

Greetings From Rev. Pressley Sutherland;  
MCC Newcastle's Interim Support Pastor:

*A first-day reflection:*



Bleary eyed, I found myself circling outside Haymarket Metro Station trying to find St. James URC this morning. I had placed my faith in my iPhone's Map App., but soon realised with some horror, as I watched the blue dot that was supposed to be me drift around aimlessly, that I was just going to have to go it unplugged.

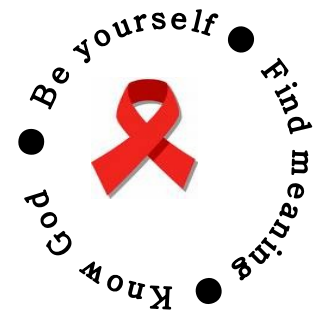
After less than a year with an iPhone, finding an address by actually looking at actual streets and buildings seemed unfathomably retro!

It had been a long morning already. London was wet and cold at 5am, as I and a few other hunched figures stood waiting for the gates to open at Seven Sisters Tube Station. As one does with any new venture, I wondered, through my shivering, what the day would hold. How would the Spirit begin this special journey with MCC Newcastle when I arrived? Would there be a theophany, a host of angels hovering above the church door?

Well, the reality was a tiny bit different. After giving up on finding my way unplugged, my journey with MCCN began with a desperate phone call to Kate H. from Northumberland Street, culminating with her big smile in a bright pink anorak greeting me on Northumberland Road. In the church office, Charlotte N. was waiting with steaming cups of tea and we were off into our first Staff meeting. A perfect beginning. Far better than cliché angels in diaphanous dresses, don't you think?

For those who haven't met me, I have been invited to be your Interim Support Pastor through the end of April while your permanent Pastor remains on compassionate leave. The Board has asked me to give special care in the areas of 1.Worship Enhancement, 2.Supporting Staff and Leadership, 3. Younger People/Student Outreach, 4.Men's Community, and 5.Liaising with your pastor, Rev. Elder Cecilia. I will be in residence for 14-15 days each month, including two Sundays. My hope is that I will be able to help MCCN continue with momentum toward fulfilling your plans and visions, while being a faithful steward of the office of Pastor for both the church and Cecilia.

Perhaps you feel as though an alien has been dropped into your midst. So here is a wee bit of my background.....



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

**PLUS**

**Bible Feature:  
You've Gotta  
Have Faith**

**Tinsel and  
Turkey  
Party**

**Congregational  
Care  
Coordinator  
Report**

**Money, MCCN &  
the Treasurer  
by Charlotte  
West**



I am originally from the Appalachian mountains of Virginia in the USA, and grew up Methodist. I have a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Musical Theatre, and became a professional performer living and working in New York. As a singer and worship leader, I worked in Episcopal, Methodist, Lutheran churches, with the odd bout of atmospheric chanting for syncretic gatherings. When I decided to follow my heart into ministry, I joined MCC New York for training and eventually received a Master of Divinity Degree from Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York. I began my MCC ministry working with Children's Education, Spiritual Development, Transgender and Men's ministries, the Food Pantry and Strategic Growth Initiatives. After two years as Assistant Pastor, I answered the call to move to London to be Senior Pastor of MCC North London. I was there from 2001-2008, during which the church experienced genuine spiritual revival. MCCNL became a vibrant worshipping community, Involved locally, nationally and internationally in social and human rights works. I was next the pastor of Good Hope MCC in Cape Town, South Africa in 2008-2010, a dynamic hitherto lay-led congregation at the coalface of tolerance, anti-violence and human rights work in SA and Africa. I returned to London permanently last May to give care to my marriage and home.

My partner, David and I live in South Tottenham with our two Devon Rex cats, Gizzie and Leon. I have been enjoying diversifying my interests while taking care before jumping into 'what's next,' a predictable response to being in one's mid-40s. Perhaps those who have lived through this age transition, cannot help but smile as I do at the irony of finding oneself asking the question again, "What do I want to be when I grow up?" I have most recently been teaching Musical Theatre at an arts academy, and begun a course of study in Integrative Psycho synthesis Psychotherapy Counselling. For MCC, I supervise a clergy student in Germany, helped a bit at MCC East London at Christmas, and am happy to be here for this special, set-aside time of pastoring with MCCN. Sometimes it is good to throw all of the balls back up into the air, and let God do some sorting and re-arranging.

