

Metropolitan Community Churches

Around The Fellowship

Tearing down walls. Building up hope.

March 2008 . Issue I

The
International
Newsletter of
MCC

Judy Dale, Editor

Subscriptions to
**Around The
Fellowship
Newsletter**
are free upon request.

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MCC churches around the world will be receiving a special, designated Easter Offering for Global Justice Ministry on Easter Sunday, or a Sunday close to Easter.

To participate, simply write to [Rev. Nancy Wilson](#) and let her know of your church's participation.

When you write to [Rev. Nancy Wilson](#), we'll add your church to the list of 2008's Pacesetter Churches -- churches leading the way for global justice!

MCC'S 2008

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PLUS... *Learn How We Can Support One Another!*

SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL CHURCHES & LEADERS

Bryan Parker, Lay Ministry Council Chair, was a member of the host committee for The Task Force's 2008 Creating Change Conference in Detroit, Michigan.

MCC in Glasgow, Scotland, met for the first time on Epiphany with 11 people participating. They have Holy Communion every other week in the Gay Centre and a monthly planning meeting. They created a Dream Tree on which they placed their hopes for the new congregation. Their vision was featured in a local newspaper. **Rev. Jane Clark** is the planter, along with **Kate Wood** as the musician. They moved to Glasgow from MCC North London (England). <http://www.mccinglasgow.co.uk>

Rev. Beth Goudy writes four Religion Columns each year for *The Morning Call* newspaper.

Rev. Terri Echelbarger taught MCC History and Polity at Pacific School of Religion for twelve students last semester. Special guests, who shared their own MCC stories, were **Rev.**

PACESETTER CHURCHES!

Churches Participating In MCC's Easter Offering for Global Justice Ministries

1. Christ Covenant

MCC (Decatur, Georgia, Region 2) - *Rev. Tessie Mandeville, Pastor*

2. Church of the

Trinity MCC (Sarasota, Florida, Region 7) - *Rev. Dr. Mona West, Pastor*

3. Circle of Light MCC

(Miami Beach, Florida, Region 7) - *Rev. Carlos Cruz, Pastor*

4. Cornerstone MCC

(Mobile, Alabama, Region 2) - *Rev. Lee Carlton, Pastor*

5. Divine Peace MCC

(Pontiac, Michigan, Region 2) - *Rev. Tyrone Sweeting, Interim Pastor*

6. Emanuel

MCC(Spokane, Washington, Region 1) - *Wayne Shull, Interim Pastoral Leader*

7. Exodus MCC (Abilene,

Texas, Region 7) - *Rev. Margaret Walker, Pastor*

8. FirstCoast MCC (St.

Augustine, Florida, Region 7) - *Rev. Ruth Jensen, Pastor*

9. Gentle Shepherd

MCC (Phoenix, Arizona, Region 6) - *Rev. Brad Wishon and Rev. Bonnie Ott, Pastors*

10. Gentle Shepherd

MCC (Tallahassee, Florida, Region 7) - *Rev. Paul Anway, Pastor*

11. Harbor MCC

(Galveston, Texas, Region 6) - *Rev. Pat Farnan, Pastor*

12. Harvest MCC

(Denton, Texas, Region 7) -

Sky Anderson, Rev. Elder Roy Birchard, Georgia Davis, Frank Howell, Clyde Howell, Jack Hubbs, Lynn Jordan, Rev. Vicky Kowalski, Bob Lawrence, Sylvia Perez, and Rev. Elder Freda Smith. The students will present their final projects as resources to the denomination.

Way to go! **MCC Lubbock** (Texas) burned their mortgage during their annual Ministry Appreciation Dinner.

A 90-minute hearing is taking place on Tuesday, March 4, before the California Supreme Court to hear the legal challenge to California's marriage filed by **MCC's Founder Rev. Troy Perry** and his partner **Philip Ray DeBlieck**. The California Supreme court will issue a final ruling within 90 days.

The Gulf Coast Gay Men's Chorus, which includes several members of **Cornerstone MCC** (Mobile, Alabama), sang at the Order of Osiris Mardi Gras Ball. The annual event attracts more than 1000 LGBT people for a night of pageantry.

Rev. Karla Fleshman was one of six individuals in the Guthrie Scholars Program at Columbia Theological Seminary. The diverse group did individual study and research, and held group discussions with seminary faculty.

The 2007 Lay Service Award at **MCC Manchester** (England) was presented to **John Foulds**.

The *Houston Chronicle* carried a news story about Galveston, Texas, which is becoming a gay mecca for the southern U.S. **Harbor MCC** was mentioned in the article.

