

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

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**2007 GENERAL  
CONFERENCE EARLY  
BIRD PAYMENT PLAN  
DEADLINE AUG. 30!**

Now MCC's General  
Conference is more  
accessible than ever.

Thanks to a new conference  
option, you can pay your  
registration fee over 10  
equal monthly payments!

The deadline for the early  
bird payment plan is Aug.  
30th.

Visit [www.MCCchurch.org](http://www.MCCchurch.org)  
today for details.

## COMING SOON!

Rev. Pat Bumgardner  
represented MCC at the  
recent World Pride -- and  
delivered the sermon at

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your subscription request to [info@MCCchurch.net](mailto:info@MCCchurch.net).

*Encourage your friends to sign-up today!*

## SPOTLIGHT ON MCC PEOPLE & CHURCHES

Way to Go! **Sacred Light of Christ MCC** (Salt Lake City, Utah) paid  
off their mortgage early. Now they're having stained glass windows  
designed specifically for their church to replace the existing windows.

**MCC Philippines** (Makati City, Philippines) recently welcomed six  
new members! They're scheduling a special event every week -  
sometimes "Friday Night Live" is a social, other times it's a Bible  
Study or support group.

Rev Kerri Mesner, Pastor of **MCC Edinburgh** (Scotland, UK),

**World Pride's Interfaith Conference.**

**Look for details coming soon on MCC's presence at World Pride -- and Rev. Bumgardner's challenging sermon.**

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**ATTEND AN MCC CONFERENCE!**

**One down -- three to go! Three additional MCC Regional Conferences will take place over the next five months -- in Hannover, 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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**GET READY TO CELEBRATE!**

**MCCs around the globe will celebrate Fellowship Sunday in October -- observing the 38th anniversary of the founding of Metropolitan Community Churches!**

**MCC was founded on October 6, 1968 in the living room of Rev. Troy Perry's home in Huntington Park, California.**

**Most churches will hold observances and celebrations on October**

presented workshops at the recent Conference of the British & Irish School of Feminist Theology.

The "Big Dreams Day" at **MCC Naples** (Florida) was a huge success! They brought in an outside consultant to assist in developing their Vision and Mission Statements, and to set goals for the next five years.

Congratulations to **Rev. Dr. Dusty Pruitt** who received a CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) internship at the Yuma (Arizona) Regional Medical Center, one of the most prestigious programs in the US. Only five were accepted from the more than 50 applicants.

**Lilly and David Cuff, Ron Drumm, and Jerry Reitz**, members of **Resurrection MCC** (Houston, Texas) went to Africa earlier this month to share an Excel experience with members of the Africa Greater Life Mission Church in Kampala, Uganda, whose Pastor is Excel graduate Joshua Magezi. Ron and Jerry also visited **Hope and Unity MCC** (Johannesburg, South Africa) and **Good Hope MCC** (Cape Town, South Africa) and worked with the Excel team training in that country.

Rev. Mike Nicholas was the guest preacher recently at **MCC in the Valley** (North Hollywood, California).

Wow! **MCC San Antonio** (Texas) has 38 new members since March, bringing their total membership to 106! They'll launch additional worship services in September.

Members of **MCC Montpelier** (France) marched in the Pride Parade in Paris, carrying a banner that read "Dieu aime qui je suis" (God loves who I am).

Great outreach! The Associated Press story on the Would Jesus Discriminate? Campaign in Indianapolis, Indiana, appeared in more than 60 newspapers in the US and countless blogs, websites, and listservs, including conservative Pat Robertson's CBN site! It even appeared in The Pink News, a major LGBT newspaper in the United Kingdom.

**Rev. Grant Lynn Ford**, Senior Pastor of **Sunshine Cathedral MCC** (Ft. Lauderdale, Florida) offered the invocation at the Opening Ceremonies of the 30th annual Gay Softball World Series.

**P.J. Sedillo**, a member of **MCC Albuquerque** (New Mexico) was featured on the Channel 13 TV news. He teaches gifted children, is working on his Ph.D., and raises money for organizations through his character Fontana Devine.

