

Metropolitan Community Churches

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

Volume 2, Issue 1

**Judy Dale,
Editor**

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of MCC's
Communications
Department

WELCOME!

Welcome to MCC's
"Around The
Fellowship" newsletter
from Metropolitan
Community Churches.

To include your
information in
upcoming issues, send
news to [Judy Dale](mailto:Judy.Dale@mcc.org),
Editor.

CELEBRATE FELLOWSHIP SUNDAY IN OCTOBER!

MCC churches around
the world will celebrate
the 38th anniversary of
MCC during October
2006.

To promote this event in
your church, download
the beautiful bulletin
insert to share with your

IN THIS ISSUE:

- **Justice and Social Action Updates**
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- **HIV and AIDS News**
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JUSTICE AND SOCIAL ACTION

Jochen Gewecke, a member of **Salz der Erde MCC** (Stuttgart, Germany), wrote to Herta Daeubler-Gmelin, the former Minister of Justice in Germany who now addresses African human rights questions in the German Bundestag, concerning injustices against LGBT people in Nigeria. Although the International Day of Prayer is over, the campaign isn't! Visit www.LGBTNIGERIANS.org for more information.

Exodus MCC (Abilene, Texas) supports two young missionaries, Leah and Paul Cypert, in a mission in Bangkok to help women caught in the sex trafficking trade. The women are retrained and introduced to the life-changing power of Jesus.

Rev. Pat Bumgardner, Senior Pastor of **MCC New York** (New York) and leader of **MCC's Global Justice Team**, spoke at a vigil in Midtown Manhattan near Iran's Mission to the United Nations to mark the one-year anniversary of the hanging of two Iranian teenagers who were killed because they were gay. The on-line coverage, including her speech, is located at <http://www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=06/07/07/1356209>.

Living Springs MCC (Bath, England) presented its annual Pride Community Award at a service which was attended by the Deputy Mayor and covered by the press. The recipient was Bath Churches Housing Association for Julian House, a shelter for people who are homeless and for which LS MCC provides food and toiletries.

Rev. Renwick J. Bell, has been named to the Board of Directors for the South Florida Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice. He is the Pastor of **Church of Our Savior MCC** (Boynton Beach, Florida) and is also involved with Equality Florida and the Human Rights Campaign.

congregation

This year's Fellowship Sunday Offering is designated for church planting, church revitalization, and establishing MCC's Virtual Church On-Line.

To add your church's name to the list of Pacesetter Churches that are leading the way by receiving a Fellowship Sunday Offering, send your church's information to Rev. Nancy Wilson, MCC Moderator, by [CLICKING HERE](#).

MCC MARRIAGE NEWS FLASH!

The California Court of Appeals is expected to rule on Rev. Troy Perry's marriage lawsuit in early October.

A lower court ruled in Rev. Perry's favor. The ruling, if upheld, would make marriage equality the law in California.

Please remember this legal case in your prayers.

Whatever the outcome, the case will be appealed by the losing party to

Serving others! Recently folks from **Holy Fellowship MCC** (London, Ontario, Canada) partnered with Blue House Effect, a Canadian nonprofit, and headed back to La Urena, a village in the Dominican Republic, on a fourth mission trip there. Under the leadership of **Allana Featherstone** and **Val Morrison**, team members presented five education workshops for the teachers of two local orphanages and schools and facilitated recreational programs for the children, including a Canadian-style day camp, complete with camp T-shirts, hotdogs, and water games. On each trip, they also offer a Sunday Church Service for the whole community. This time they were joined by **Rev. Deb Dysert** and three members of **Divine Peace MCC** (Pontiac, Michigan). DP MCC again donated medical supplies to this group.

MCC Albuquerque (New Mexico) joined other groups that promote diversity to take part in Habitat of Humanity's Diversity Build, which constructed houses for low-income families.

Good Hope MCC (Capetown), **Word of Life MCC** (Durban), **Hope and Unity MCC** (Johannesburg), and **Glorious Light MCC** (Pretoria) all celebrated Women's Day in South Africa to honor the work of women in making their nation free for all people.

For the fifth year, **MCC of Corpus Christi** (Texas) collected school supplies for the children of The Corpus Christi Women's Shelter and The Rainbow Room.

Folks at **Trinity MCC** (Gainesville, Florida) will be supporting two teams in the PDK Walk on September 17. There is no cure for Polycystic Kidney Disease. It is the most common of all life-threatening genetic diseases and affects 12.5 million people worldwide.