Angel Collie and **Melanie Martinez**, co-leaders of the Transgender Resource Team, represented MCC at the Gender Odyssey Conference. They provided a positive MCC example, when a common theme in all workshops was the lack of faith communities and spiritual connection.

Rev. Dwayne Morgan is featured in *It's Your Choice*, a DVD-based curriculum used in schools to combat homophobia and bullying. He is also a Trustee for the Space Youth Project, the Dorset (England) LGBT youth group.

Daniel Schellhorn, a member of **MCC Washington, DC**, was elected to a three year term on the Board of Trustees of Lancaster Theological Seminary.

Rev. Lori E. Rivera was a guest lecturer at Manatee Community College, sharing MCC's history, worship experiences, and social justice work in the Religion in Contemporary Society class.

The **A. Austin Amerine Retreat Center** received corporate grants from OptiWell, Inc. and Nichiren's Coffeehouse for

Rev. Jeannie George, Pastor

13. Holy Covenant

MCC (Brookfield, Illinois, Region 2) - Rev. Danny Spears, Pastor

14. Holy Trinity MCC

(Edinburgh, Scotland, Region 4) - Rev. Kerri Mesner, Pastor

15. Imago Dei MCC

(Glen Mills, Pennsylvania, Region 3) - Rev. Karla Fleshman, Pastor

16. Joy MCC

(Orlando, Florida, Region 7) - Rev. John Middleton, Pastor

17. King of Peace

MCC (St. Petersburg, Florida, Region 7) - Rev. Dr. Candace Shultis, Pastor

18. Living Springs

MCC (Bath, England, Region 4) - Rev. Kieren Bourne, Pastor

19. Markens Liljer

MCC (Copenhagen, Denmark, Region 4) - Rev. Mia Anderson, Pastor

20. MCC Albuquerque

(New Mexico, Region 6) - Rev. Judy Maynard, Pastor

21. MCC

Anchorage(Alaska, Region 1) - Rev. Johnathan Jones, Pastor

22. MCC Brisbane

(Australia, Region 1) - Rev. Anne James, Pastor

23. MCC Cologne

(Germany, Region 4) - Ines-Paul Baumann, Interim Pastoral Leader

24. MCC

Detroit(Michigan, Region 5) - Rev. Mark Bidwell, Pastor

25. MCC East London

(England, Region 4) - Rev. Dr. Kermie Wohlenhaus, Interim Pastor

26. MCC

Elizabethtown(Kentucky,

sacred site development, including the purchase of their first street signs. The Center sold a parcel of land to help fund other projects.

Comedienne Vickie Shaw appeared at **Church of the Trinity MCC** (Sarasota, Florida) last month.

Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry preached at **MCC San Diego** (California) to welcome their new pastor **Rev. Dan Koeshall**.

Rev. Jeff Bert was named to the Board of DOORWAYS, the organization that had presented **MCC of Greater St. Louis** (Missouri) with a grant for their 9th Annual Golf Classic, the second largest in their history.

All God's Children MCC (Minneapolis, Minnesota) presented its 2007 annual **Troy D. Perry Living the Vision Award** to Minneapolis Mayor R. T. Ryback.

Over one-third of the congregation of **SunCoast Cathedral MCC** (Venice, Florida) completed *The Bible in 90 Days*. Participants read 12 pages of scripture daily, attended a weekly discussion class, and read through the entire Bible in three months.

CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND YOUNG ADULTS

Pike's Peak MCC (Colorado Springs, Colorado) holds a Children's Church each Sunday for those ages 4 through 5th grade.

COMING OF AGE was the theme for a Youth Retreat at **MCC of Greater Dallas** (Texas). Twelve teenagers (12-16) from **Agape MCC** (Ft. Worth, Texas) and MCCGD participated. They created a "rite of passage" similar to the bar/bat mitzvah or confirmation. They included a broader age range than the usual 13 year olds, since this had not been offered previously. They camped out and reflected on the Trinity and the elements: The Sacred Land - God - earth; The Sacred Body - Christ - water; The Sacred Soul - Holy Spirit - wind and fire. They built an altar to God, outlined their bodies in chalk as the sacred temples of Christ, and felt the wind as they talked about the power of love. They discussed the passion of the Spirit, Baptism, and Communion around the campfire. They drank the waters of life, ate bread, and talked about basic needs. They swam and compared it to being immersed in God's love. Then on Sunday morning, the youth celebrated and served Communion for the MCCGD congregation.

