

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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Department

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WELCOME!

Welcome to Part II of July's "Around The Fellowship" newsletter from Metropolitan Community Churches.

To include your information in upcoming issues, send news to Judy Dale, Editor.

JUSTICE AND SOCIAL ACTION

The Church Bowl appeal by **NewCoast MCC** (New South Wales, Australia) raised AD\$530 for CASSY 4 Youth (Coastal Accommodation Services Supporting Youth), to assist young people with accommodations, employment, and health and education services.

A group from **MCC San Francisco** (California) is participating in a 12 day mission trip to Guatemala in conjunction with the Rainbow World Fund. They will also deliver medical and educational supplies.

Trinity MCC (Gainesville, Florida) provides dinner for the residents at the Ronald McDonald House each month.

On July 2, MCCers observed the International Day of Prayer for LGBT People in Nigeria. The primary service was led by **Rev. Rowland Jide Macaulay** at **MCC North London** (England). Testimonies by LGBT Nigerians (see www.LGBTNigerians.org) spoke of having to live in fear and hiding in the face of government hostility. One LGBT youth described being badly beaten by his father after another family member read a phone text message. Another spoke of a 21-year-old friend who "disappeared" and is believed to have been murdered, saying, "We talked of finding our Prince Charmings -- now he is asleep in Jesus."

Congregants at **Resurrection MCC** (Houston, Texas) are adopting 140 children at Robert Stevenson Elementary School and will provide all their required school supplies. Principal Frances Houser-Rogers will attend a worship service to receive the gifts.

Members of **Living Springs MCC** (Bath, England) donated over 57 pounds for the Kenyan Orphans Project, which sends doctors, nurses, and medical equipment to Kenya.

**LEARN MORE
ABOUT UPCOMING
MCC CONFERENCES
AT www.MCCconferences.org**

TROY PERRY BOOK

**NOW ON
AMAZON.COM**

The beautiful coffee table book, "Troy Perry: Pastor and Prophet," is now available for purchase on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

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

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

**HONOR OR
MEMORIALIZE
YOUR LOVED
ONES THROUGH
MCC**

Your financial donation to Metropolitan Community Churches is a wonderful way to honor or memorialize your loved ones.

Your gifts touch the lives of people around the world with a message of hope and faith -- and are a beautiful tribute to those who have made a difference in our lives.

Agape MCC (Ft. Worth, Texas) members volunteer with the Tarrant County Food Bank to prepare back to school packs for over 10,000 children in Kindergarten - Grade 5.

Each month the folks at **New Life MCC of Hampton Roads** (Virginia) pack cookies, candy, and games to send to troops in Iraq.

Rev. Pat Bumgardner delivered the sermon at the Interfaith Worship Service at World Pride in Jerusalem -- then traveled to Iceland for their first Pride ever, and to Malaysia to meet with underground LGBT secular and religious groups.

Congregants at **MCC of Our Redeemer** (Augusta, Georgia) collected food for Molly's Militia, which fosters dogs and cats until they find a home.

Exodus MCC (Abilene, Texas) participates in Samaritan's Purse, sending shoe box gifts to children around the world. Each month members bring specific items like small toys, soap, brushes, combs, and socks. Their goal this year is to fill 100 boxes.

Church of Our Savior MCC (Boynton Beach, Florida) was recently selected by the Community Caring Center to focus on feeding the poor. They surpassed their goal of collecting 700 items -- congregants brought in more than three cans of food per person each week!

Rev. Janice Bowker, Pastor of **MCC Portsmouth** (England), participated in the launch of the Dorset Police's New Approach to Diversity Day, meeting with the Chief and Deputy Chief Constables, the Venerable Archdeacon of Bournemouth, and civic agencies to discuss "the quality of being different or varied." She also sits on the Dorset Hate Crime Independent Advisory Group (IAG) and is a Trustee of The Pier Project, which helps place repeat offenders into drug rehab programs and reintegrates them into the community. She helped produce a Third Party Reporting Leaflet for Homophobic Hate Crimes, which is being distributed throughout the southwest of the United Kingdom.