You can help! **Wichita Falls MCC** (Texas) reached their goal of making the link to their church's website the top one and the first one seen on Yahoo! Now they are trying to do likewise on Google by getting everyone to google their church's name!

**Rev. Rowland Jide Macaulay**, Associate Pastor of **MCC North**

**8, 2006 -- others will choose another Sunday in October in accordance with their church calendars.**

**Let's celebrate God's goodness as we look to a hope-filled future!**

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Every year, MCC churches receive a designated Fellowship Sunday Offering.

This year's offering will be used 100% for the local church ministries of church planting and church revitalization.

We warmly invite your church to participate in this annual denomination-wide offering to realize the goals of MCC's Strategic Initiative... to plant new MCC congregations... to revitalize churches going through transition... and to share the unconditional love of Jesus Christ through MCC's unique ministries.

#### MCC LAUNCHES CHURCH PLANTING WEBSITE, NEW RESOURCES

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

You'll discover helpful

**London** (England) was interviewed by the BBC World Service on the issues of homosexuality and the Nigeria government and how their stance affects Africans. "Africa Have Your Say" can be heard at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/5117748.stm>.

Congratulations to **Dick Kennedy** and **Jay Newman**, who celebrated their 46th Anniversary with their friends at **MCC of the Quad Cities** (Davenport, Iowa).

**MCC in the Valley** (North Hollywood, California) hosted a screening of *Instant Dads*, an independent film by Derek Maki. Prior to the show, **Deacon J.J. Kawan** performed her original songs from the movie. For information about the movie, visit [www.coolwatersprods.com](http://www.coolwatersprods.com).

As part of the Windsor Pride Celebrations, **Rev. Martha Daniels**, Pastor of **MCC Windsor** (Ontario, Canada), was invited to lead the prayer to open the City Council Meeting. She is only the third woman ever to be so honored - and the first MCCer.

Harry Knox, Director of the Human Rights Campaign's Religion and Faith Program, was a recent guest preacher at **Church of the Trinity MCC** (Sarasota, Florida).

**Marina Laws, Rev. Janice Bowker, Angie McLachlan, and Catherine Brew**, all members of **MCC Portsmouth** (England) will be exhibiting various artwork by MCC artists at the Art in the Park outdoor gallery in Bournemouth, Dorset, UK this month. Photographs by MCC's "First Lady," **Dr. Paula Shoenwether** of Snaparts in the US, will also be exhibited.

In the news! **Beth Lanier** and **Rev. Wayne Schwandt** of **MCC of the Chesapeake** (Annapolis and Southern Maryland) were featured on the front page in a three-part series of newspaper articles detailing LGBT life in a rural area. [www.somdnews.com](http://www.somdnews.com).

**First MCC** (Atlanta, Georgia) has applied for a separate 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation for their Community Center and charity work, making them eligible for government grants and corporate donations to assist with the food bank, benevolence programs, emergency funds, and other community outreach programs.

Congratulations to noted Queer Theologian **Professor Marcella Althaus-Reid**, the new Chair of Contextual Theology at New College, Edinburgh University's School of Divinity, making her currently the only female Professor of Theology in Scotland and the first woman ever to be appointed to a Chair of Theology at the University of Edinburgh. She worships with **MCC Edinburgh** and has just published her most recent book *Liberation Theology and Sexuality* (London: Ashgate 2006).

CREATIVE MCC MINISTRY IDEAS

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  
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## MCC FACTOIDS

There are 23 new MCC churches and groups meeting on a regular

Want to raise funds for your church? Try this idea from **All Saints' MCC** (Christchurch, Aotearoa/New Zealand)! The leaders promised to take a dip in the winter ocean if the congregation raised NZ\$500. To see the results, go to <http://allsaints.rainbow.net.nz/midwinter.html> for pictures of Interim **Pastoral Leader Neil Hellewell** and **Deacon Valerie Marshall** engaging in the Pastoral Polar Plunge! They are also holding bake sales, saving coins, and taking pledges to raise the NZ\$4000 needed for five of them to attend the MCC Sub Regional meeting in Sydney, Australia, next month.