New Life MCC of Hampton Roads (Norfolk, Virginia) offers a Children's Nursery and a Children's Sunday School during

Region 5) - *Rev. Cathy Porter, Pastor*

27. MCC Hartford

(Connecticut, Region 5) - *Rev. George Chien, Pastor*

28. MCC Illiana

(Lake Station, Indiana, Region 5) - *Rev. Angie Thinnis, Pastor*

29. MCC in the Valley

(North Hollywood, California, Region 6) - *Rev. Dr. Bob Goss, Pastor*

30. MCC

London (Ontario, Canada, Region 5) - *Rev. Teresa Mallot, Interim Pastor*

31. MCC Los Angeles

(California, Region 6) - *Rev. Neil Thomas, Pastor*

32. MCC Louisville

(Louisville, Kentucky, Region 5) - *Rev. Dee Dale, Pastor*

33. MCC Lubbock

(Texas, Region 7) - *Rev. Renae Phillips, Pastor*

34. MCC Melbourne

(Australia, Region 1) - *Rev. Heather Creighton, Pastor*

35. MCC Montana

(Great Falls, Montana, Region 1) - *Rev. Gina Hartung, Pastor*

36. MCC New York

(New York, Region 3) - *Rev. Pat Bumgardner, Pastor*

37. MCC of Greater

Dallas (Texas, Region 7) - *Rev. Colleen Darraugh, Lead Pastor*

38. MCC of Greater

St. Louis (Missouri, Region 2) - *Rev. Dr. Carol Trissell, Pastor*

39. MCC of Northern

Virginia (Fairfax, Virginia, Region 3) - *Rev. Kharma Amos, Pastor*

40. MCC of the Blue

Ridge (Roanoke, Virginia, Region 3) - *Open Pulpit*

Sunday worship.

Nickolas leads the Youth Group at **MCC Melbourne**

(Australia), which meets twice each month and has grown to 10 members. They enjoy open discussions, Bible study, social activities, and encouraging one another on their spiritual journeys.

Jillian Graetz, the 19-year-old daughter of **Rev. Paul Graetz**, was crowned Miss All American. Her platform of care for the homeless and support of medical research for HIV and cancer took first place in the pageant's interview portion. Very supportive of MCC, she now makes public appearances across the U.S.

MCC Omaha (Nebraska) periodically offers a Kids' Activities Day for their children and those in the community. Crafts, games, and fun fill the afternoon.

MCC United (Tulsa, Oklahoma) celebrated their children and youth by having them lead a worship service.

Cornerstone MCC (Mobile, Alabama) has expanded its Christian Education opportunities to offer Bible studies for the whole family. In addition to their *ACEs* (Adult Christian Education) Bible Study, they now offer *Joy*, adult studies in Christian living; *Journey*, Bible study for teens; and *Kingdom Kids*, Bible study for children.

New Covenant MCC (Columbia, Maryland) offers a Children's Church during worship one Sunday a month.

MCC in the Valley (North Hollywood) has established a new Youth and Young Adult Outreach Group.

CREATIVE MINISTRY IDEAS YOU CAN USE!

Every month Sybil Bruncheon (the Church Lady), Fabio, and their entourage present an amazing evening of Bingo, entertainment, and fabulous prizes at **MCC New York** (New York).

Planning ahead! **MCC of Corpus Christi** (Texas) will hold a Mortgage Debt Retirement dinner in April. It will be \$52.00 (USD) per person --\$1 for each week of the year. But their Vending Machine Team put a twist on the ticket price by placing \$5 off coupons on several items in the machines, so that people never know when they might find one with their purchase!

The folks at **MCC of Paducah** (Kentucky) host a quarterly Music Night in their Fellowship Hall, which also serves as a

41. MCC of the Gentle Shepherd (Vancouver, Washington, Region 1) - *Rev. Ken Kerr, Pastor*

42. MCC of the Good Shepherd (Sydney, Australia, Region 1) - *Rev. Robert Clark, Pastor*

43. MCC of the Hudson Valley (Albany, New York, Region 3) - *Rev. Janet Avery, Interim Pastor*

44. MCC of the Lehigh Valley (Allentown, Pennsylvania, Region 3) - *Rev. Elizabeth Goudy, Pastor*

45. MCC of the Living Spring (Eureka Springs, Arkansas, Region 2) - *Rev. Steve Urie, Pastor*

46. MCC of the Spirit (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Region 3) - *Rev. Eva O'Diam, Pastor*

47. MCC Portland (Oregon, Region 1) - *Rev. Ron LaRocque, Interim Pastor*

48. MCC Quezon City (Philippines, Region 3) - *Pastor CJay Agbayani, Pastor*

49. MCC Rehoboth (Delaware, Region 3) - *Rev. Dr. Tom Bohache, Pastor*

50. MCC Richmond (Virginia, Region 3) - *Rev. Dr. Robin Gorsline, Pastor*

51. MCC San Antonio (Texas, Region 6) - *Rev. Mick Hinson, Pastor*

52. MCC Seattle (Washington, Region 1) - *Open Pulpit*

53. MCC Sydney (Australia, Region 1) - *Rev. Karl Hand, Pastor*

54. MCC South London (England, Region 4) - *Rev. Elder Jean White, Pastor*

Community Center. Their Singspiration Band plays requested favorites. Others play their instruments or perform karaoke. After participating in this fun evening, several people have begun attending worship and other church events.