Resurrection MCC (Houston, Texas) hosted a Bingo Night to benefit their Food Pantry. Members also attended a Houston Comets' game with US\$10 of each pre-paid ticket going to Resurrection's Food Pantry. Since it was also Breast Cancer Awareness Day at the game, they were able to support all three groups and causes -- the Food Pantry, the Comets, and Breast Cancer awareness!

NewCoast MCC (New South Wales, Australia) held the inaugural meeting of PFLAG Morisset Chapter NSW with 17 people attending. Some Mums and Dads traveled over 100 miles to attend, revealing the great need for this outreach. Meetings will now continue monthly.

MCC PRIDE REPORTS

During Wisconsin's Pride events, **Rev. Chris Fox**, Interim Pastor of **MCC**

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**SHARE YOUR
CHURCH'S NEWS**

To share your
church's news with
the MCC Fellowship,
send info by e-mail
to [Judy Dale](mailto:JudyDale), Editor.

Deadline is the 15th
of each month.

Milwaukee, presided at a mass wedding ceremony. Eighteen couples were united and hundreds observed.

The final event of the Brisbane Pride Festival was the Stonewall Commemorative Service at **MCC Brisbane** (Australia). **Rev. Iris Sagers**, Assistant Pastor, explained the significance of Stonewall and the astonishing global developments since. Dr. Wendell Rosevear, the founder of Gay and Lesbian Alcohol and Drugs Support Group and Men Affected by Rape and Sexual-Abuse brought the message. The Brisbane Lesbian And Gay Pride Choir sang for the service, which had the largest attendance ever for **MCC Brisbane**.

Trinity MCC (Arlington, Texas) and **Agape MCC** (Fort Worth, Texas) joined efforts at the Tarrant County Pride Picnic to provide information about their churches. They passed out free snow cones and managed the children's play area. Interim Pastoral Leader **Curtis Smith** and **Rev. Ken Ehrke** shared in delivering the invocation before 1500 people

MCC of the Palm Beaches (Palm Beach Gardens, Florida) hosted the Palm Beach Interfaith Service "Faith Unashamed: A Celebration of Gay Pride and Spirituality." **Church of Our Savior MCC** (Boynton Beach) also participated in the service, which was attended by others from **Sunshine Cathedral MCC** (Ft. Lauderdale).

Revs. Dan Bennett and **Jim Lynch** of **Reconciliation MCC** officiated at a community-wide Commitment Ceremony in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Folks from **MCC North London** (England), **MCC South London**, **MCC East London**, and **MCC Bournemouth** walked together in the EuroPride Parade, sharing stickers "God Made Me Gay" and "No Fear in Love" and information about MCC with the crowds. The placards from **MCC East London** made people smile: "Queer and Christian: Any Questions?," "Practising Safer Texts," and "God ISN'T homophobic." **Rev. Elder Cecilia Eggleston** marched with the contingent.

Open Arms MCC (Rochester, New York) received the Stonewall Award for displaying the most originality in expressing Pride in the city's Pride Parade.

Rev. Paul Graetz, Senior Pastor of **First MCC** (Atlanta, Georgia) and **Rev. Renee Dubose**, Pastor of **Our Hope MCC** (Athens, Georgia), officiated at the annual Pride Commitment Ceremony where over 100 couples shared vows and exchanged rings at the Sheraton Colony Square Ballroom. A reception followed with cake and refreshments. The event was heavily covered by the media.

HIV AND AIDS NEWS

When the price of peanut butter doubled at the local food bank, **New Hope MCC** (Montgomery, Alabama) stepped in and now supplies all of the peanut butter needed by the Montgomery AIDS Organization.

Again this year congregants at **Agape MCC** (Ft. Worth, Texas) have provided clothes, shoes, back packs, and school supplies for 20 children whose mothers are a part of the Tarrant County AIDS Interfaith Network's support group for

Spanish speaking women with HIV.

The Royal Sovereign Imperial Court of Central Texas Empire presented the President's Award to the Red Door Pantry, which is sponsored by **Central Texas MCC from the Heart** (Waco, Texas) for people who are HIV+.