The book of Ecclesiastes mentions that there is a time for sowing and harvesting. Two months of residence spread across four months may only allow time for the sowing of a few seeds. But the Holy Spirit has a beautiful way of warming that which is sown in good soil until it flourishes with fresh expressions of love and good news. This is my fervent prayer for our season together. With Her guidance, which is far better than any Map App., I look forward to a special time of journeying and companionship with you---One Christ. One Body. One Spirit.

**Rev. Pressley Sutherland**



**Mr Eric needs YOU!**

Hospitality team members wanted  
Sign up by kitchen hatch

**Kairos**

'go deeper'



**A free flowing charismatic  
worship experience.**

**All are welcome.**

**February 16<sup>th</sup>**

**7.30pm Room 1  
(ring MCCN doorbell!)**





## Bible Feature

### You've Gotta Have Faith

**Many of you will remember my Bible feature from last month when I told you all of my encounter with God whilst walking in the Peak District's area known as Jacob's Ladder. Many miraculous events occurred to me during that walk and I truly believe they did so because I have faith in our Almighty Creator God.**

Now let's make it clear that I'm not saying that I have anything special that one of you might not already have or indeed, can acquire, but I do believe I've got faith in The Creator and Jesus Christ. So why is faith so important? The simple answer is that Jesus repeatedly told us that it was (and I'm not going to argue with Jesus).

In the Old Testament the emphasis by the writers was always God's faithfulness to the people. (Children of God). However, in the new testament we find an important shift in philosophy; Jesus teaches us that it is more about the faith that can people can actually show God when they hear and believe in God's word. So, instead of us relying on God's faith to us, we actually discover what God has actually been needing from us all along, to show our faith in God.

Now the importance moves away from what God can give to us but rather what we can do for God! And not being too expectant a parent, that you simply have faith in Her existence is all She requires. Simple isn't it!

Many of us have times when we doubt, but Jesus told us over and over again the importance of faith:

*Matthew Ch 17: V. 20 we find Jesus telling the crowd gathered around 'that if they only had the faith of a mustard seed....'*

*Again in Mark Ch 2 V. 5 he tells us that when Jesus saw they had faith the sick were immediately healed.*

*And again in Matthew Ch 12 V. 38-39 Jesus refuses to work miracles in order to prove to the crowd that He is the Son of God and the*

*Messiah, preferring, that they have faith in his words alone without fancy displays of almighty powers..*

And yet again, in what is probably the most direct and unequivocal statement by Jesus on the issue of faith and belief; *John Ch. 20 V. 24-29 One of the disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), was not with the others when Jesus came. They told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he replied, "I won't believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side."*

*Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. He said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don't be faithless any longer. Believe!"*

*"My Lord and my God!" Thomas exclaimed.*

***Then Jesus told him, "You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who haven't seen me and believe anyway."***

Indeed, Saint John concludes his whole book by saying :-

***"Jesus' disciples saw him do many other miraculous signs besides the ones recorded in this book. But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life."***

We are the Children of God and the Parent loves us so much that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was necessary, in order to make us realise that all the Almighty Creator wants from you is simply reciprocation of the faith and belief She has in all of you already.

Amen

# Staff Reports

## KATE HALL—CONGREGATIONAL CARE COORDINATOR

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Fabulous, beautiful people, thank you for having such big and generous hearts! You donated thirty shoe boxes to the Operation Christmas Child Appeal and amazed me all over again!

When I was stuck indoors because of heavy snow and couldn't get to the WORLD AIDS DAY FUNDRAISER MASQUERADE BALL, two quick phonecalls and Mikee and Jonny stepped in at very short notice to ensure we filled the entire table at the event! What a wonderful way to show the wider community how very much we care about these issues and the people who are affected. Watch out next year. . . my pink peacock feathered masquerade mask will make an appearance no matter what!



We have suffered badly in the weather at times but there is one positive note. . . the real snow certainly helped to speed up the ride (and the excitement) when MCC Newcastle members and friends went snowtubing at Wickham Thornes outdoor centre in Gateshead in late November. A great time was had by all and there were far fewer bruised behinds than we expected afterwards! The hot chocolate with marshmallows and mince pies added some extra wintry cheer and participants have asked for another outing in January or February. Perhaps we are experienced enough to try our hands at snowboarding by now too. . . ?

Listening lunches have continued to be popular with an average of 12 guests attending. Thanks go to our secret donator who pays for the lunches so we only have to think about buying drinks. The Christmas lunch at Santana's Restaurant was especially nice. Huge thanks to the person who donated wine for that occasion. You are wonderful and appreciated and you know who you are!

