

Metropolitan Community Churches

Around The Fellowship

T e a r i n g d o w n w a l l s ! B u i l d i n g u

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Editor**

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Communications
Department

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MCC CHURCHES GO GREEN!

Is your church becoming "greener"?

What are you doing at church to educate members? To encourage congregants to actively take care of the world God created?

Let Judy Dale know for a special feature in an upcoming issue of *Around the Fellowship*! To contact Judy, [CLICK HERE!](#)

**SEPTEMBER 2008
ECUMENICAL AND
JUSTICE EVENT
SLATED FOR NEW
ORLEANS**

LEARN MORE ABOUT M

The article below appeared in the newsletter of Good South Africa). We never know when a conversation will impact an entire nation. We are so excited by the dev months with Reverend Maxwell Master, an excommur Zimbabwe.

This divine meeting happened one morning about nine mon considers the importance of some meetings; such was the o meeting with Rev. Max, Yet his follow-up mail said, "To say Christ our Lord through Sharon Cox and Good Hope MCC, I suicide..." -- and it made me realise that every meeting is a never knows the predicament of the person until you sit dov story... and their story is our story, too.

Several months later, the wheels were in motion and our El Shepherd, was in Cape Town. Rev. Max came down from Zi and us.

During this time, we got to know more of Rev. Max and his gay when he was young. In theology school he wrote a pap Sodom; his liberal theological standpoint scored him a 0! H pastored a church during which time he brought LGBT peop spoke on justice issues at synod meetings. Clergy peers wer enemies. The final nail was a hand-delivered letter, which re

MCC Moderator Rev. Nancy Wilson is seeking Lay Delegates or lay leaders in the U.S. between the ages of 17 and 35 years interested in participating in an ecumenical/justice event in New Orleans in September 2008.

If you are interested or know someone who would represent MCC effectively, please contact Rev. Nancy Wilson.

CHECK OUT THESE UPCOMING CONFERENCES!

MCC's 2008 Women in Ministry Conference will take place in Sarasota, Florida during January 31 - February 3, 2008. For details, schedule and registration information, CLICK HERE

The MCC People of African Descent, Our Friends and Allies will take place in St. Louis, Missouri during April 17-19, 2008.

For full details and registration information, CLICK

homosexuality and gay people is sin. As a minister you are ex-communicated from the Presbyterian Church and you will receive no more salary and lose use of the car." Rev. Max went to stay in a friend's house. He started a Bible study, using the Bible to discuss homosexuality and the Bible.

He told Rev. Elder Glenna, "My vision is church growth and I heard God and I said, 'Here I am, send me.' The time is now. How? God will answer."

In October, Rev. Max went to Birmingham, England, for the REVM-UK class is more like groundbreaking and, of course, Max is following his roots to where he belongs. I am thrilled for Max to be accorded an opportunity to interact with my fellow colleagues. Cox and Good Hope MCC are still acting as my pillars of strength and support. Words are not enough but I would like to thank the

Rev. Elder Shepherd added, "We're grateful to those whose support is possible – we're Tearing Down Walls and Building Up Hope in

JU

At a special gathering at **MCC New York** (New York) **Rev. Max** presented MCC's triennial Human Rights Award to the Human Rights organization dedicated to defending the rights of LGBT people. Director of the LGBT program, and Rebecca Schleifer, Advocacy Coordinator, accepted and expressed their gratitude for the recognition and support they are doing in Jamaica, Eastern Europe, and other locations around

ICM Niterói (Brazil) and the Brazilian Association of Gays, Transvestites and Transexuals (in Portuguese, ABGLT - www.abglt.org.br) made nationally by ABGLT and **ICM Niterói** regarding equal

For their Fifth Sunday FYI Forum, the congregation of **Center Heart** (Waco) hosted representatives from the Advocacy Center for Children to learn more about their work and to give them items including clothing, toiletry items, coloring books and activity sheets up for teens, toys, CDs and DVDs, and furry animal slippers

MCC Manchester (England) has instituted a new Social Action magazine their passion for doing justice work, especially their letter writing new magazine Call for Justice (C4J) just debuted. To receive more information contact coordinator **Steve Gray** at socialaction@mccmanchester.co.uk

Congratulations to the Homeless Ministry of **Jesus MCC** (In) who received the Community Partner Award from Horizon House for over 40 hours per month to Horizon House and JMCC continuing funds in the annual Homeward Bound Walk for the Homeless

Holy Covenant MCC (Brookfield, Illinois) sponsored a team

[HERE.](#)

**MCC YOUTH PLAN
MINISTRY TRIP TO
DOMINICAN
REPUBLIC**

You can support
MCC's youth as they
plan a 2008 ministry
trip to the Dominican
Republic!