That's ministry! Members of **New Life MCC of Hampton Roads** (Virginia) developed various ministries as part of their Discipleship Classes. Disciple I students began an Elderly Outreach Ministry, visiting nursing homes in the area to share Bible lessons, music, games, and prizes. Those in Disciple II started an Underprivileged Children's Ministry in which they work with other churches to provide after-school meals for children. The Hospice House Meals Ministry was created by Disciple III students preparing and packaging meals for a local hospice. Their meals were even featured on a local TV news channel! Disciple IV folks formed the Union Mission Ministry to serve meals to the clients there.

**ICM Los Angeles** and **MCC Los Angeles** (West Hollywood, California) invited other area MCCs to join them for a day of "Fun in the Sun" at Zuma Beach recently. The city of West Hollywood provided a bus for the outing!

Calling all youth! **Rev. Ty Sweeting**, music director **Jeremiah Cummings**, and the **Creative Dance Team** at **The Rock MCC** (Chattanooga, Tennessee) have found a key to increasing youth attendance by holding celebratory services to which youth can come, without judgment, in jeans, various hairstyles, and piercings. Heterosexual youth are coming, too, because of the inclusive atmosphere.

**Diaconia Cristiana en la Diversidad ICM** (Montevideo, Uruguay) publishes translated segments of **Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson's** *Our Story Too, Reading the Bible with New Eyes* in each issue of their weekly e-newsletter.

Anyone hungry? Since the completion of the renovation of the kitchen and social hall at **St. John the Apostle MCC** (Ft. Myers, Florida), **Deb Valsile** has served a second Sunday brunch each month, feeding as many as 135 hungry souls!

Need refreshing? Oasis Groups at **Jesus MCC** (Indianapolis, Indiana) are small groups that meet for friendship, support, Bible study, and prayer. They now have twelve such gatherings each week, with participants finding an "oasis" in their busy lives. Some are geographic and others appeal to a specific group, such as Honeymooners!

**MCC Tampa** (Florida) and **King of Peace MCC** (St. Petersburg,

basis in Latin America.

**A direct result of your generosity and support are eight new MCC churches and groups that regularly meet across Eastern Europe.**

Florida) held a joint "Beach, Baptism, and Barbeque" at Ft. Desoto Park.

"Love Liberates" was the theme **MCC Edinburgh** (Scotland) used for Pride this year. They wore "Love Liberates" t-shirts and handed out 1000 bright red stickers with the slogan and the church's web address. One Member of Parliament who addressed the crowd mistakenly thought that "Love Liberates" was the theme for the entire event!

**Billy Carroll**, the Children's Ministry Director at **First MCC** (Atlanta, Georgia) instituted a Sunday summer program for kids entitled Fiesta - Where Kids are Fired up about Jesus!

**MCC of Northern Virginia** (Fairfax, Virginia) recently had a successful - though sticky and gooey! - "Pie-in-the-Eye" fundraiser. Folks voted for their favorite "candidate" by putting money in a container bearing his/her name. The three with the most "votes" and the three with the least were declared the "winners." Those wishing to throw a pie at one of these six lucky MCCers had to bid for the opportunity. Over US\$1800 was raised and great fun was had by all!

"Holy Craps II- Vegas Style!" is the theme of a Casino Night on September 15 for **Resurrection MCC** (Houston, Texas). There will be Blackjack, Texas Hold 'Em, Roulette, Craps, and other casino games, as well as food, a store to purchase items with those winning chips, a silent auction, live entertainment, and more. The event will be held at the Texas Medical Center's Conference Center.

**MCC Illiana** (Lake Station, Indiana) worships in a storefront that's located on a drab street across from some railroad tracks. Wanting to brighten things up, one member brought planters and filled them with flowers. That prompted other folks along the strip mall to plant flowers in front of their stores, creating a little spot of brightness and a small sign of hope in a struggling community. And it was all inspired by the thoughtful action of one person.

Folks from **Open Door MCC** (Boys, Maryland) are carpooling to Gay and Lesbian Day at Kings Dominion theme park on September 16. Anyone want to join them?

