

# Around The Fellowship

U n f i n i s h e d   W o r l d . U n f i n i s h e d   C a l l i n g

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Judy Dale, Editor

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## IN THIS ISSUE:

- Free MCC Newsletter Subscriptions!
- Spotlight On MCC People and Churches
- Creative Ministry Ideas You Can Use!
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### WOULD JESUS DISCRIMINATE?

Now you can view the  
webcast of the historic  
Town Hall Meeting that was  
part of the "Would Jesus  
Discriminate?" campaign in  
Indianapolis, Indiana  
earlier this month.

To view the webcast --  
which features Rev. Elder  
Nancy Wilson, Rev. Jeff  
Miner, Dr. Cindi Love and  
Mitchell Gold -- visit  
[www.MCCchurch.org](http://www.MCCchurch.org) .

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### TEARING DOWN WALLS. BUILDING UP HOPE.

You can view photos and  
read daily on-line reports  
directly from the scene  
of MCC's Eastern Europe  
Initiative.

Visit Rev. Elder Diane  
Fisher's blog and photo  
album of MCC's  
breakthrough ministry

## FREE NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTIONS

Pass the word to your friends and acquaintances:

*Subscriptions to MCC's e-mail newsletters are free upon request.*

To stay up-to-date with MCC news around the world, simply send  
your subscription request to [info@MCCchurch.net](mailto:info@MCCchurch.net).

*Encourage your friends to sign-up today!*

## SPOTLIGHT ON MCC PEOPLE & CHURCHES

BBC Scotland filmed at **MCC Edinburgh** (Scotland) to reflect on a church that accepts and blesses gay couples. The program aired on May 24 as the Church of Scotland prepared to debate in their General Assembly whether ministers will be allowed to bless Civil Partnerships for LGBT couples or enter into Partnerships themselves. Scotland has 5 million residents, so this was major national coverage for MCC. Also, at the time of the debate, **Rev. Kerri Mesner** called for a Day of Prayer for all members of the Church of Scotland.  
[mail@mccedinburgh.com](mailto:mail@mccedinburgh.com)

**MCC Washington DC** was honored with the 2006 Distinguished Service Award at the 35th anniversary celebration of DC's Gay and Lesbian Activist Alliance.

**Rev. Dr. Penny Nixon**, Senior Pastor of **MCC San Francisco** (California), appeared on "Top Chef" on the Bravo network as she performed a same-sex wedding. The chefs on this reality TV show learned the day of the wedding that the couple, for whom they were catering the reception, were gay men.

in Eastern Europe at  
[www.MCCchurch.org](http://www.MCCchurch.org)

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### ATTEND AN MCC CONFERENCE!

Four MCC Regional  
Conferences will take  
place over the next five  
months -- in Scottsdale,  
Arizona; Hanover,  
Germany; Fort  
Lauderdale, Florida; and  
Pittsburgh,  
Pennsylvania.

Learn more about MCC  
Conferences, or register  
to attend, by visiting  
[www.MCCchurch.org](http://www.MCCchurch.org).

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### MCC ADDRESSES NEEDS IN JAMAICA

Time Magazine recently  
called Jamaica "the most  
homophobic country in  
the world." Many LGBT  
people have been  
murdered there -- the  
hate crimes often are not  
reported in the press and  
not prosecuted by civil  
authorities.

Rev. Robert Griffin  
recently conducted an  
MCC ministry trip to  
gather information,  
provide support, and  
facilitate a new MCC  
congregation in Jamaica.

Are you listening? A new Internet radio show, "*The Community Activist with Rev. Jim Merritt*," can be heard on-line at <http://media.clickclickexpose.com/TheCommunityActivistShow1.mp3>. The show focuses on his experience as a community activist along with his insights and those of his guests and is produced separately from his ministry as Co- Interim Pastor of **Joy MCC** (Orlando, Florida).

**Anna Booth** has been named to the Independent Advisory Group on LGBT Issues for the **Greater Manchester** (England) Police.