Wedding bells! **MCC Toronto** (Ontario, Canada) and Hudson Nuptials, a company dedicated to facilitating intimate destination weddings in Toronto, have teamed up to help same-sex couples who cannot get legally married in their own countries. The two organizations hope to help to bring Canada's progressive marriage laws to the LGBT community across the US and the world.

MCC San Antonio (Texas) hosted a series of events to celebrate and educate families, and to reach and assist those in the community who are interested in starting new families. The events included a Family Pride Picnic, several forums about financial and legal issues, a presentation by a representative from the State of Texas concerning foster care and adoption, and the OutSpoken Families Media Training.

MCC East London (England) raised over 200 pounds for Helping Hands, a local charity that supports homeless and vulnerable people.

Socially conscious! **Ruby Nancy** and **Mona Ritemon**, members of **MCC of the Quad Cities** (Davenport, Iowa), recently opened Coffee Artist Café in downtown Moline, featuring specialty coffee, other drinks, and light food fare. All coffee used is fair trade certified. Their sugar-free cream soda sales support the American Diabetes Association, while decaf sales go to reforestation. They are also showcasing the work of local artists.

MCC Rehoboth (Delaware) celebrated the building of a house in

the California Supreme Court.

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.

This book makes a wonderful gift or keepsake -- and you'll find the lowest price on Amazon.com.

Visit [Amazon](http://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

Georgetown, Delaware -- a joint effort of the Lewes-Rehoboth Association of Churches and Sussex County Habitat for Humanity. Fourteen churches joined with Habitat to build a two-story, four-bedroom, two-bath home for a family in need. **Rev. Tom Bohache**, Pastor of MCC-R, participated in the Habitation Ceremony where the home was blessed and the keys officially handed over to Maria Lagunas and her five children. MCC-R, with the lay leadership of **Judy Gibson** and **Liz Bowman**, participated in several work days. Habitat for Humanity expressed interest in helping MCC Rehoboth erect its building on land that the church has purchased.

Four workers from **Resurrection MCC** (Houston, Texas) received extensive training, along with four workers from Legacy Community Health Services, to launch the Seniors Preparing for the Rainbow Years (SPRY) program to provide needs assessments, peer support, and case management for LGBT seniors. Resurrection MCC was awarded the grant by the US federal government's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Only 11 of the 165 organizations which applied received funding -- and Resurrection MCC is the only LGBT organization among the recipients. **Rev. Dwayne Johnson** is the senior pastor.

Jen Cook, the daughter of **Charlene Bisordi**, a member of **SunCoast Cathedral MCC** (Venice, Florida), is producing a documentary at her own expense to support the LGBT community's ability to adopt and/or have children and raise them in loving families. They were filming during the recent Family Weekend in P'town (Provincetown, Massachusetts). For more information, visit www.embracethedifference.com.

LEARN MORE ABOUT... SOUL FOOD MINISTRY

Soul Food Ministry <http://www.soulfoodministry.org> is multilingual Internet evangelism site that is a special ministry of **MCC Washington, DC**. They post reflections in nine languages on how to become a Christian or how to become a better Christian. In the course of a year nearly half a million articles are downloaded from their site and they receive visits from some 140 countries. Currently postings are available in Afrikaans, Chinese, English, Esperanto, French, German, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish.

They want to do more, but they need your help!

Translations are the biggest need. There is a list of about 30 translations that are currently needed, which can be found at <http://www.soulfoodministry.org/Friends/SFWishList.htm>. Could you possibly do one of the translations? Or, if languages are not one of your God-given gifts, would you be interested in donating money so that translators can be hired?

Another big need is someone to develop a fundraising/grant writing program. Obviously, the more money they can secure, the more translations, and the more people who hear the good news of Jesus Christ.

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.

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Subscriptions are free upon request.

Write to info@MCCchurch.net for your free newsletter subscription.

SHARE YOUR CHURCH'S NEWS

To share your church's news with the MCC Fellowship, send info by e-mail to Judy Dale, Editor.

They would also like to have a periodic e-newsletter for faithful supporters and people interested in their ministry, so, if that can be your gift, contact them.

Dr. Sandy Bochonok is the Pastoral Leader of Soul Food Ministry and is the author of many of the articles. **Geraldine "Gerry" Wright** is the Translation Coordinator and Operations Manager. They would be delighted to dialogue with you in English, Esperanto, German, Portuguese, or Spanish, if you email them at sitecomments@soulfoodministry.org.