Sunshine Cathedral MCC (Ft. Lauderdale, Florida) sponsors a back-to-school outreach for Nu-Vision Youth Services, serving children who are infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. Participants select a child and purchase clothes, shoes, school supplies, backpacks, and gift certificates. They engage in a similar program for children at the Jack and Jill Children's Center, who live significantly below the poverty level.



VISIT REV. TROY PERRY'S NEW WEBSITE!

Have you visited www.RevTroyPerry.org?

That's the new website of MCC's Founder, **Rev. Troy Perry!** You'll learn how he's continuing his life's work of bringing the Good News of God's love to all people and fighting for social justice. There are pictures of both the past and present, referencing his books which tell the stories of the photographs. The site also contains a schedule of Rev. Perry's upcoming appearances.

You may also submit digital photos of Rev. Perry's participation in MCC and other events. Please include photo credit and information about the event.

Two e-mail lists are supported by the site. **Troy Perry News** is a regular e-newsletter containing basic news, schedule updates, and reflections from Rev. Perry. **Troy Perry Alerts** share breaking news on an occasional basis. You can sign up for one or both on the site's homepage.

For history buffs, or those who never heard Rev. Perry preach in the early days, there's a collection of audio (MP3 format) files from "One God," the classic 1973 recording of Rev. Perry's sermon. The audio files provide an accounting of adventures during MCC's initial years. More sermons will be posted later. Mark S. Hahn is the creator and Web Manager.



ECUMENICAL AND INTERAITH NEWS

MCC Brisbane (Australia) hosted a Pentecost Service with other LGBT faith groups participating. Everyone was encouraged to wear red/yellow/orange clothing and bring noisemakers for the celebration of the Holy Spirit!

MCCer **Rev. David Gillentine** is the Secretary-Treasurer of the Clark County Ministerial Association in Las Vegas, Nevada. The new Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, The Rt. Rev. Katharine Jefferts-Schori, also participates in the organization.

MCC of the Redwood Empire (Guerneville, California) has co-founded the

Russian River Interfaith Homeless Coalition, which strengthens and builds alliances to advocate for those most in need.

Rev. Dr. Sandy Bochonok, Director of www.SoulFoodMinistry.org and a Pastoral Assistant with **MCC Washington, DC**, has been named President-Elect of the Bremerton (Washington, DC area) Ministerial Association.

Thirty clergy and rabbis have formed the Faith Coalition for Pennsylvania Families, including **Rev. Jeffrey Jordan** from **MCC Philadelphia**, who spoke at the first press conference, and **Rev. Karla Fleshman**, Pastor of **Imago Dei MCC** (Glen Mills).

MCC Louisville (Kentucky) is a member of the Highland Community Ministries, an association of 26 neighborhood churches. Each church is assigned a specific item for the Return to School Project. This year MCCL donated over 1000 spiral notebooks.

LEARN MORE ABOUT... DENOMINATIONAL GIVING

We all know about giving to our local churches, but did you know that there are opportunities to give to our international MCC movement, too?

Donations are accepted to **honor individuals** who have made a difference in our lives, or to honor special occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries and graduations, and can also be made **in memory of those who have passed on**. Notes are sent to the person honored or, if appropriate, to the family who has lost a loved one.

There is always the opportunity to **give to a particular cause** that touches your heart. Our special Easter offering was for MCC's work in Eastern Europe. Some folks give for ministry in Brazil or in some other part of the world. Many of our churches give an extra percent for Church Planting. Donors might ask that their gifts be designated for HIV/AIDS ministries. Others support Global Justice endeavors. The list is endless.

Last year the MCC Board of Administration established the **Disaster Relief Fund**, available to those impacted by a natural disaster (tornado, tsunami, fire, hurricane, etc.) It allows MCC to provide quick support to members, families, and churches affected. It can also be used for extraordinary compassionate relief for MCC Pastoral Leaders at risk of imminent death or permanent disability because of a treatable medical condition. A one-time emergency travel allowance can be given to an LGBT person outside North America who is targeted for death because of HIV status, sexual orientation, or gender identity issues.