At the recent **MCC People of African Descent and Their Allies Conference**, several awards were presented. The Oshe (a Yoruba word meaning "thank you") Award went to the host church **MCC Tampa** (Florida). **Barry Hundley** of **First MCC** (Atlanta, Georgia) and the **Church Revitalization Team** received the Trailblazer Award. The Rosa M. Parks Award was presented to **Rev. Delores Berry**. **ET Thomas** of **MCC Los Angeles** (West Hollywood, California) was the recipient of the Faithful Steward Award. The Leading with Distinction Award was presented to **Rev. Elder Darlene Garner**. MCC PAD Ally Certificates were given to the Episcopal Divinity School, Pacific School of Religion, Union Theological Seminary, Freedom to Marry, the Gill Foundation, and the Human Rights Campaign. Certificates of Appreciation were presented to all people of African descent who serve as clergy in MCC.

Way to go! Earlier this year in response to a budget crunch, people from across northeast Wisconsin met at **Angels of Hope MCC's** Green Bay facility to brainstorm creative solutions. A Mortgage Retirement Campaign was instituted. In less than four months the outstanding balance of \$16,970 (USD) was paid off 11 years early on a 20 year loan! The extra money each month can now be used for ministry at their Green Bay and Appleton locations.

**Rev. Dr. Mona West** delivered a paper on Queer Spirituality recently at the University of Tennessee.

Broadway on Broadway was a fundraising event last month at **MCC Portland** (Oregon) featuring **Mark Brown, Gail Burma, Dan Fletcher, Kirk Herring and Kate Shimazaki**, with a guest appearances by **Rev. Dr. Glenna Shepherd**, the MCCP Choir, and their Elevation Band. Proceeds will be used to send Mark Brown to **UpBeat Training**, and Elevation Band to the MCC Regional Conference in July.

The Augusta (Georgia) Transgender Support Group meets at **MCC of Our Redeemer** each month.

EuroPride is being hosted by London, England, this year and the three MCCs there -- **MCC of East London, MCC of North London, and MCC of South London** -- are working together to make sure that MCC is out and proud at this international festival! **Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson** will preach at the EuroPride Service "Pride and Prejudice" at St. James Church, Piccadilly.

## LOCAL CHURCH MCC LOGO DESIGN SERVICE

Did You Know that MCC Headquarters provides a local church logo design service?

More than 120 local congregations have already used this service.

For a \$100 (USD) fee, a professional graphic designer will create your church's logo in accordance with all the guidelines and specs of the denominational logo.

Your church will receive a CD with your new logo in two-color, one-color, black-and-white, and knock-out versions in JPG, GIF, and EPS formats.

For more information, write to Jim Birkitt, MCC Communications Director, at [info@MCCchurch.net](mailto:info@MCCchurch.net).

## MCC LAUNCHES CHURCH PLANTING WEBSITE, NEW RESOURCES

The MCC Church Planting Team has launched a new Church Planting website.

You'll discover helpful

New release! **Jason & deMarco's** new CD, "*Till the End of Time*," will be released on June 27th and will be available for the first time in retail outlets in the US at Virgin Megastores and Tower Records. [www.jasonanddemarco.com](http://www.jasonanddemarco.com)

**MCC in the Valley** (North Hollywood, California) is producing *Corpus Christi*. The play will run on Friday and Saturday nights through July 1. Reservation information is available at [www.mccinthevalley.com](http://www.mccinthevalley.com).

The coming out story of **Rev. Mark Bidwell** was featured in a recent column by Deb Price, a syndicated columnist in the US. The article referenced his work as Senior Pastor of **MCC Detroit** (Michigan).

Seven MCCs are among the 963 churches listed in *A New Spiritual Home: Progressive Christianity at the Grass Roots* by Hal Taussig. Included are **MCC Rehoboth** (Delaware), **Sunshine Cathedral MCC** (Fort Lauderdale, Florida), **MCC of Greater New Orleans** (Louisiana), **New Light MCC** (Hagerstown, Maryland), **MCC of the Chesapeake** (Annapolis, Maryland), **Christ the Liberator MCC** (North Brunswick, New Jersey), and **MCC New York** (New York). The churches featured in the book represent a range of denominations, including United Church of Christ, Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Independent Catholic, Non-denominational, Mennonite, and others.