**MCC Brisbane** (Australia) decided to follow the example of **MCC Sydney** and institute Crave Services. They were so named because those of a Pentecostal background were "craving" a charismatic-style worship service!

It's all in the name! The Yawanna Go Club at the **Sunshine Cathedral MCC** (Ft. Lauderdale, Florida) plans outings to movies, museums, sporting events, and festivals.

WomenSpirit Presents: MCC Women's Song Circle, a new monthly event for the women at **MCC San Francisco** (California). **Kathy Olberts** and **Shauna Joseph** are the leaders. Participants are invited

to bring an instrument or a favorite song.

**MCC of Corpus Christi** (Texas) has already started planning for their Second Annual Christmas Crafts Fair!

Folks from **Harvest MCC** (Denton, Texas) will go as a group to a Rangers' game that's designated as Faith Night with a pre-game concert of Christian music.

Friday Night Live! is the monthly gathering for Christian fellowship, food, fun and friends, both known and new, at **MCC of the Coachella Valley** (Cathedral City, California).

Formation of small groups is a priority this year for **King of Peace MCC** (St. Petersburg, Florida) as they focus on mentoring and nurturing of the congregation. Already formed are the Book Club, Photography Group, Sunday Morning Breakfast Club, Bicycling Folks, Cooking Club, and Meditation Group. More will be started in the near future.

**Agape MCC** (Ft. Worth, Texas) held a Skating Party for their "Kids of All Ages!"

The Tribe is the weekly youth group at **MCC Los Angeles** (West Hollywood, California). They host a monthly worship service that is incredibly spirited.

Do you like to shoot pool? If so, you might want to join the folks at **FirstCoast MCC** (St. Augustine, Florida) for one of their Billiards Socials!



#### LEARN MORE ABOUT: MULTICULTURAL TASK FORCE

The Multicultural Task Force facilitates the development of culturally appropriate documents, communications, worship experiences, and workshops to more intentionally embrace the global nature of MCC. Their work is in addition to that of the Clergy Development Team and the respective Elders who are addressing culturally appropriate protocols for education and credentialing of clergy serving in countries other than Canada and the US.

Currently the Multicultural Task Force is in the process of making recommendations to the appropriate MCC leaders and staff based on their discussions. An inventory of the location of MCC documents and in which of our official languages (French, German, Portuguese, Spanish and English) they are available is now being completed. With that information in hand, every document can be made more widely available to anyone who needs it.

Soul Food Ministry, an online ministry of MCC Washington, DC, has been working on translations for several years and is sharing their store of translated documents with the Task Force. (Learn more about Soul Food Ministries in the next issue of Around the Fellowship!)

At General Conference next July the Task Force plans to present a session about their mission and to ensure that there will be culturally varied workshops, displaying the diversity of being MCC outside of North America, as well as linguistically and culturally diverse worship experiences.

Members of the Multicultural Task Force are **Connie Meadows**, Chair, Assistant to the Moderator and fluent in five languages (Sarasota, Florida); **Christy Ebner**, Assistant to Region 5 and liaison to the Conference Team, **MCC of Greater Dallas** (Texas); **Rev. Elder Cecilia Eggleston**, Region 4 (Bath, England); **Rev. Paul Garcia**, a retired Professor of Foreign Languages, **Spirit of Hope MCC** (Kansas City, Missouri); **Rev. Elder Darlene Garner**, Region 6 (Monterrey, Mexico); **Rev. Axel Schwaigert**, Pastor, **Salz der Erde MCC** (Stuttgart, Germany); and **Enrique Zenteno**, Assistant for Region 6 (Monterrey, Mexico).

There is always a need for additional translators for our official languages. If you are gifted in this area and would be willing to volunteer to assist in MCC translations, please contact Connie at [ConnieMeadows@MCCchurch.net](mailto:ConnieMeadows@MCCchurch.net). Also needed are professional level translations for Bylaws and other official documents of MCC.

The coordinators for translations are, for French, **Thierry Sereno**, **MCC Montpellier** (France); for German, **Rev. Thomas Friedhoff**, Pastor, **MCC Hamburg** (Germany); and for Spanish and Portuguese, **Enrique Zenteno**, Region 6 Elder's Office (Monterrey, Mexico).