We continue to have a good presence at the Tyne Trans meetings. Our wonderful friend Susan M has also been voted onto the committee. Congratulations to her. Like us, they have noticed her calm and steady personality and realised how very much this can bring to others. Other members and visitors to MCC Newcastle also attend this group and I feel certain that they feel more supported in the wider community. The group also received good coverage on Newcastle radio recently. I will continue to pray for more acceptance and understanding for all trans people.

My survey is now almost complete and is going forward for approval by the Board very soon. I am so excited to get this out to you all! Only by understanding what you really want me to provide through the ministry areas I am responsible for can I really take this role forward. I urge you all to complete the questionnaire as fully and as honestly as possible. The questions are pulled out of the information and communication we have shared at listening lunches and at other times. I am just the facilitator, the congregation are the important ones. . . please use this opportunity to tell me what you want and make welcome, social and pastoral support more effective for yourselves and for others.

Finally, thanks to all who travelled out to the wilds of Castleside to join Helen and I at our home for the Tacky Tinsel Christmas Party. Thank you James for your gift of creativity and photography – your photographs are wonderful! We will never forget the very fine rendition of 'The 12 gays of Christmas' that afternoon. You blessed us by your presence and what a way to welcome Pressley!

Peace, health and happiness to you all for 2011. My shoulders are broad, my heart is open. I am here for you all. God Bless,

**Kate**

**Kate is available on the  
Church Phone: 07770543407**

## TURKEY AND TINSEL PARTY

**On the afternoon of Saturday December the 18<sup>th</sup> 2010, Kate and Helen opened their lovely home to MCC by hosting a Christmas get together with the theme of a 'Turkey and Tinsel Party'. Lots of MCC members, some adorned with tinsel and Christmas hats, were able to make the journey to Castleside in Durham to savour the festive fun and fantastic hospitality of our hosts.**



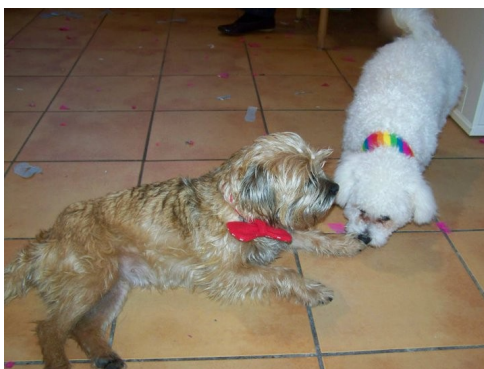
**It was a very cold day and many of us had wondered if we would be able to make the journey because of snow and freezing temperatures we had been subject to over the previous few weeks. However we got a wonderful warm welcome and soon forgot the cold outside.**

**The walls and ceiling were tastefully bedecked with Christmas decorations and there was even a snowman who travelled back and forth along a line hung from the ceiling. He seemed to be enjoying the get together as much as we were!! We even had two dogs that came to visit and they were also filled with the festive spirit.**

**Everyone was given a sticker with either 'Judge', 'Snowflake' or 'Fairy' written on it. The Snow Flakes and Fairies were pitched against each other with various tasks and party games and were given points by the judges to decide who the winners were and who were the runners up. The Fairies did a particularly funny camp version of 'The Twelve Gays of Christmas' and the Snowflakes carried out humorous magic acts.**

**The food prepared by Kate, Helen and Susan was superb and there was lots of conversation amongst all the party goers. It was such a relaxed atmosphere. Everyone had bright smiling faces and enjoyed the Christmas spirit brought about by Kate and Helens hard work. A huge thank you must go to Kate and Helen for all the efforts they put into hosting and making sure that everyone had such a great time. It certainly did set everyone up for a super Christmas !!**

*By James Linn*



## FINANCE REPORT

By Charlotte West, Treasurer.

At the Board Meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2010 it was my privilege to be confirmed as your new Treasurer.

I would like to start by thanking Katie Marsh for the superb work she has done over the last 4.5 years. Secondly I would like to thank all of you who give week in week out, many of you by monthly standing order, to support the work of MCC Newcastle.

Your giving helps support a paid Pastor; Church Administrator, a Congregational Care Co-ordinator and an office in St James as well as insuring our tithes go to UFMCC, sending our Lay delegate to Acapulco for the worldwide conference; and much more.

### Why Give?

One answer to this is that we give to meet the needs of MCC Newcastle



However I am a firm believer that this is not the primary reason why we should give.