On Easter Sunday, **MCC of Greater St. Louis** (Missouri) had over 500 people in combined attendance at their two morning worship services.

**Thierry Sereno** and **Jean Vilbas** of **MCC Montpellier** (France) have compiled the life stories of over twenty French LGBT people, their families, and friends into a book. This is one of the first resources to address the lives of LGBT Christians in France. To order a copy, contact Thierry at [eglise.mcc@free.fr](mailto:eglise.mcc@free.fr).

Congratulations to **Jakob Hero**, who recently returned from doing trans activism and teaching in Serbia. He has been awarded a prestigious Presidential Scholarship at Pacific School of Religion. This full tuition merit scholarship is awarded to a small number of incoming students who show great intellectual prowess and promise for ministry. He is formerly a member of **MCC Tampa** (Florida) and now is part of **MCC San Francisco** (California).

**Shawn Thomas** is the new Music Minister and Church Administrator for **MCC of the Palm Beaches** (West Palm Beach, Florida).

## CREATIVE MCC MINISTRY IDEAS

The folks at **MCC Manchester** (England) gathered on a recent Saturday for a "Come and Sing Day." They enjoyed a potluck lunch

lessons, guidelines, and resources -- along with stories of recent MCC church plants.

Learn more about MCC Church Planting from the link on the front page of [www.MCCchurch.org](http://www.MCCchurch.org).

REV. TROY PERRY  
BOOK NOW  
AVAILABLE ON  
AMAZON.COM

The beautiful coffetable book, "Rev. Troy Perry: Pastor and Prophet," is now available for purchase on [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).

This book makes a wonderful gift or keepsake -- and you'll find the lowest price on [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).

Visit [Amazon](http://Amazon) today -- and order now for birthdays, special occasions, and early Christmas shopping.

and learned new songs to use in worship.

Under the direction of **Christine Andrew**, The Kids Club members led a worship service last month at **Angels of Hope MCC** (Green Bay and Appleton, Wisconsin). During the service Bibles were presented to all of the youth and several took their First Communion.

As part of renovating the lower level of their facility, **MCC Portland** (Oregon) was required by the city to plant trees between the sidewalk and the street. So, they had a *Picnic and Tree Planting Afternoon* as their Arbor Day activity! They are also planning a *Picnic and Swim Party* for July 22 at the Mt. Scott Park.

**Jesus MCC** (Indianapolis, Indiana), a congregation with a vibrant children's ministry, held their annual Vacation Bible School during June 19-23.

More than 200 people attended the 5th Annual Rainbow Ball hosted by **MCC of the Palm Beaches** (West Palm Beach, Florida). The event held at the Kravis Center for Performing Arts downtown raised more than \$27,000 (USD) for the church.

Saving lives! **Open Arms MCC** (Rochester, New York) has eight nurses in their congregation who are volunteering to check people's blood pressure each month either before or after church. High blood pressure, the "silent killer", is treatable when it is known.

Christian community teamwork! Folks at **Agape MCC** (Ft. Worth, Texas) gathered to help one of their own whose father had died and left a house and yard that needed a lot of work before the estate sale and sale of the house could happen. Together they quickly made a real difference!

Focusing on our community! **Rev. Roland Stringfellow**, Interim Pastor of **MCC Sacramento** (California), is featuring one segment of our community each Sunday in worship over a four month period. The Transcendence Gospel Choir performed on the Sunday they focused on transfolks. Other groups lifted up include drag kings and queens, parents, those living with HIV/AIDS and those who have gone on before us, people of color, bears and body image, bisexuals, those in recovery, straight allies, youth, gays and lesbians, and the struggle for marriage equality.

