
Week 2	34
Week 3	32
Week 4	35
Week 5	N/A
Average Sunday attendance	32
No. of different individuals attending over month	41
Offering in plate	£169.33
Offering through standing order	£1950
Total monthly offering	£2119.63
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!

***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

WORSHIP

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.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

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. If you are interested in taking part this year, pick up a form from the back of the church near the coffee hatch.

Art and God is an opportunity for getting to know one another better in a creative environment, and to experience God in the safe space created by camaraderie and creativity. You don't think you're artistic? Art and God is not about being artistic, it's about exploring an aspect of ourselves, of being 'created in the image of God', of being creative since God *is* creativity. Join us in November to make knitted graffiti to brighten up dull winter streets! No knitting experience necessary, all materials provided. DB Social Cafe, New Bridge Street West, Newcastle 5-7pm.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Operation Christmas Child

Operation Christmas Child is run by the Samaritan's Purse, a Christian charity working to alleviate poverty worldwide. Every year hundreds of thousands of shoeboxes are filled up with small Christmas gifts, wrapped and sent by volunteers to children living in poverty who would otherwise receive no gifts. MCC Newcastle packed 17 shoeboxes last year as well as collecting individual items. This year we would love to beat our record! As well as completed shoeboxes, this month please bring hats and gloves and colouring books and pens/pencils/crayons.

SOCIALS

Listening Lunch

Kate, your Congregational Care Co-ordinator, would love to meet the congregation! On the 15th November she will be available to share lunch with anyone who wants to join her at the **Age Concern Cafe, Mea House, Newcastle**. Food is provided. Come along for fellowship and lunch, caring and sharing.

Snowtubing Join us for a fun activity in Gateshead - slide down a dry ski slope in a rubber ring! To book a place on this social talk to Kate. Please remember to bring gloves with you as you will not be allowed on the slope without them!

YAM (Young Adults Ministry) is for the young and the young at heart. We have a social once a month. In November we are going ice-skating. Meet at 2pm outside the Centre for Life, Newcastle and get ready to don your skates. We will be warming up with Hot Chocolate afterwards! All are welcome to come, whether you are a regular YAM-mer or not! Chat to Charlotte N if you need more info.

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.



November 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 Creating a Life that Matters (CLM) 7pm Church Hall and Room 1	3	4	5	6
7 Sunday Worship 6.30pm, church hall	8	9 Creating a Life that Matters (CLM) 7pm room 1	10	11	12	13 YAM Social YAM on Ice 2pm Centre for Life, Newcastle
14 Sunday Worship 6.30pm, church hall	15 Listening Lunch 12-2pm Age Concern Cafe, Mea House, Newcastle	16 Creating a Life that Matters (CLM) 7pm room 1	17	18	19 Art and God Knit Graffiti 5-7pm DB Social Cafe, New Bridge St West, Newcastle	20
21 Sunday Worship 6.30pm, church hall	22	23 Creating a Life that Matters (CLM) 7pm room 1	24	25	26 Snowtubing 7-8pm With Kate	27
28 Sunday Worship 6.30pm, church hall	29	30 Creating a Life that Matters (CLM) 7pm room 1				