Round Ball Time! The women of **First MCC of Atlanta** (Georgia) have formed a basketball team coordinated by **Heather Vincent** and **Gina Williamson** and are playing in the Decatur Women's Sports League.

For the annual Founders' Day Renewal Weekend at **MCC North London** (England), the Holy Hands Choir, a British Sign Language choir of hearing and deaf members, made its debut under the direction of assistant pastor **Rev. Sharon Ferguson**.

That's dedication! Fit and Fabulous is a new ministry at **New Life MCC of Hampton Roads** (Norfolk, Virginia). They meet on Monday and Tuesday evenings and at 8 am on Saturday mornings to "walk away the pounds and sweat in the Spirit!"

Spirit of Christ MCC (Joplin, Missouri) has a unique outreach ministry to LGBT students who are expelled from a local Bible school.

The "ladies" of **Open Door MCC** (Boys, Maryland) raised \$2100 (USD) at their third Drag Bingo FUNdraiser. More than 100 people attended, half of whom were not previously connected to the church.

St. Jude's MCC (Wilmington, North Carolina) has had several "British Boot" Sales. They each pay \$10 (USD) for a space and sell items out of the boot (trunk) of their cars! The church even supplies a table for another \$5.

Becoming family! The newsletters of both **MCC Sydney** (Australia) and **MCC Melbourne** (Australia) feature another MCC in a different part of the world. They get the information and pictures from that church's website or from someone in the church. In their e-newsletter **First MCC** (Atlanta, Georgia) lists information about another MCC for special prayer that week. And **Good Shepherd MCC** (Granville, NSW, Australia) lists worship, location, and other contact information for all of the churches in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand in their monthly newsletter.

MCC Elizabethtown (Kentucky) has a monthly Scrapbooking Night.

Neat idea! **Open Arms MCC** (Pahoa, Hawaii) played MCC Trivia. Prizes were awarded in response to questions such as: *What year was MCC founded? Who founded MCC? How many people were at the first worship service? When did our local church become an MCC? What is our Region? Who is the*

55. MCC Topeka

(Kansas, Region 2) - Rev. Patrick Rogers, Interim Pastor

56. MCC Winston

Salem (North Carolina, Region 3) - Rev. Joe Cobb, Pastor

57. Milwaukee MCC

(Wisconsin, Region 2) - Rev. Wendy Woodruff, Pastor

58. New Creation

MCC (Columbus, Ohio, Region 5) - Rev. Margaret Hawk, Pastor

59. Hew Hope MCC

(Montgomery, Alabama, Region 2) - Rev. Jo Crisco

60. New Life MCC of Hampton Roads

(Virginia, Region 3) - Rev. Reg Richburg, Pastor

61. New Spirit MCC

(Cincinnati, Ohio, Region 5) - Rev. Melody Wolder, Interim Pastor

62. Open Arms MCC

(Pahoa, Hawaii, Region 1) - Rev. Elder Debbie Martin, Pastor

63. Open Arms MCC

(Rochester, New York, Region 3) - Rev. Jim Mulcahy, Pastor

64. Open Door MCC

(Boys, Maryland, Region 3) - Rev. Rob Apgar-Taylor, Pastor

65. Our Hope MCC

(Athens, Georgia, Region 2) - Rev. Renee DuBose, Pastor

66. Peninsula MCC

(San Mateo, California, Region 1) - Rev. Terri Echelbarger, Pastor

67. Safe Harbour MCC

(Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, Region 5) - Rev. Darlene Young, Pastor

68. Spirit of Christ

MCC (Joplin, Missouri, Region 2) - Rev. Steve Urie, Pastor

Moderator? The grand prize was an autographed copy of one of **Rev. Elder Troy Perry's** books. The winner decided that after she had finished reading it, she would sign it and pass it on to another person to read, who would then sign it and pass it on.

At potluck dinners at **Holy Covenant MCC** (Brookfield, Illinois), congregants place the recipe on the item they brought so that folks with allergies can safely eat. The recipes are collected afterwards and will be included in a church cookbook.