To contribute to this
ministry trip, visit
www.MCCchurch.org,
click on "Contribute,"
-- then select
"Children & Youth"
from the drop-down
menu.

hunger. The name of their team? The Covenant Holy Crop V

Congregants of **MCC of Greater Dallas** (Texas) joined with gather sweet potatoes that were left in the field because the shape or size. All gleaned potatoes were then donated to va help feed the hungry.

The congregation of **Living Springs MCC** (Bath, England) t produce to Julian House, a shelter for homeless men. Now t hats, blankets, and jackets for the men.

Teamwork Makes a Difference! Following the devastation of members of **ICM Santo Domingo** (Dominican Republic) kn clothes, food, and medicine to others in their city. They also gather much, so they partnered with **Church of the Trinity** (Florida). **Rev. Tania** took suitcases of clothing, a box of me food. Together the churches fed and clothed 50 families and **Washington DC** is now sending needed supplies to be distr **Domingo**.

Heartland Community MCC (Springfield, Illinois) participa Jammin' for Justice on the campus of Indiana University, wh about the church.

MCC Good Shepherd (Parramatta North, NSW, Australia) o the Salvation Centre, Cambodia Trust Fund, which assists o children with food, school fees, medicines, and income gene families. **Rev. Greg Smith** is active with this ministry.

Folks from **Pikes Peak MCC** (Colorado Springs, Colorado) p Habitat for Humanity house. They also donated clothes to p released from prison.

MCC of Paducah (Kentucky) sent boxes of books and altar group in Moldova.

All God's Children MCC (Minneapolis, Minnesota) hosted a Training in conjunction with the Minnesota Department of H Preparedness.

MCC of Greater Dallas (Texas) joined a coalition of local a mental health professionals, and clergy for a press conferen against the National Association for Research and Therapy o a controversial fringe group that claims to "cure" gay people

Wesley House Family Services honored **MCC Key West** (Flo support, including donating \$5000 (USD) in grocery gift card

Holy Cross MCC (Pensacola, Florida) congregants filled bas needed to make a complete Thanksgiving dinner.

Congregants at **Christ Covenant MCC** (Decatur, Georgia) o

women's business suits to Dress for Success, an organization that helps women with job training and interviewing skills.

The **First MCC** (Atlanta, Georgia) Team raised \$550 (USD) for the American Diabetes Walk.

Tom Allard is collecting clothing, blankets, pillows, and other items for the homeless at **MCC in the Valley** (North Hollywood, California) to give to the homeless.

The HOT Team (Human Outreach Team) at **King of Peace** (Tampa, Florida) serves meals to the homeless and needy at St. Vincent de Paul (Hands Empowered to Reach Others) is another ministry of the church. In the direction of **Gene Davis**, they do repair work on homes for the homeless. The work required due to code violations and could lose their homes.

Members of **Holy Covenant MCC** (Brookfield, Illinois) are currently volunteering for shifts at BEDS Plus, churches which provide shelter for homeless persons in the western Cook county area.

At **Open Arms MCC** (Rochester, New York) the congregation is preparing in order to provide Thanksgiving Baskets for 25 families. There are Apples, Fruits, the Sweet Things, the Stuffers, the Spuds, and the T

ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCE A

Is your congregation looking for ways to make your church more accessible? Do you have an explicit problem, such as the need for a ramp or parking for people with visual or hearing impairments? Maybe you want to increase accessibility for people with a particular disability and how to minister to people experiencing these challenges?

The Disability Forum is here to help you! We can assist by providing resources for you, perhaps even available in your local community. We can provide information about ADA requirements in the US, national laws, and suggestions from the United Nations. Did you know that information is available to assist you in making your building more accessible? Contact us for community groups?

If you have a question or desire support, contact one of the chairs, **Mike Gauss** mwgauss@yahoo.com or **Terra Muncy** Earthleabear@yahoo.com, who will assign a member of the forum to work with your church and find the answers you need!

HIV AND AIDS I

The folks at **MCC Omaha** (Nebraska) took the biblical story of the five loaves and fish seriously. Members brought in five non-perishable items and each member gave \$5 (USD) to feed the "multitudes" through the Nebraska Food Bank.

The former congregation of **City of Angels MCC** (Los Angeles) is currently

\$3000 (USD) to the **Mother of Peace Orphanage** in Zimbabwe.