HIV AND AIDS NEWS

MCC of Our Redeemer (Augusta, Georgia) is already looking ahead to their World AIDS Day event. They began creating their own AIDS Memorial Quilt of both traditional panels and squares for names only.

Rob Hadley, Director of **Team UFMCC**, has created a new sports team, **Team Plus**, for those who are HIV+. They debuted during the Gay Games in Chicago, winning a number of medals, and appeared again during the Out Games in Montreal. For more information, visit www.teamplussports.org. You can read an interview with Rob on Gay.com at <http://www.gay.com/fitness/article.html?sernum=3746&navpath=/channels/fitness/gaygame>

Last month **Truth Center MCC** (Atlanta, Georgia) hosted the Deeper Love Project on Wednesday nights, a series of safer sex workshops for black gay and bisexual men.

Rev. Angie Thinnies, Pastor of **MCC Illiana** (Lake Station, Indiana) was quoted in a series of articles in the *Gay Post Tribune* concerning the issue of AIDS in the gay community.

MCC of the Upstate (Duncan, South Carolina), a congregation of 34 members, raised \$1,635.00 for Aid Upstate, the Greenville, SC, HIV/AIDS group. The largest amount came from a "Dining with Friends" party at the home of their Vice Moderator and his partner.

MCC CONFERENCES AND RETREATS

Telling Our Stories, a Queer Spirituality Workshop sponsored by **All Saints' MCC** (Christchurch, Aotearoa/New Zealand), took place September 1-3, coordinated by a team lead by former Interim Pastoral Leader **Rev. Andrew Donaldson**. Keynote Speakers were Tim Barnett, MP, and Rev. Dr. Susan Thompson, historian.

If you are in Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, or 7 (or if you just want to attend, or if you are in Regions 1 or 6 and didn't vote in Scottsdale), don't forget to register for the upcoming **Regional Conferences** and make your plans to participate in the exciting workshops and dynamic worship services ... oh, yes, and business meetings and forums, too!

Hannover, Germany - September 14-17 - Regions 4 and 5

Ft. Lauderdale, Florida - October 5-8 - Regions 2 and 7

Deadline is the 15th
of each month.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania - November 2-5 - Regions 3 and 5

Go to www.MCCconferences.org for all the information on registration, hotel, schedule, speakers, etc.

Kamporee registrations are pouring in from folks in the MCCs in Central Florida ... **Church of the Trinity MCC** (Sarasota), **King of Peace MCC** (St. Petersburg), **MCC Ocala**, and **MCC Tampa**. Others, of course, are welcome to attend! There are tent and RV sties available, as well as cabins and nearby hotel rooms. The event is slated for October 12-15 at Saw Mill. A Pool Party, Coffee & Sweets, Campfire Sing-Along, and Scavenger Hunt are just a few of the fun events planned. To register, go to www.kingofpeacemcc.org and click on Kamporee at the bottom of the page.

Make plans now to attend MCC's **General Conference XXIII**, July 2-6, 2007, at the Fairmont Princess in Scottsdale, Arizona (USA). Just ask anyone who attended the recent conferences and meetings there just how fabulous this venue is! And it will only be MCCers there during our Conference! For details, go to www.MCCconferences.org today!

Peninsula MCC (San Mateo, California) recently held a Contemplative Retreat.

Region 1 is holding a Sub Meeting, September 15-17, in Sydney, Australia to provide folks from Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand an opportunity to say goodbye to **Rev. Elder Debbie Martin**. The event coincides with the 20th Anniversary Celebration at **MCC Good Shepherd**.

MCC San Francisco (California) held an All Church Retreat, September 8-10.

Reflection Day was recently observed at **MCC Brisbane** (Australia). They spent the day at the Sisters of the Sacred Advent House, taking time to be quiet and contemplative. They focused on where they are going as individuals and as a church.



CHURCH AND PASTORAL ANNIVERSARIES

MCC Seattle (Washington) celebrated their 34th Anniversary on August 13 and **Trinity MCC** (Gainesville, Florida) celebrated their 23rd Anniversary that day with a special worship service.

New Hope MCC (Santa Rosa, California) celebrated their 21st Anniversary last month. They had a special dinner and follies celebration.

Truth Center MCC (Atlanta, Georgia) celebrated their 5th Anniversary with a special worship service on August 20.