Great Community Outreach! **MCC Albuquerque** (New Mexico) placed major ads in local newspapers inviting the public to an Open House at the church. Members staffed ministry information tables, dialogued with those who came, and provided refreshments and gifts for their guests.

MCC Richmond (Virginia) has a Soaking Prayer Service each month. Soaking Prayer is a time of allowing yourself to just "be" with the Holy Spirit. It is not a time for "God, I want" or "Jesus, I need", but a time to let the Holy Spirit heal hurts, strengthen you, and draw you closer to God.

MCC Knoxville (Tennessee) is hosting Home Fellowship Groups in four surrounding counties.

Here are great ideas: Folks at **Agape MCC** (Ft. Worth, Texas) submitted pictures of their pets. Congregants then voted (\$1 per vote) for their favorites. The 12 finalists were featured in a 2008 calendar. A calendar created at **MCC NOVA** (Fairfax, Virginia) featured pictures of church events. Members could include their birthday and anniversary dates for \$5 (USD) each and businesses could be listed for \$20.

MCC Manchester (England) held a Covenant Service on the Sunday devoted to Jesus' baptism. They held a commissioning service for their Board of Directors and a renewal of commitments to God.

Following Wednesday night dinner, folks at **Church of the Trinity MCC** (Sarasota, Florida) enjoy Spirit Cafe. The variety of programs last month included *The Spiritual Practice of Yoga* led by **Leah Linzer**, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Resurrected* with **Rev. Vickie Miller**, and *The Spiritual Practice of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicinals* taught by **Dr. Ellen Teeter**.

A real hoot! The seniors group that meets for lunch and other activities at **Resurrection MCC** (Houston, Texas) is called the **OWLS** (Outreach, Wisdom, Laughter & Support).

NEW BYLAWS AND JUDICIARY REVIEW TEAMS

69. Spirit of Life MCC

(New Port Richey, Florida, Region 7) - *Rev. Suzie Chamness, Interim Pastor*

70. St. John the

Apostle MCC (Fort Myers, Florida, Region 7) - *Rev. Steve Filizzi, Pastor*

71. St. Jude's MCC

(Wilmington, North Carolina, Region 3) - *Rev. Amanda McCullough, Pastor*

72. SunCoast

Cathedral MCC (Venice, Florida, Region 7) - *Rev. Dr. Sherry Kennedy, Pastor*

73. Sunshine

Cathedral MCC (Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Region 7) - *Rev. Durrell Watkins, Pastor*

74. Trinity MCC

(Gainesville, Florida, Region 7) - *Rev. Joe McMurray, Pastor*

75. Water of Life MCC

(Tucson, Arizona, Region 6) - *Rev. Gale Rawson, Pastor*

PARTICIPATION BY REGION:

- Region 1 - 12**
- Region 2 - 9**
- Region 3 - 14**
- Region 4 - 8**
- Region 5 - 10**
- Region 6 - 7**
- Region 7 - 15**

TOTAL = 75*

***as of March 3, 2008**

A Message from

**Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson,
MCC Office of the Moderator
and**

**Rev. Elder Darlene Garner,
Elders' Portfolio for Governance**

MCC BYLAWS REVIEW TEAM: The Board of Elders is pleased to announce the appointment of the MCC Bylaws Review Team. We extend our gratitude to each of the 13 people who applied. The six members of the MCC Bylaws Review Team are:

- Rev. Michael Cooper** of Boston, Massachusetts
- Ms. Judy Dale** of Louisville, Kentucky
- Rev. Ron LaRocque** of Portland, Oregon
- Rev. Robyn Provis** of Austin, Texas
- Mr. Lewis Reay** of Edinburgh, Scotland
- Ms. Leah Sloan** of Abilene, Texas

The MCC Bylaws Review Team will conduct a full, in-depth review of the MCC Bylaws and submit its report and any recommendations for change to the Board of Elders by the end of the 3rd quarter of 2009. A final proposal will be presented for consideration by General Conference in 2010. The work of the Bylaws Review Team is coordinated by Rev. Elder Darlene Garner.