Congratulations! **MCC of Greater St. Louis** (Missouri) received a grant from the Missouri Foundation for Health to establish a center called "The Hope & Help Center" to promote the physical, mental, and spiritual health of HIV-positive individuals, including lesbians, gay men, and individuals who are HIV-positive. The center will provide needed information to enable these individuals to make more informed choices about healthcare, provide information about health care issues, including affordable options and care by providing information about affordable options and care through other nonprofits, and to provide additional pastoral care for social and spiritual health.

Valley Ministries MCC (Stockton, California) has pledged support to the **Mother of Peace Orphanage** in Zimbabwe. It is part of their outreach program. They hope to send a group to visit and work with the orphanage in the future.

achurch4me? MCC (Chicago, Illinois) joined several other churches at the Test Positive Aware Network to offer ManAlive, Chicago Summit. **Rev. Kevin Downer** was one of the presenters.

ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH

Earlier this year, 20 members of **MCC Sydney** (Australia) traveled to a mosque. They wanted to learn more about the Muslim faith, and to extend a hand of friendship in a society that has demonized Muslims. Although they knew the group was LGBT, they have now invited them to participate in a special Ramadan Iftar, a meal in a Muslim home. **MCC Sydney** will host a group from the mosque to hear more about Islam, especially the experience of the Haj, and for them to learn more about Christianity.

This first seminar in a series on comparative religions at **Kirkwood** (Petersburg, Florida) covered the foundations and history of Islam, including major tenets and rituals of Islamic religious expression. **Dr. John Watson**, international lawyer and former Islamic history professor at the University of South Florida.

As Chair of the California Faith for Equality, **Rev. Neil Thornburg** was a friend-of-the-court brief filed by 144 religious groups, including the California Supreme Court to rule in favor of same-sex marriage. Media outlets carrying his quotes were CBS 5 TV in San Francisco, 365Gay.com, Fog City Journal, Gay News Blog, an ACLU press release, and a national (US) website.

Rev. Charles Tigard serves on the Retreat committee of the Key West Alliance of Key West (Florida). There are more churches per square mile on Key West Island than in any other location in the US.

Rev. Debbie Gaston was interviewed by Hardeep, a Sikh, in Brighton, England.

A Celebration of Faith and Diversity was co-sponsored by **K** Petersburg, Florida), **Church of the Trinity MCC** (Sarasota), **Rights Campaign**, and the United Church of Christ's Suncoast ecumenical gathering featured LGBT faith-themed workshop

New Spirit MCC (Cincinnati, Ohio) is active with Churches provide emergency assistance, outreach to youth and children building events and activities. NSMCC volunteers with the C campaigns for special donations such as HUGS (hats, under the children of Northside.

MCCs in Australia joined other faith communities in a National people of Burma and participated in local interfaith services

MCC of the Hudson Valley (Albany, New York) joined Emr a viewing of *The Ghost of Abu Ghraib* and a discussion about



CONFERENCES, CLASSES, AND

ICM Niterói (Brazil) invited some of their country's leading theologians to speak *Excluded*. The sessions included the Bible and Women, the Bible and Homosexuality and People of African Descent. The seminar was advertised in Mix Brazil, the le

Every **MCC in Australia and New Zealand** was represented at the Region 1 **Heather Creighton** and **MCC Melbourne**. Over 70 registrants participated in other activities. The Region's special guest for the Gathering was **Joshua Love** Ministry and Drug Literacy Program. The next gathering, for the central and north **Ministries MCC** (Stockton) March 7-9.

The Great Gulf Coast Camp Meeting was again hosted by **Cornerstone MCC** (Breathe on Me, Holy Spirit. **Rev. Jo Crisco**, pastor of **New Hope MCC** (Montg preachers. **Justin Ryan** and **Fred Francis** were the featured musicians, along direction of **Alton Cottingham**.

The **ACTS Institute** at **MCC Baltimore** (Maryland) focused on Systematic The New Testament survey another.

'Ohana MCC (Honolulu, Hawai'i) joined with local chapters of Dignity and Inte weekend retreat for LGBT Christians and their friends at Camp Mokule'ia on th

Dancing with the Divine: Celebrating Our Relationship with the Sacred is the th **Toronto** (Ontario, Canada) during January 25-27.

Holy Covenant MCC (Brookfield, Illinois) has resumed their study of Living th

MCC Montpelier (France) celebrated the 10th anniversary of MCC's presence in France on December 15-16. The guest preacher was **Rev. Elder Glenna Shepherd**. There were many times, and fun parties. And they provided for non-French speaking people.