The **Faithful 5000 Endowment Fund** was launched last April at the People of African Descent Conference. This endowment will ensure that there are funds for church planting, church revitalization, crisis intervention, and strategic growth and development initiatives in existing churches. Faithful 5000 members are asked to commit to US\$5 per month for five years. This amount, which is a minimal gift for many people, will create amazing ministries when added together with the donations from other people around the world.

The **MCC Founder's Circle** was established in 2002 to support local

community faith based initiatives created by the vision and action of our Founder, Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry. Gifts to the Founder's Circle support the exploration and development of community and congregational models and practices for people of all ages and identities. Annual gifts range from US\$61 - 1199.

In 2005 the **MCC Legacy League** was initiated. These gifts fund the Interim Pastoral Network training and placements, ecumenical and interfaith alliances, formal training and education for future clergy, and partnering with seminaries and other institutions of higher learning. Legacy League members contribute US\$1200 - 4999 annually.

The **Faithful 100** is open to those who are able to commit to a minimal annual gift of \$5000 (AD, CD, USD) for three to five years. This program began during the Installation Weekend for our Moderator, Rev. Elder Nancy L. Wilson. It guarantees that the mission of MCC can advance in areas of emerging opportunity in the world, where we would otherwise not have a voice and ministry.

All donations may be given via the Internet at www.MCCchurch.org or you can send a check or money order to the attention of **Bill Hooper** at Metropolitan Community Churches, PO Box 691728, West Hollywood, California 90069, USA. You can also arrange for a monthly automatic credit card gift. Just contact Bill at 310-861-4656 or BillHooper@MCCchurch.net for details.



CONFERENCES AND RETREATS

Planning is underway for the **MCC Leadership Institute** in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Nov. 30 - Dec. 3, at a retreat center. Lodging and meals are available for US\$25. More than 100 ICM lay and clergy leaders are expected to attend. Courses will be offered in Church Planting, Leadership Development, Preparation for Ministry, Theology, Diversity, and Sexuality and Spirituality. There will be excellent worship services and time for networking, building relationships, and having fun. ICM leaders from Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Venezuela will be present -- and others are welcome, too! Transportation will be a major cost for participants. If you or your church would like to assist someone in attending this institute, contact **Rev. Elder Darlene Garner**. RevDarleneGarner@MCCchurch.net

MCC of Greater New Orleans (Louisiana) will host a Rainbow Revival Aug. 25-27 to acknowledge the first anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, celebrate the care and restoration that they have received and given, and renew everyone's spirits with the Holy Spirit for the ministry that lays ahead. There will be dynamic worship with the music coordinated by **Rev. Keith Mozingo** from MCC Los Angeles (West Hollywood, California), a presentation by **Joshua Love** concerning MCC's response to the crystal-meth epidemic, training by GLSEN for those interested in the ministry of encouraging LGBT safe schools, time for fun and fellowship, and a discussion of how we are called to collaborate in ministry. If you would like to attend, you can register at www.MCCchurch.org.

Embracing the Spiritual Fire was the theme of a Transfolks Retreat sponsored by **MCC of the Hudson Valley** (Albany, New York). Co-Pastor **Rev. Karha' Us** facilitated the retreat which featured a labyrinth and agape meal and focused on relationships with self, God, and the community.

MCC Bournemouth (England) held a Camping Weekend July 27-29.

The River of Praise Choir of **MCC of the Redwood Empire** (Guerneville, California) held their first choir retreat, during which they focused on music and workshops to develop their leadership, personal spiritual journeys, and relationships with others.



CHURCH AND PASTORAL ANNIVERSARIES

In honor of his 20th anniversary as Senior Pastor of **Sunshine Cathedral MCC** (Ft. Lauderdale, Florida), the Cathedral Foundation's Board of Directors presented **Rev. Grant Lynn Ford** with a beautifully framed parchment replica of his personal banner, which he designed several years ago. It is being hand sewn for the Cathedral to be placed in the Worship Center. The silk banner will have applique on both sides of his family crest and several other personal items.