SERMON AND STUDY SERIES

August on Broadway was the theme for the regular weekly worship services at **Open Door MCC** (Boyds, Maryland). Each Sunday they used a different musical for Scripture, sermon and special music to help them understand how faith influences and interacts with popular culture every day. The four shows featured were *Godspell*, *Wicked*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, and *Carousel*.

Rev. Rob Taylor is the Pastor.

Folks at **Harvest MCC** (Denton, Texas) have started a 12 week study led by **Rev. Mary Luna-Wolfe** of *Yes Lord, I Have Sinned, But I Have Several Excellent Excuses* by James W. Moore.

The Spiritual Journey group at **City of Angels MCC** (Los Angeles, California) will study *This is Real and You Are Totally Unprepared* by Alan Lew to help them prepare for the church's observance of The Days of Awe, the most important days of the Jewish liturgical year.

The Bible Study Group at **MCC of the Quad Cities** (Davenport, Iowa) is engaged in an eight week study of *Meeting Jesus Again For The First Time* by Marcus Borg.

During August and September, **Eternal Joy MCC** (Dayton, Ohio) is offering a series on The Bible and Homosexuality based on *The Children are Free* written by **Rev. Jeff Miner**, Senior Pastor of **Jesus MCC** (Indianapolis, Indiana).



RESOURCES

Kevin Choate writes devotional thoughts which are posted on the MCC Ministry Development Centre website. People who sign up for *A Minute of Sunshine* receive an email with a link to new material when it is posted.

Rev. David K. North, Pastor of **Holy Redeemer MCC** (College Park, Maryland) wrote almost all of the songs on an album *I am Not Ashamed*. They are performed by Gospel Celebration. To read about and order this album, go to the Chi Rho Press website at www.chirhpress.com/products/product_details/AudioRevNotAshamed.htm.

Several excellent resources were displayed at the Regional Conferences in Scottsdale including:

Queer Eye for the Straight Jesus: Prepare for a Spiritual Makeover is a Lenten sermon series with a small group discussion guide and a creative worship drama. For a copy contact **Rev. Charles Tigard** at **MCC San Francisco** (California) CTigard@mccsf.org.

A self paced program giving Laypersons an opportunity to develop knowledge and the skills needed for lay ministry within the local congregation was developed by **Rev. Margaret Walker** of **Exodus MCC** (Abilene, Texas). Major elements include: Christian doctrine; Biblical studies, history, pastoral care, UFMCC history, strategic plan and bylaws; readings on sexuality issues, clergy/liturgical information and more. Email RevMWalker@sbcglobal.net or to

obtain a CD of this study guide, contact RevSharonBezner@MCCchurch.net.

Creating a Life That Matters is a new spiritual discovery and development curriculum by **Rev. Ken Martin**, Senior Pastor of **MCC Austin** (Texas), **Rev. Jo Bell**, Director of Congregational Life at **MCC Toronto** (Ontario, Canada), and **Rev. Glenna Shepherd**, Senior Pastor of **MCC Portland** (Oregon). The three-course curriculum explores ways to rediscover relationship with the Sacred, with Self, and with Passion, creating parallels to the spiritual experiences of being changed, gifted, and called. It integrates art, scripture, music, film, journaling, and diverse spiritual resources to augment our exploration of the Christian path. The curriculum will be available to MCCs in early 2007.

Rev. Jim Lynch who maintains the website for **Reconciliation MCC** (Grand Rapids, Michigan) has created a blog page for posting prayer requests, inspirational and devotional matter, event information, and other timely material. <http://reconciliationmcc.blogspot.com>.

The theme for the 18th National Coming Out Day is *Talk About It*, to encourage LGBT folks and straight allies, to talk openly and honestly about their lives and community issues in order to change one mind at a time. Originally a US event, others around the world now also observe *Coming Out Day* on October 11 each year. The Human Rights Campaign has **FREE** action kits that include the new HRC Coming Out Guide, posters, balloons, stickers, and other resources. http://www.hrcactioncenter.org/campaign/coming_out_day_kit

ISNA (Intersex Society of North America) is hosting the First DSD (Disorders of Sex Development) Symposium, a gathering of intersex adults, parents, and allied healthcare professionals. The DSD Symposium is a mini-conference, held within the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association's annual conference, October 13-15 at the Parc 55 Hotel in San Francisco (California). For more information, visit the ISNA website at www.isna.org.

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