MCC JUDICIARY REVIEW TEAM: The Board of Elders is pleased to announce the appointment of the MCC Judiciary Review Team. We extend our gratitude to each of the 27 people who applied. The members of the MCC Judiciary Review Team are:

- Rev. Kharma Amos** of Fairfax, Virginia
- Ms. Paulette Armstead** of Washington, DC
- Rev. Robert Clark** of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
- Rev. Terri Echelbarger** of Pacifica, California
- Rev. Elder John Gill** of San Diego, California
- Rev. Robert Griffin** of MCC Clergy Development
- Ms. Jude Litzenberger** of San Diego, California
- Rev. Marty Luna-Wolfe** of Tucson, Arizona
- Rev. James Merritt** of Orlando, Florida
- Mr. Ray Nutter** of Mercer Island, Washington
- Rev. Gale Rawson** of Tucson, Arizona
- Rev. Clay Witt** of Merritt Island, Florida

The MCC Judiciary Review Team will conduct a full, in-depth review of the current MCC Clergy Judiciary Process and submit its report and any recommendations for change to the Board of Elders by the end of the 2nd quarter of 2008. The work of the Judiciary Review Team is coordinated by Rev. Elder Darlene Garner (RevDarleneGarner@MCCchurch.net).

MCC TRIPS & TRAVEL

Dr. Sandra Bochonok is leading a Lenten pilgrimage to Northern France March 4 - 13. "Labyrinths, Cloisters and Chants" includes time to pray, play and ponder in Paris, Chartres, Mont-St. Michel and the Normandy Beaches. www.beipelligrini.com/trips2008.htm

First MCC of Atlanta (Georgia) is hosting a five-day cruise out of Tampa, Florida, September 13-18, aboard the Carnival Inspiration. They'll visit Grand Cayman Island and Cozumel, Mexico. Prices begin at \$492 (USD).

King of Peace MCC (St. Petersburg, Florida) has announced their 2008 cruise. They'll depart Miami, Florida, on October 19 and return on the 26th after visiting San Juan, Puerto Rico; Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas; and Philipsburg, St. Maarten aboard the Freedom of the Seas, the largest Royal Caribbean vessel. Prices begin at \$929 (USD) and include bus transportation from St. Pete. **Ron O'Conner**, 727-367-3737

Or... you could enjoy the cruise hosted by **MCC of the Palm Beaches** (West Palm Beach, Florida) to the Eastern Caribbean on the Crown Princess, Oct. 26 - Nov. 2, sailing from Fort Lauderdale. Enjoy Halloween at sea! **Rev. Paul Whiting** mccrev@bellsouth.net or Loring Miller LoringM@sandctravel.com.

MCC STEWARDSHIP IDEAS THAT WORK!

Rev. Ruth Jensen-Forbell challenged congregants of **FirstCoast MCC** (St. Augustine, Florida) to become *Pacesetter Parishioners* by tithing a full 10% of their income for a month, whether they received a salary, hourly wage, disability, an allowance -- whatever! The challenge came with the guarantee that at the end of the month, if they did not have everything that they *needed*, the money would be returned.

The Stewardship Team at **MCC San Diego** (California) taped congregants talking about how stewardship impacts their lives. The comments ranged from thought-provoking to outrageous, from impromptu to planned, and were shared with the congregation.

Rev. Neil Thomas challenged members of **MCC/ICM Los Angeles** (West Hollywood, California) to tithe a full tenth of their income for 120 days. Every day he prayed by name for each of those who committed to this endeavor that they might experience the blessings of God in new and wonderful ways. Now they are excitedly telling him about those blessings.

MCC Seattle (Washington) tailored their stewardship campaign to coincide with Advent. *Step into the Stream* focused on giving with a grateful heart out of what God gives to you.

MCC Key West (Florida) held a Stewardship Celebration Reception. Encouraging everyone to pledge, those who did were presented with a special pin custom designed by **Vicki Gordon**. First year pledgers received one with a ruby; second year folks were able to add a sapphire. This will continue until the rainbow is complete.

The Annual Giving Campaign at **MCC NOVA** (Fairfax, Virginia) proved that the church is full of awesome STARS ... **S**elfless, **T**houghtful, **A** amazing, **R**emarkable, and **S**upportive folks. They created a "Wall of Fame" which featured comments about why individuals give.

The Commitment Cards at **MCC Lubbock** (Texas) include pledges to daily prayer, witness, various ministries, presence at church, and spiritual growth, along with financial support. Programs are held throughout the year to assist congregants in keeping their commitments.

CHECK OUT THIS MCC AUTHOR!

Kittredge Cherry, MCC clergy and a former headquarters staff member, has a website <http://jesusinlove.org/> and a blog <http://jesusinlove.blogspot.com> that are excellent resources for LGBT theology and art. The blog is a place to discuss queer spirituality and the arts.

Art That Dares: Gay Jesus, Woman Christ and More has numerous full-page color illustrations. The stories of 11 contemporary artists, who present cutting-edge, sometimes controversial Christian images, are featured.

