



## **Greenbelt 09 - What an Experience!**

I'm sure that everyone's experience of Greenbelt is quite different and it's almost impossible even to sum up just my own. That's because there is so much happening during this four day Christian festival – talks, music, drama, comedy, art, worship, plus the unscheduled things like catching up with old friends and making new ones.

I went to a pretty diverse set of worship sessions: from Taizé and the Quakers, with which I'm quite familiar; to a gospel choir and contemplative dance which I'm not! Theatre and comedy were combined by Applecourt theatre: a couple of expert storytellers who tell bible stories in a pub in London in a wonderfully funny, personal, fresh, simple way which was mesmerizing. There was music too and I heard Sixpence None the Richer, Athlete and a number of great acoustic singers and smaller bands.



**Charlotte enjoying lunch!**

Most of the talks I went to had a social justice/environmental slant and I was inspired and challenged by much of what was said and also heartened to hear of so much of the hard, but important, work that the church is doing (just ask if you want to hear more). Gene Robinson was a highlight too.



**Mikee looking puzzled and Katie looking happy!**

The only bad thing was that I didn't manage to get into either Beer and Hymns session, although you could hear it from all around the site.

I loved being there with the MCC Newcastle crowd and catching up with everyone, relaxing under the Gay-zebo, with the MCC Newcastle flag flying above us.

In short I was inspired, strengthened, challenged, motivated and given plenty of food for thought, had an amazing time and a lot of fun. Thank you everyone, see you again next year!

For those of you who couldn't make it, but wanted to, or are interested to find out more, just ask those of us who were, plus the talks are all available on the Greenbelt website as MP3s – [www.greenbelt.org.uk](http://www.greenbelt.org.uk).

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

**Pastor's Report - Gathering Together**

**CLM is Back! Find out more!**

**Operation Christmas Child - Your chance to be Santa!**

**Life in the Set Up Team**

**Report from Our Elder's visit**

**Tea with Dorothy takes over the world!**

## Pastor's Report – August 2009

August can be a funny month. Many people go away or end up working extra hours, to cover for colleagues who are on holiday. The BBQ summer we were promised never turned up!

August at MCC Newcastle was a time of gathering. Over three weeks, six of us gathered together for Enquirers and then Membership class. We explored the history of MCC as a denomination and discussed what it means to each of us to be part of MCC Newcastle. We watched the DVD of Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson's installation as Moderator and enjoyed watching a historic moment in our history, marvelling at how far we have come and how much there is still to do.

Each person in the class completed a Spiritual Gifts Survey and we talked out how each person is gifted and called into ministry. Some are already involved in different church activities, some are still enjoying getting to know us and finding out where God might be calling them.

It is always a source of great delight to me to facilitate these classes! It is wonderful to hear people's spiritual journeys so far, the questions that they have about MCC Newcastle and the joy that many experience when they find us, sometimes after many years of searching for a place to call their spiritual home.

Helen and Kate became formal Members in Good Standing this Sunday. It was a great celebration, with cake - obviously!! Kate and Helen provided another of the gatherings in August. They opened their home up to the whole church and invited us to spend a long a lazy summer afternoon with them. It was a wonderful time to get together, to enjoy each other's company and to get to know people in the church a little better. Over 30 people came to the picnic, spread through the course of the day.

Thank you both for an amazing day and congratulations on becoming Members!! We now have 40 Members at MCC Newcastle.

On the front page, you will have read about another gathering, which is now part of the MC Newcastle year - Greenbelt! I confess that I have never been to this festival, but it seems to

have a very positive and profound effect on the people who do attend. I am vaguely thinking that I may possibly, with some persuasion, perhaps consider attending next year!

Many of you will have spotted the fantastic new notice board that Hannelie has designed in the church hall, where we worship. If you are keeping an eye on our church website, you will also see that Patrick, our Web Guru is making changes to that too.

Last month, I wrote about the four areas of activity that form part of a healthy, growing church:

- a vibrant, organised, ongoing, inclusive community life
- meaningful, frequent, and varied opportunities to be of service to others
- relevant, vibrant worship experiences
- well planned, varied opportunities for spiritual development, led by prepared facilitators

On the notice board and the website, we are using colours to highlight different aspects of our church life, which cover these four areas:

- **Justice and social action** (red) - symbolised by the scales of justice
- **Community** (orange) - people holding hands
- **Outreach** (yellow) - the flames of Pentecost
- **Stewardship** (green) - plants and pound signs, we need to look after both!
- **Service** (blue) - symbolised by a lovely cup of tea
- **Spiritual Growth** (purple) - the dove of peace

Gathering together, whether it is for worship, to go deeper spiritually or simply to have fun, is an important part of being a faith community. The rainbow colours remind us that we gather together under God's promise.