Trinity MCC (Gainesville, Florida) held an Anniversary Picnic on Aug. 12.

Open Arms MCC (Rochester, New York) will celebrate their 25th Anniversary Aug. 19-20 with **Rev. Dr. Cindi Love**, **Rev. Elder Arlene Ackerman**, and **Rev. Delores Berry** as their special guests. There will be a banquet and dance, as well as a special worship service.

MCC Richmond (Virginia) held a Homecoming to celebrate their 28 years. Highlights were a Homecoming Dinner, Silent Auction, special worship service, and a Block Party. The children of the church, wearing their party hats, listened intently to **Gay Fritzeimer's** sermon about the church's birthday and seemed to be everywhere at the Block Party, making pictures, having their faces painted, playing ball, and chasing each other. The **Mary Gay Hutcherson Community Leadership Award** was presented to MCC's **Aidan Grennell**, a straight teenager who is a vocal LGBT rights activist. She plans to become an MCC pastor.

Rev. Ann Hulse was honored for her 20 years of ministry recently. The folks at **MCC Seattle** (Washington) held a Potluck Lunch and shared stories about her.



SERMON AND STUDY SERIES

Rev. Dr. Mona West, Senior Pastor at **Church of the Trinity MCC** (Sarasota, Florida), taught a series on the Book of Ruth, discussing ways Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz serve as our spiritual ancestors, having gone beyond the letter of the law of their day to create a family of choice that was recognized by their community.

Rev. Dr. Jonipher Kwong presented a sermon series at **'Ohana MCC** (Honolulu, Hawaii) on relationships, including ones on being single, married, or divorced.

"*Christian Beliefs That Can Drive Us Crazy!*" is the theme of **Rev. Mark Pridemore's** recent sermon series at **Eternal Joy MCC** (Dayton, Ohio), providing "relief from false assumptions about our faith," such as not needing people when you have God, or one day being finished with recovery.

MCC of Greater New Orleans is hosting a book discussion on *Where the Edge Gathers: Building a Community of Radical Inclusion* by Rev. Yvette Flunder, Pastor of City of Refuge UCC in San Francisco and a featured presenter at many MCC Conferences.

Rev. Neil Thomas, Senior Pastor of **MCC Los Angeles** (West Hollywood, California) is facilitating a weekly discussion on Progressive Christianity to learn more about what this term really means. The study is part of MCC LA's Learning Institute.

Rev. Michael Patrick Ellard is preaching a sermon series on "*Living in the Realm of God in Your Everyday Life!*" at **MCC San Jose** (California). Titles include Stormy Passage, Detours, I'm Choosing Heaven Today, Working with What You Have, and Rest.

Rev. Julie Two-Suess is leading a discussion group at **First MCC** (Atlanta, Georgia) on characters in the Bible, examining their lives and how they influence our own lives today.



RESOURCES YOU CAN USE!

MCC Philippines has a new website at <http://mccph.net.tc>.

If you would like to receive a weekly thought-provoking devotional by **Rev. Durrell Watkins**, request a free subscription by e-mailing him at kweerspirit@aol.com. "The perspective is theological, progressive, religiously pluralistic (though primarily Christian), optimistic, and often with a challenge to consider matters of justice. Sometimes the devotionals offer a meditation on a scripture passage. They are meant to be encouraging and relevant both to the devoutly religious and to the non-religious."

Have you ever heard of AVEN? It's the Asexual Visibility and Education Network. When we list all the various categories in our rainbow community, how many of us remember those who are asexuals? For more information, visit <http://asexuality.org>. This growing organization has over 10,000 members.

Joshua Love has begun to refine our MCC on-line community, www.LivingFusion.org. There are now nearly 3,000 members worldwide. Features will be expanded and new tools developed to help people connect more easily on the site. There is now a "News" feature on the menu atop the main screen. The Living Fusion team has been looking at various sources for news items that will be of interest, including original pieces from within MCC's own rich community. Please check out the stories that are posted and consider writing one yourself for possible submission. Send your material to JoshuaLove@MCCchurch.net.

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