Congregants at **First MCC** (Atlanta, Georgia) were challenged to give up something and set aside \$2 (USD) each day during Lent. They knew that if 100 people would participate, the church would receive \$9,400 (USD). On Easter Sunday they received a Miracle Offering of over \$12,000 (USD).

A Blessing of the Animals will be followed by fun, food, contests, and entertainment for Pet Pride Day at the West Hollywood (California) Park on June 24 and hosted by **MCC Los Angeles**. There will be vendors offering the latest in pet boutique products, pet food, and pet

photos.

There is a new Clown Team at **MCC Winston-Salem** (North Carolina). Recently they led the congregation in a powerful "Clown Communion."

The youngest congregant at **New Covenant MCC** (Columbia, Maryland) was recently baptized amid church members and special guests, who held a celebration following the sacrament.

**Jesus MCC** (Indianapolis, Indiana) hosts a Newcomer's Welcome Reception, a casual evening event featuring hors d'oeuvres and dessert. It offers recent visitors a time to get acquainted, be oriented to the church, and have questions answered.

Great advertising! **MCC Manchester** (England) has a tradition of leafleting the Gay Village with their posters and post cards.

**Angels of Hope MCC** (Green Bay and Appleton, Wisconsin) has added a Contemporary Service on the third Saturday of the month at their Green Bay location. After the service they have a dinner and social activity planned, such as a Grill Out, bowling, hayride, and pizza/game night.



## TRANSITIONS

**Rev. Dr. G. Penny Nixon** has announced her resignation as senior pastor of MCC San Francisco in order to pursue new ministry opportunities.

**Rev. Glenna Shepherd** is the candidate for MCC Regional; Elder for Region 4. She is nominated to succeed **Rev. Elder Cecilia Eggleston**.

**The Rev. Elders Jeri Ann Harvey and Gill Storey** recently sailed to England where they planned to visit Rev. Storey's mother and then take up residence in Spain.

**Rev. Paul Fairley** has resigned from the MCC Headquarters staff to accept a ministry position with Bloor Street United Church in Toronto, Canada. He will maintain his MCC clergy credentials. We send our prayers as he begins his new ministry.

**St. John's MCC** (Raleigh, North Carolina) needs a larger church home, so they voted recently to accept a \$1.8 million (US) offer to purchase their current property.

**Naomi and Chris Stevens-Castor** are the blessed parents of **Joanie Jean Stevens-Castor**, who was born on April 24. **Marsha and Cindy Pino-Stevens** are the proud grandmothers! **Rev. Elder Troy Perry** conducted the Christening at **Christ Chapel MCC** (Santa Ana, California) [SSBalm@aol.com](mailto:SSBalm@aol.com)

**MCC Wichita Falls** (Texas) has moved into their new building with just over 5,000 square feet and a sanctuary which seats 175 people and has a baptistery. There are offices, a large meeting room, a kitchen, and a

fellowship hall that seats 100. The back lot will be converted to parking for 20-30 cars and the enclosed side yard will become a children's playground. The church is very visibly located in the heart of downtown and is just around the corner from one of the city's two gay bars.

**MCC Köln** (Germany) has moved into a new worship venue which will significantly increase their visibility and outreach. It's a shop on a busy street!

A future church plant in Chico, California, is underway. **Rev. Bruce Barton**, who will be the Pastor, has been meeting with a group there sharing about the MCC movement globally. They are completing a feasibility study and having small group sessions. Their goal is to have their first worship service during Gay Pride in October.

**Hope Unites MCC** (Winter Park, Florida) recently installed **Rev. Linn Possell** as their new Pastor. [revpossell@cfl.rr.com](mailto:revpossell@cfl.rr.com)

The first weekend in June **New Spirit Community Church** (MCC, UCC, DOC) (Berkeley, California) hosted a Farewell Party for their founding Pastor, **Rev. Karen Foster**. The event was underwritten by "angels" so that all of the proceeds could establish a Legacy Fund for the church.