Jesus in Love: A Novel tells of a queer Christ with today's sexual sophistication as he lives in first-century Palestine. It is a novel of spiritual and sexual awakening.

Her newest book was released for Lent. A queer Christ lives out the Easter story of death and resurrection in *Jesus in Love: At the Cross*. This fictional autobiography of a bisexual Christ has the dramatic events of Christ's Passion set in the context of a gay love story between Jesus and his disciple John.

She also was featured in a video that celebrated Coming Out Day last year; it's included in video responses compiled by the

[coming-out-day-video.html](#)

MCC TRANSITIONS

Gentle Shepherd MCC (Tallahassee, Florida) has just moved to their own facility on 3.7 acres. A house was converted to a church. The sanctuary seats 90 and there is a kitchen, office, and an additional building for a Sunday School room. The congregation was so sure about this being the right place that they raised the \$100,000 (USD) down payment in just under 3 weeks!!! info@gentleshepherd MCC.com

Rev. Reg Richberg was elected pastor of **New Life MCC of Hampton Roads** (Virginia). He and his partner **Susie Chin** have begun their ministry there. prayers@newlifemcc.net

MCC North London (England) hosted an Affirmation of Ordination Service for **Rev. Clinton Crawshaw**, who completed his transfer clergy year at MCCNL, having begun it at **MCC/ICM Los Angeles** (California). He and his partner **Leon** moved to join the staff of **MCC Baton Rouge** (Louisiana) working with **The Big Easy MCC** (New Orleans, Louisiana). pastor@big easymcc.com

Kristin Gordon George is the new choir director at **MCC Portland** (Oregon). admin@mccportland.org

Rev. Beth Rakestraw gojcmcc@sbcglobal.net has for a number of years pastored both **Redeemer MCC** (Flint, Michigan) and **Gospel of Jesus Christ MCC** (Tri-Cities area). She has moved to a single pastorate and **Rev. Jim Lynch** is serving as the interim pastor of Redeemer MCC. RevJML1@verizon.net

'Ohana MCC (Honolulu, Hawai'i) had their final worship service January 13. Participants included Region 1 Elder **Rev. Elder Ken Martin**, **Rev. Elder Debbie Martin** from **Open Arms MCC** on Hilo, and Rabbi Schaktman from Temple Emanu-El. The group continues to participate in **MCC's Asian Pacific Initiative** and holds a monthly study group. **Rev. Dr. Jonipher Kwong** remains as the executive director of the Counseling & Spiritual Care Center of Hawai'i and leader of the Asian Pacific Initiative for MCC. JonipherKwong@aol.com

Rev. Ken Ehrke resigned as pastor of **Agape MCC** (Ft. Worth, Texas) effective Ash Wednesday, February 6. He will take part in a Spanish Language Immersion in Costa Rica and then begin his internship to become a nursing home administrator, for which he has already completed the class work. He hopes eventually to use that ministry for an LGBT endeavor. KenEhrke@aol.com

Mike Holroyd was installed as associate pastor of **Living Springs MCC** (Bath, England), while he is doing his candidacy at the church. kowhai45@hotmail.com

MCC of the Lehigh Valley (Allentown, Pennsylvania) had their final services in their old location on December 30 and began the new year in their new location in the Silkwerks Building, where they have ample worship, office, and fellowship space, as well as a large kitchen and a lot of natural light. info@mcclv.org

Rev. Joe Cobb and **James Matthews** are the proud parents of **Virginia Jane Alexandra Matthews**, born in November. The congregation of **MCC Winston-Salem** (North Carolina) is excited about their new church baby! mccws@lycos.com

Rev. Elder Nori Rost is the temporary pastor at **Wichita Falls MCC** (Texas). She is physically in the pulpit two Sundays a month and preaching there through technology for the other services! RevRost@aol.com

Rev. Wanda Floyd has resigned as pastor of **Imani MCC** (Durham, North Carolina). The founding pastor of this congregation 10 years ago, she will be focusing on her classes at school. RevWFloyd@aol.com

Ending on a high note! For his final sermon at **King of Peace MCC** (St Petersburg, Florida) interim pastor **Rev. Nathan Meckley** preached (and sang) on *Faith to Sing*. **Rev. Dr. Candace Shultis** has been installed as the new Senior Pastor. Candace@kingofpeacemcc.com

Harvest MCC (Denton, Texas) hired **Rev. Jeannie George** as their temporary pastor (Harvest@HarvestMCC.org) while they are in pastoral search following the resignation of **Rev. Marty Luna-Wolf** due to her hip replacement surgeries. mluna3141@aol.com

Len Tenorio is the new interim pastoral leader for **MCC Auckland (Aotearoa/New Zealand)**. bermulti@orcon.net.nz The former pastor **Rev. Leigh Neighbour** and his partner **Denny** are relocating to Brisbane, Australia. RevLNeighbour@yahoo.com.au

MCC San Diego (California) bid a fond farewell to **Rev. Elder John Gill** and **John Phlegar** at the conclusion of a 21-month interim pastorate there. The congregation presented them with a Sirius satellite radio, a gift certificate for Carnival Cruises, a photo album, a plaque, and a generous love offering.