Every week at Communion we say **“all things comes from you and of your own do we give you”**. We give to say thank-you, out of gratitude for all we have, all of it coming from God. Hopefully we also give graciously **“for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9: 7)**.

Sometimes I am reminded how much God has **“for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills” (Ps 50 v10)** I have learnt in the past, where money is tight and projects look impossible due to a lack of finance or not knowing where that finance might come from, that God can just sell some of those cows to provide for us and your generosity is a sign of this.

**And if you're wondering just how much the tax lady gave, yes GAVE to us....turn to the next page to find out. I bet you can't guess....**

## 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 DECEMBER
05/12/2010	21
12/12/2010	30
19/12/2010	46
26/12/2010	8
Week 5	N/A
Average Sunday attendance	17
No. of different individuals attending over month	37
<b>Offering in plate</b>	£108.68
<b>Offering through standing order</b>	£1950.00
<b>Total monthly offering</b>	<b>£2058.68</b>
<b>Budget for 2009/2010</b>	£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 **£6200.00** in Gift Aid for 09/10

***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!***

## Year to date

As things stand at the moment we are due to break even this financial year and should only have to dip into our reserves by just under £400 instead of the expected £3000. (For more details see our web site under "The Board", or come and talk to me.)



We should also give thanks for the tax-man (or lady!). Many of you have completed a Gift Aid form and this allows us to claim back the tax on all your gifts to us. We have recently received £6200.00 for the tax year 2009/10.

Our expenditure is considerably down from that budgeted. The main reason for this is within our staffing costs. The posts of Church Administrator and a Congregational Care Co-ordinator did not start until August and September respectively and so we will not pay the full year costs budgeted for them. Also with Cecilia on compassionate leave this has reduced our costs. However if we wish to continue to have three paid positions to support the work of MCC Newcastle we will need to see our income increase by about £8000.00 in the coming year.

As the board begin to look at the budget for the next financial year, which starts April 1st 2011, I would ask for you both to pray for them and consider your giving again.

## Ways to Give

### **Standing Order**

There are forms at the back of church, just complete one and send it to your bank and they will do the rest.

### **Envelopes**

Please speak to me if you want more details about this.

### **Plate**

Feel free to place cash or cheques in the plate any week.

If you have any questions about giving please feel free to talk to me, all these conversations are in complete confidence. There is also a more detailed report on the web site.

So thank you all again for your generosity, especially in what is and has been a difficult time for many financially.

**By Charlotte West, Treasurer**

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](http://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

# 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.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

We have a special service on the 30<sup>th</sup> January to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day.

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH



### ***Holy Conversations Discussion Group***

*Holy Conversations* is about having Bible Study and discussion in a safe space. People of all theological persuasions are welcome to come – there are no right and wrong answers! Come to as many or as few sessions as you like. The first Session is on “*What does it mean to serve God?*” and takes place in the church office – ring the MCC doorbell! See Hannelie for details.

## SOCIALS

### ***Listening Lunch***

Kate, your Congregational Care Co-ordinator, will be available to share lunch with anyone who wants to at the Age Concern Cafe, Mea House. Come along for fellowship and lunch, caring and sharing. Food is provided so you just need to buy a drink! See Kate for details.

***YAM (Young Adults Ministry)*** is for the young and the young at heart! Join us for a film night at Charlotte N’s house (near Durham). Bring your favourite DVD and we will choose one (or two!) to watch. Dinner provided. See Charlotte N for details.

For more information, phone/text the church phone (Cecilia or one of the church leaders)  
07770 543407

or visit [www.mccnewcastle.org.uk](http://www.mccnewcastle.org.uk)

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

# January 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
<b>2 Sunday Worship</b> 6.30pm, Church Hall	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>9 Sunday Worship</b> 6.30pm, Church Hall	10	11	12	13	<b>14 YAM</b> 7pm Film Night Charlotte N's Home	15
<b>16 Sunday Worship</b> 6.30pm, Church Hall	<b>17 Listening Lunch</b> 12-2pm Age Concern Cafe, Mea House, Newcastle	18	19	20	21	<b>22 Burns Night Gathering</b> 6pm Susan's home in <del>Stocksfield</del>
<b>23 Sunday Worship</b> 6.30pm, Church Hall	24	25	<b>26 Holy Conversations</b> 7pm Church Office	27	28	29
<b>30 Sunday Worship</b> <b>Holocaust Memorial Service</b> 6.30pm, Church Hall	31					