**Divine Peace MCC** has moved to a location in downtown Pontiac, Michigan, for six months while they search for property to purchase. Although it doesn't look like a church, the facility has offices and the space they need. Because of the many street festivals in the coming months, they are in the perfect location to participate and do fundraising.

**Harbor MCC** (Galveston, Texas) had 25 people for an awesome Easter Sunday worship and collected \$217 (USD) for the Eastern Europe Initiative. **Rev. Pat Farnan** is pastor of this brand new church plant.

"From Thanksgiving to Hope: We are the Body of Christ" is the theme of the congregational discernment program into which Holy Covenant MCC (Brookfield, Illinois) has entered as part of their process of readying themselves to call a new Pastor. A logo for the program was designed by **Paul Renfus**.

Congratulations to **Tessa Fortherby**, the Region 4 Administrative Assistant. She married her fiance Reg on June 3!  
[Region4@MCCchurch.net](mailto:Region4@MCCchurch.net)

**Rev. Bernie Barbour** was installed as the Pastor of **MCC New Haven** (Connecticut) on June 10. A reception followed the ceremony.  
[mccofnewhaven@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mccofnewhaven@sbcglobal.net)

Welcome to **Ritchie Crownfield**, who has joined the MCC Regional Staff as administrative assistant for Region 2. Ritchie is based in Atlanta, Georgia and can be reached at  
[RitchieCrownfield@MCCchurch.net](mailto:RitchieCrownfield@MCCchurch.net).



## SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER

Interim Pastoral Leader **Bonnie Walbran** of **Sweet Spirit MCC** (Salem, Oregon) has been diagnosed with breast cancer.  
[SalemSweetSpirit@aol.com](mailto:SalemSweetSpirit@aol.com)

**Rev. Candace Schultis**, Senior Pastor of MCC Washington DC suffered a detached retina. The doctors were able to reattach it and time will tell how much sight she recovers. [PastorCandace@mccdc.com](mailto:PastorCandace@mccdc.com)

Here's an interesting -- *and true!* -- story: **Rev. Beth Goudy** was in a car accident during Holy Week. Moments after the accident a carload of folks from **MCC of the Lehigh Valley** (Allentown, Pennsylvania) appeared. The Pastor looked up and saw Satan. Actually, it was **Vickie Schantz**, who played the role of Satan in MCCLV's "He's Alive" drama. Thankfully, Jesus (**Nancy Whitaker**) was also at the scene, still in her beard! (Everyone in the accident was OK.)  
[rev.goudy@mcclv.org](mailto:rev.goudy@mcclv.org)

**Rev. Joan Thompson**, a volunteer clergy at **St. John the Apostle MCC** (Fort Myers, Florida) died suddenly of a heart attack on May 15. Her partner, Chicky, is under hospice care. Remember Rev. Thompson's family, and especially Chicky, in your prayers. Notes may be sent in care of the Pastor, Rev. Steve Filizzi, [Pastor@sjamcc.com](mailto:Pastor@sjamcc.com).

**Danie Botha**, formerly an MCC clergyperson in South Africa, passed away in late May. He lived in a city without an MCC, but loved our denomination dearly. He was ordained at a service in Zimbabwe by **Rev. Judy Dahl, Rev. Nancy Wilson, and Rev. Hong Tan** when MCC leaders were there for the World Council of Churches Assembly several years ago.



## SHARE YOUR CHURCH'S NEWS!

In order to share your news, we need to hear from you! So be sure and let us know what exciting things are happening with your church and people - lay and clergy! Email [JudyDale@MCCchurch.net](mailto:JudyDale@MCCchurch.net) with your news! Or add Judy to your church's e-list to receive e-newsletters or your church's monthly newsletter as an email attachment.

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**Metropolitan Community Churches**

P.O. Box 691728  
West Hollywood, CA 90069  
Phone: 310-861-4651  
Web: [www.MCCchurch.org](http://www.MCCchurch.org)

E-Mail: [info@MCCchurch.net](mailto:info@MCCchurch.net)