R.W. Fisher is the new minister of music at **MCC Seattle**

(Washington). He's adding fun, hand clapping and a variety of instruments into the worship services. He previously served in four other MCCs. info@mccseattle.org

"Down by the Riverside"! Over 300 people gathered on the first Sunday of 2008 in the new interim worship location for **MCC of Greater St. Louis** (Missouri) in the historic Souldard neighborhood. info@mccgsl.org

Revs. Bonnie Ott and Brad Wishon tendered their resignations as co-pastors of **Gentle Shepherd MCC** (Phoenix, Arizona) effective April 1. revbonniemcccop@aol.com, revwishon@gsmcc.org

Rev. Rich Hendricks submitted his resignation at his secular job, effective March 1, in order to be the fulltime pastor at **MCC of the Quad Cities** (Davenport, Iowa).

Rev. Lori McPherson has been named interim pastor of **MCC Fredericksburg** (Virginia).

Hope MCC (Daytona Beach, Florida) voted to withdraw from MCC and become an independent church.

Donald Rosenstein is the new music director at **MCC Albuquerque** (New Mexico).

Rev. Leanna Hamilton is the interim pastor for **New Hope MCC** (Santa Rosa, California). revleanna@comcast.net

SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER

Rev. George McDermott fell on the ice and broke his hip. He is now using a wheelchair and will be walking again soon. He writes, "I am so thankful for the many expressions of love and concern that I've received from so many MCCers. I feel incredibly blessed to be part of such a phenomenal group of people who truly cross barriers and make people feel welcomed and loved. I am so touched by this true fellowship of believers." ProfRev@aol.com

Melanie Martinez had 8 1/2 hours of surgery on her spine just before Christmas. She is still recuperating and working as she can. She will be in a back brace for several months and has survived one major complication following surgery. MelanieMartinez@MCCchurch.net

Artur, the partner of **Rev. Steve Taylor**, recently passed away in Beijing, China, where Steve was stationed with the U.S. Embassy. Rev. Taylor had served as interim pastor at **MCC Washington, DC**, and as a consultant to the Board of Elders

about international relations, government protocol, and other issues. PereBouche@aol.com

Rev. Jane Clarke lost her father earlier this year. She had been his primary caregiver. janeclarke22@googlemail.com

Dale Burkholder, who has been the musician at many MCCs and is currently at **MCC Windsor** (Ontario, Canada), has just completed both radiation and chemo cancer treatments. gangalf_drb@yahoo.com

Ray Evette, the choir director at **MCC Knoxville** (Tennessee), has been diagnosed with prostate cancer (rjchavette@aol.com), as has **Rev. Elder Roy Birchard**.

Rev. Jim Glycer joined the Church Triumphant. He had served MCC in Kansas City and at **MCC Portland** (Oregon) and **MCC San Francisco** (California).

Rev. Mia Anderson is mourning the loss of her father. alma@heaven.dk

Congratulations to **Marie Holt** and **Lisa Cupit**, long time lay leaders of **MCC of the Palm Beaches** (West Palm Beach, Florida) on the birth of their twins Zachary and McKinley. info@mccpalmbeach.org

Here's an update from **Rev. Paul Fairley**: "I finished chemotherapy last year and the results were good - shrinking my chest tumor by more than 50% - although the process of chemotherapy was very difficult, physically and emotionally. For now, I am not having any further treatments. The chest tumor seems under control and there is no other therapy that can be done for my brain. Based on the location of the five tumors there, surgery, more radiation or chemotherapy are not options. So it's a wait-and-see process between now and when symptoms start to emerge. Thanks to the generous disability insurance provided through **MCC Toronto**, I will be able to maintain my household indefinitely and I am very comfortable. The best way to reach me now is my email at paul@paulfairley.ca. Go ahead and use it! Your messages mean more than you know."

The mother of **Rev. Pressley Sutherland**, senior pastor of **MCC North London** (England), was called home to God. She had been ill in recent months, but is now at peace. PressleyLondon@aol.com

To learn more about MCC's international ministry, visit www.MCCchurch.org.

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