2 *Penkia*

## Meeting the Elder

Reverend Elder Diane Fisher came to MCC Newcastle, as part of her whistlestop tour of the UK. Diane will be responsible for supporting the MCCs in Europe and Africa for the next 18 months.

On Tuesday night, Mikee hosted a Squash, so that we could meet Diane more informally. Thank you Mikee and to everyone who brought loads of food. On Wednesday night, we were delighted to welcome two members of MCC Manchester, Gwen and Margaret, who had travelled across the Pennines to join us for worship and to meet Diane.

Diane preached about "On this rock, I will build my church". She was a very lively speaker! She challenged us to move out of the pews and get out into the community. She called on MCC Newcastle to be "the rock" on which God can build God's church. She talked about her ministry in eastern Europe, where MCC does a lot of human rights work and how we have changed the laws in countries, such as Romania, by lobbying the government on lgbt rights.



**If you would like to know more about MCC's Global Justice ministry, visit [www.mccchurch.org](http://www.mccchurch.org) and click on the "Programmes and Initiatives" tab**

Diane will be in monthly phone contact with Cecilia to support MCC Newcastle in our ministry. She has also set up cluster teams of local churches, so that we can share prayer requests, information and ideas. The churches in our cluster are:

Journey MCC, Birmingham  
Brightwaves MCC, Brighton  
Salz der Erde MCC, Stuttgart, Germany  
Living Springs MCC, Bath  
River of Life MCC, Dorchester

The Cluster team leader is Reverend Janice Bowker, who is based in Dorset. Our Lay Delegate, Charlotte N, will be the contact person for MCC Newcastle and she will keep us all updated about what is happening.

## Bible Feature

*There is no Bible feature this month, as our editor, Claire, is enjoying a well deserved holiday!! Back next month though!*

## Tea with Dorothy Takes Over the World!!!

Tea with Dorothy, our monthly social for those of us with a more mature outlook, is spreading its wings once again. TWD has been going in Heaton, Newcastle for over two years now, hosted by Eric. Good Hope MCC in Cape Town, South Africa started its own group. Apparently Journey MCC in Birmingham has changed the name of its older LGBT group to Tea with Dorothy as well!



Last year, Roger got in touch with Age Concern in Sunderland to start a group there. This has gone really well. Roger is now moving south, so the connection with MCC is no longer formally there with the Sunderland group, but it great to know that MCC Newcastle has helped a successful project to get off the ground. The group continues to meet twice a month at Age Concern.

Now Age Concern in North Tyneside has contacted MCC Newcastle, asking if they can use the name "Tea with Dorothy" and the MCCN logo to advertise their new group! Way to go Dorothy!!

### TEA WITH DOROTHY

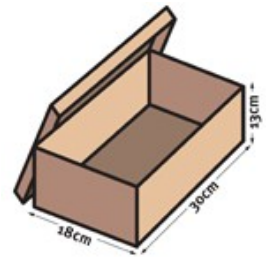
**Are you over 50 and looking for a place to meet other lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered people in a relaxed social environment?**

Come along to:  
**Tea with Dorothy North Tyneside**  
Friday 8th October from 6-8pm  
£1 (including tea/coffee)

**North Tyneside**  
For more information contact  
Community Engagement Coordinator at  
Age Concern North Tyneside  
Ann Lough on (0191) 287 7014



## Operation Christmas Child Is Back! By Abby



Many of you may remember that MCC Newcastle took part in Operation Christmas Child last year, but some people will ask "What is it all about?" Operation Christmas Child is about giving some of the world's poorest and most deprived children a gift and message of hope and love at Christmas time. The children these gifts will go to will often be victims of war, poverty, famine, disease and natural disaster.