Gentle Shepherd MCC (Tallahassee, Florida) celebrated their 14th year of service and worship, as well as a potluck dinner.

Spirit of Christ MCC (Joplin, Missouri) celebrated 10 years of ministry with special guests **Sam Sampson**, **Rev. Carolyn Mobley** (**First United MCC**, Tulsa, Oklahoma), **Rev. Carolyn Mobley** (Kansas City, Missouri), and congregants from **MCC of the Living Spring** (Europe).

The **Rock MCC** (Chattanooga, Tennessee) celebrated their 19th anniversary with poetry, an appearance by the **MCC Knoxville** (Tennessee) choir, and over 12 former pastors. **Rev. Keith Mozingo**.

MCC Philippines recently celebrated their 16th anniversary.

House of Rainbow MCC (Lagos, Nigeria) is averaging almost 100 in worship each week. They have ministered to over 1000 people in their first year!

MCC London (Ontario, Canada) celebrated their 27th anniversary with a potluck.

MCC of Greater Dallas (Texas) celebrated their Anniversary 2 x 2. They prayed and brought them to their Anniversary Service and luncheon, led by **Rev. Dr. Cino**.

Imani MCC (Durham, North Carolina) honored their 10th anniversary with a luncheon. **Elder Nancy Wilson** preaching.

Harvest MCC (Denton, Texas) used their 22nd anniversary festivities to dedicate a new Homecoming.

Sweet Spirit MCC (Salem, Oregon) celebrated their 30th anniversary on two occasions. Allison, a former member, shared with music and preaching. Following the service, they were complete with vinyl records and a record player, as they reminisced and viewed old photos. The next Sunday, **Rev. Elder Ken Martin** joined them to look at the next 30 years.

MCC of the Chesapeake (Annapolis, Maryland) celebrated their 9th anniversary with Panels, bringing in new members, and sharing an anniversary dinner.

Following their ReCharge Service on Wednesday evenings, **Ray Page** led the **Omaha** (Nebraska) in a study of the history of the Rosary, the Mysteries, the life of the mother of Jesus.

At **Heartland Community MCC** (Springfield, Illinois) **Dr. Allan Cook** taught

on **Rev. Jeff Miner's** book *The Children are Free*.

Celebration MCC (Naples, Florida) has two book discussion groups on Thursdays. **Rev. Rick Sosbe** facilitates one on *Velvet Elvis* in Fort Myers and **Doug Ball** facilitates one on *The Secret* in Naples.

Dr. Jonelle Neighbor taught the *Bible and Homosexuality* series at **Pikes Peak MCC** (Colorado Springs, Colorado).

Over 27% of the members of **Exodus MCC** (Abilene, Texas) participated in their *Discipleship 101* class. They will offer *Discipleship 102* in January and then begin *Life that Matters* in February.

achurch4me? MCC (Chicago, Illinois) just completed a sermon series on *Spoken to Love as God Loves*.

Tree of Life MCC (Ann Arbor, Michigan) is currently using the *Living the Question* in place of the sermon during worship.

Rev. Renee McCoy is teaching the Wednesday Night Bible Study at **MCC DeWitt** (Michigan).



The *2007-2008 Liturgical Calendar and Lectionary for the Church Year*, which began with the first Sunday in Advent is available from **Chi Rho Press**. It is based on Year A from the Revised Common Lectionary and features many extras, such as readings for Pridetide written by **Rev. Gordon McCoy**. Copies are \$11.95 (USD) each or \$9.50 for six or more copies, plus shipping and handling. For more information or to order, [CLICK HERE](#).

Following a sabbatical and a move, **Rev. Robin White's** *Inclusified Lectionary* (based on the Revised Common Lectionary) is once again available. His translations from the original languages for all four readings are available each week and provided three weeks in advance for sermon preparation or personal study. "Tying this week's texts together" provides a quick summary of the readings and how they can be formed into a unified narrative. Interpretive notes have been expanded and made more relevant. Challenging questions are addressed, concepts (as well as language) are inclusified, and a middle ground is presented between liberal and conservative interpretation. The cost? Only your prayers and constructive feedback! www.mcclouisville.org

A video *Homosexuality and the Bible* featuring **Rev. Elder Ken Martin** is available from **MCC Good Shepherd**, PO Box 2312, Parramatta North, NSW 1750, Australia, for \$12 (AUD), which includes postage.

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