## TRANSITIONS

**Rev. Eleanor C. Nealy**, a member of the Moderator's Nominating Committee, has been promoted to the newly created position of Deputy Director for Programs at New York City's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center. She will oversee the Center's efforts in mental health and social services, youth services, cultural programming, meeting and conference services, and organizational development, planning, and research. Previously she was the Center's Director of Mental Health and Social Services. Rev. Nealy has also completed the coursework for a PhD. in Social Welfare.

**Rev. Nathan Meckley** is the new Interim Pastor at **King of Peace MCC** (St. Petersburg, Florida).

**Rev. Vicky Kolakowski** is developing an Internet ministry for transgender people that will be based at **MCC San Jose** (California). The church held a special service to bless and encourage her as she began her work on this exciting project.

**Rev. Kathy Burton** has joined the staff of **Truth Center MCC** (Atlanta,

Georgia) and will be leading the Women's Ministry.

Over three hundred people participated in the Building Dedication events at **St. Jude's MCC** (Wilmington, North Carolina), including the Mayor, a Senator, the District Attorney, school board members, business leaders, and a UCC pastor. The choir from **Imani MCC** (Durham, North Carolina) performed during the Gospel Concert. **Rev. Wanda Floyd**, Pastor of **Imani MCC**, and **Rev. Belva Boone**, Pastor of **St. John's MCC** (Raleigh, North Carolina) participated in the service, as did Rev. Preston Wells. **Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson** preached. The weekend also featured a Pig Pickin' on Saturday and a Brunch on Sunday. The extra food was taken to one of the local shelters. **Pilar Johnson and Tony Harrington** chaired the Dedication Committee. **Rev. Amanda McCullough** is the Pastor at **St. Jude's MCC**.

**Rev. Kati Houts**, a staff member of **Sunshine Cathedral MCC** (Ft. Lauderdale, Florida) is serving the congregation of **Water of Life MCC** (Tucson, Arizona) while **Rev. Gale Rawlins** continues healing from surgery.

**Rev. Penny Nixon's** ministry will be celebrated at **MCC San Francisco** (California) on Friday, September 15. She will preach her last sermon there on September 17.



**SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER**

**Rev. Ivor Holmans**, retired Pastor of **MCC Brisbane** (Australia) has been hospitalized for a month while undergoing chemotherapy. Cards may be sent to him and to his partner Adrain at PO Box 282, Annerley QLD 4103, Australia.

Sympathy is extended to the family and friends of **Michael T. Irwin**, a Deacon at **MCC Knoxville** (Tennessee), who passed away last month of a heart attack. [mcck@bellsouth.net](mailto:mcck@bellsouth.net)

The mother of **Rev. Charlene Buck**, Pastor of **MCC Longview** (Texas), recently passed away.

Due to a heat wave and severe storms in St. Louis, Missouri, last month, **MCC of Greater St. Louis** was without power for over a week. They had to worship outside because of the stifling heat and lack of power. [info@mccgsl.org](mailto:info@mccgsl.org)

When **Region 4** met in 2004, they were in Cape Town and over 100 delegates from South Africa were able to participate. But this year, the Conference is in Hannover, Germany, which makes it financially impossible for most delegates. **East London MCC** (England) has already pledged 535 pounds. **Journey MCC** (Birmingham, England) is doing a

for two delegates. If you would be interested in helping people attend the Region 4 Conference, contact [RevCeciliaEggleston@MCCchurch.net](mailto:RevCeciliaEggleston@MCCchurch.net).

Sympathy is extended to **Rev. Kermie Wohlenhaus**, spouse of **Rev. Glenna Shepherd**, in the passing of her father following an extended illness. [KermieK@aol.com](mailto:KermieK@aol.com)

**MCC Auckland** (Aotearoa New Zealand) lost a member of their Board -- Frank Smedley -- earlier this month. Remember the church and Frank's family in your prayers. [mcc\\_auckland@clear.net.nz](mailto:mcc_auckland@clear.net.nz) .

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