**What Kind of Gift?** The gift of hope and love comes in the form of a Shoe Box carefully filled with toys, sweets, hats, gloves, pens, crayons small things that would make a child smile. MCC Newcastle will be collecting in both completed shoe boxes by you, or individual items that you would like to be put into a shoe box for Operation Christmas Child. Everyone has a different pocket and we would love everyone to be involved. This year we are getting started early and will start collecting items from September onwards. Last year, several church members went to the Operation Christmas Child Warehouse in Byker to help out; the countries this warehouse delivered to last year were Belarus, Serbia, Ukraine and Romania - all very cold countries. But why start collecting from September? We noticed last year that the top up items for boxes were running low in the Warehouse such as extra toys, soaps, flannels, toothbrushes and toothpaste, and felt called that our church could provide these essential items if we started collecting earlier. So with your help we plan to collect the following pairs of donations each month:

- September:** Tooth Brush (Wrapped) and Tooth Paste
- October:** Flannel and Soap (Wrapped, no liquid soap please)
- November:** Crayons, Colouring Pens and Colouring Books



We would be grateful if the donations could come in these pairs, so a child can benefit from each item fully. We will also be collecting toys throughout the collecting period too as top ups. There will be boxes at the back of the church to put the items in and examples if you are not sure what to buy. If you would like personally to see your shoe box start its journey, we will be going to the Warehouse to deliver our boxes and help out in the next couple of months, so watch this space! There are leaflets available on a table at the back of church by the serving hatch, telling you all about how to make up a box and what items would be suitable to be put in. In the coming weeks there will be examples of made up shoe boxes. Please get shopping, box wrapping and toy packing as you can bring hope and a smile to some of the world's most vulnerable children.

**NEWS FLASH!!!!**  
**WE NEED LOTS OF SHOE BOXES WITH SEPARATE LIDS**  
**PLEASE GET HUNTING!**



# Service not Servitude!

*Life in the Set Up Team by Margaret B*

The word “menial” is disparaging. It conjures up images of low class Victorian servants, carrying our low class tasks. The work of the Set Up Team should not be thought of in that context. People need seats to sit on and a lectern to preach from. All that has to be done before the congregation arrive. A ministry—yes, menial—no!

A rota has been organised of people who are willing to come in early one Sunday a month to set up the worship area. When you are rota'd, you are there for 5.20pm and there is everything to do. Eric has already put out the “A” board outside and started getting things ready in the kitchen. Firstly the chairs are unstacked and put out. 4 pews have to be manoeuvred into position—2 at the front, 2 at the back. Next the welcome, outreach and community tables all have their places in the hall, with their own particular literature etc. We move the piano and make space for chairs in the prayer area. Parents are bringing babies and older children, so their needs have to be catered for too.

All the IT equipment has to be set up, and checked. One last look to make sure that the stage is clear and everything is in order...then worship begins!

After worship and coffee time, everything is tidied away and the hall put back as per St. James' instructions. Floors and toilets are given a last look over, after which lights are switched off and church locked up.

In other churches that I've been part of, I've helped with setting up tasks. My impressions of being on the MCCN Set Up are mostly good. There is a layout plan to help, so you can see where things are meant to be. We know what we have to do and just get on with it. If one job dovetails into another, it's a bonus! You get to know better those you are helping alongside. People who are not on the rota often come and help as well. New people are showing an interest in helping to set up. That's good!

***Thanks to all our fab set up Crew. If you would be helping to help one Sunday a month, please see Rob.***

## CLM is back!!

Creating a Life that Matters (CLM) is a year long course, made up of 3 six week modules. It is an opportunity to go deeper with a small group of people, to learn more about ourselves, our God and how we can live out our lives in a way that matches our faith and our calling.

Nine people completed the course last year. It was stimulating, challenging and encouraging. Everyone learned something and, for some, it was life changing experience!

The three modules are:

### **The Sacred**

While many would agree that relationship with the Sacred is the fundamental beginning of all faith paths, this transforming experience is often lost when we exchange our spiritual vitality for empty religious practices. In the six sessions of Rediscovering Relationship with the Sacred, we explore what it means to be transformed by an encounter with the Sacred, and rediscover loving God with heart, soul and mind.

### **My Self**

We expend time, effort and money seeking to understand who we are. In Rediscovering Relationship with My Self, we explore some of the influences that have shaped us, and investigate ways to create a self we will want to live with, others will want to relate to, and God will be able to use in the service of all that is Sacred.

### **My Passion**

Our passions make us most aware of our personal power, energy and joy. Many internal and external factors influence how successfully we manifest these passions in our lives. In the six sessions of Rediscovering Relationship with My Passion, we explore ways to manage those factors, and discover what gives us power, energy and joy as we serve the Sacred through church. continues.....

## ...CLM is Back! Continued

MCC Newcastle will be running **Creating a Life that Matters** on **Thursday** evenings, starting 19<sup>th</sup> November 2009 with a meal and introductory session. You need to **register before** this evening and pay something towards your fees.

The course is delivered as three modules, each of six sessions, with a week's break between sessions 3 and 4. There is an additional introductory session at the start of the course. **Each session will run from 7pm – 9pm.** You need to register for the whole course, it is not possible to just do one module.

Course dates are:

**Rediscovering the Sacred:** 19th November (pre-session for whole course), 26th November, 3rd December, 10th December, 7th January, 14th January, 21st January

**Rediscovering your Self:** 11th February, 18th February, 25th February, 11th March, 18th March 25th March

**Rediscovering your Passion:** 13th May, 20th May, 27th May, 10th June, 17th June, 24th June

The course fees are set at three different levels. You choose the level at which you can afford to pay.

Prices for the complete course are: **£80** (High waged), **£60** (Waged), **£30** (unwaged).

It is possible to pay in instalments if you need to, but it is better if you can pay in one go, if you are able to. See Katie Marsh for more information on paying by instalments.

Booking forms are available at church, on the MCC Newcastle table, next to the kitchen hatch!!

### **Our Mission**

The Metropolitan Community Church in Newcastle upon Tyne is a Christ-centred and inclusive community, with a commitment to spiritual and personal growth through worship, prayer and action. We seek to provide a welcoming and accepting atmosphere, and aim to proclaim Christ's message of liberation for all. We work towards a transformation in the understanding of Christianity and its relevance to contemporary society.

**Registered charity number 1093009**

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 deemed appropriate.

# Events and Activities

## **New This Month! Number 1.**



### **\*Operation Christmas Child**

Last year, we collected loads of shoe boxes filled with goodies for children overseas. We are doing the same this year AND also collecting extra items that are needed to supplement the boxes that come into the warehouse. In September, we are collecting toothbrushes and toothpaste. Pop an extra one in your basket or look out for “buy one, get one free offers”! For more info, contact Abby [social@mccnewcastle.org.uk](mailto:social@mccnewcastle.org.uk)

## **New This Month! Number 2. God and Food**

Join Helen at her home in Morpeth for good food and chat. Food is a big part of our faith story, from manna in the desert to the meal that we share through communion each week. Enjoy a home cooked vegetarian dinner and share the traditions of food and faith. Directions are available from [social@mccnewcastle.org.uk](mailto:social@mccnewcastle.org.uk) or ring 07770 543407

## **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. This month’s Squash is on a Tuesday, so we can meet Rev. Elder Diane Fisher. Come along!

**18 – 30 Social Group** – this group needs a better name! If you are between 18 and 30, then contact Charlotte N at [laydelegate@mccnewcastle.org.uk](mailto:laydelegate@mccnewcastle.org.uk) or via our Facebook group, to see what you want to do as a social this month!!

**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. This project is now running independently of MCC Newcastle.

**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](mailto:social@mccnewcastle.org.uk) for more information.

## **Study and Discussion Groups**

**Good Book Club returns! GBC** is for those of us who would like to refresh our knowledge of the Bible.

We learn together in a relaxed atmosphere. This month we are looking at the many different relationships that are in the bible, beyond the “husband, wife and children” model. GBC is in the church office, through the car park on the right side of the main St James church building. See Cecilia for more information.

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 September 2009



(What's this?...see over\*)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	1 <b>Squash with the Elder</b> Mikee and Jonny's, Heaton, from 7.30pm <i>Bring food to share</i>	2 <b>Worship service</b> Main church 7pm. Preacher – Rev. Elder Diane Fisher	3	4	5 <b>Tea with Dorothy Heaton</b> 2 – 4pm A social for the more mature among us	6 <b>Sunday Worship</b> 6.30pm, church hall  Membership service – dress up and celebrate!
7	8	9 <b>Taizé Service</b> 7pm, main church	10 <b>Good Book Club</b> – Queer families in scripture 7.30pm Church office	11	12	13 <b>Sunday Worship</b> 6.30pm, church hall
14  C on leave	15 <b>God and Food</b> Enjoy homemade veggie food and chat with Helen 7pm, Morpeth  C on leave	16  C on leave	17  C on leave	18  C on leave	19 <b>Supergay weekend</b> – Middlesbrough. Join Claire to be out and proud in Teesside  C on leave	20 <b>Sunday Worship</b> 6.30pm, church hall  C on leave
21  C on leave	22  C on leave	23  C on leave	24  C on leave	25 <b>18 – 30 Social</b> Contact Charlotte N to decide what we are doing!  C on leave	26 <b>Dog Walk</b> Derwent Walk, Swallowell 10.30am With Abby  C on leave	27 <b>Sunday Worship</b> 6.30pm, church hall Deadline for articles for newsletter C on leave
28	29	30				