

New to Metropolitan Community Churches?

A Denominational Overview.

Welcome to MCC! MCC is a global Christian church of loving, affirming and welcoming communities of faith. We are “Tearing Down Walls” of oppression and injustice in your community and around the world. Because we are a people of the Good News, we are working with our Divine Creator to “Build Up Hope” among our siblings worldwide. We are a people of hope. We are a people of faith. We welcome you on this lifelong journey and mission!

What are Local MCC’s Like?

Our churches are located in over 40 countries on 6 continents and are made up of congregants from many different walks of life. Because of this, we have a fellowship of churches that celebrate diversity both within their local congregations and among our global community. Every church is influenced by the congregation members involved. The people sitting near you during worship services may come from a different religious tradition than you do. Still, we all worship together and celebrate the diversity God creates in us. As a global church, we share the foundational calling (mission) for a specific and intentional outreach to/with homosexual, bisexual, and transgender people. Our churches actively minister in their communities to and with LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) people. We are a church that believes in the priesthood of all believers. That means, in a nutshell, that when you walk into the church and become an MCC member, you become a messenger the God loves all of God’s children and celebrates our created sexualities, our diversities and our individual uniqueness. All persons have value and worth, and are uniquely gifted to share the Good News with others. It takes the whole body, clergy and laity, to live out the Good News!

Will I be welcome?

Yes, absolutely. No matter your religious background (or lack thereof), your race, gender identity, sexual orientation, family makeup, disability...anything – you are welcome in MCC.

What about my family? Is there a place for my children?

Yes. You and your family (biological and of choice) are welcome!

Ministry to children and young adults is available in most MCC churches. If you are feeling uncertain about resources available to you at the church you plan to visit, please contact the pastor or pastoral contact before you go. Find contact information in our Church Directory.

Q & A: About MCC for Newcomers

Is MCC a gay church? MCC was founded as a Christian church called to be in ministry to/with homosexual people. As time passed, we built on the original vision given to our founder (Rev. Troy Perry). MCC has become an all-inclusive fellowship of churches – churches that welcome everyone.

How old is MCC? We were founded in October, 1968 and celebrated our 40th anniversary in 2008.

How did MCC begin? MCC was founded out of the vision and calling of the Rev. Troy Perry. For more information on the establishment of MCC and our earliest experiences as a church.

Does MCC perform gay marriage? MCC believe that marriage should be freely available to all people, everywhere. Where legal marriage is allowed for homosexual couples, MCC offers marriage ceremonies. In locations in which gay marriage is not legal, MCC offers Holy Unions – religious ceremonies that recognize the union of a homosexual couple in the house of God. NOTE: MCC clergy are able to provide marriage or union ceremonies to any couple, heterosexual and homosexual.

MCC's Statement of Faith...

This is the simple declaration of what MCC believes, as stated in our By-Laws, and accepted by our General Conference: "Christianity is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and is the religion set forth in the scriptures. Jesus Christ is foretold in the Old Testament, presented in the New Testament, and proclaimed by the Christian Church in every age and in every land." Founded in the interest of offering a church home to all who confess and believe, Metropolitan Community Churches moves in the mainstream of Christianity. Our faith is based upon the principles outlined in the historic creeds: Apostles and Nicene.

We believe: In one triune God, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient, of one substance and of three persons: God – our Parent-Creator; Jesus Christ the only begotten son of God, God in flesh, human; and the Holy Spirit – God as our Sustainer. That the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God, showing forth God to every person through the law and the prophets, and finally, completely and ultimately on earth in the being of Jesus Christ. That Jesus...the Christ...historically recorded as living some 2,000 years before this writing, is God incarnate, of human birth, fully God and fully human, and that by being one with God, Jesus has demonstrated once and forever that all people are likewise Children of God, being spiritually made in God's image. That the Holy Spirit is God making known God's love and interest to all people. The Holy Spirit is God, available to and working through all who are willing to place their welfare in God's keeping. Every person is justified by grace to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

MCC Statement of Purpose:

As God's liberated people, we boldly . . .

Reclaim our Holy Identity

At MCC, we believe that even in our humanness, we are holy. We are liberated from other people's definitions of who we are. We are made both body and spirit. We believe that our sexuality is a holy gift from God so we no longer distance our bodies from our experience with God. We are a people who proudly participate in the communion of body and spirit.

Advance our call to Social Justice and Action

At MCC, we believe that Jesus led the way in acts of compassion and acts of justice. Because we have been a people in the margins of society, we understand fully the grace that God has extended to us. We seek to distance ourselves from exclusion and draw ourselves closer to including all those who are marginalized in any way. We stand boldly with those who resist the structures of exclusion, as Jesus did, and work to insure freedom for all people. In the margins, we are blessed.

Transforming Grace

At MCC, we come as we are to Christ and are changed by what we find. We experience a God with open arms, inviting all to take the sacred journey of faith and transformation. We are growing in our faith and claim that our place in society has magnified our place in God's family. We are one of the many voices of God that, until now, has been lost in the margins!

Nurture the value of Community

At MCC, we believe our ultimate ministry is in the world. We know that in order to prepare ourselves for radical service that changes lives, we must equip ourselves and others in the safety of a supportive community. We strive to live out a message that rejects the idea that any are excluded from the family of God.

Build bridges that Liberate and Unite

At MCC, we have experienced the soul destruction that comes from hate filled rhetoric. In restoring our souls, we have come to find that our voices will speak the liberation that comes through peace, compassion, love, respect and grace. As followers of Jesus, we believe in everyone's holy privilege to work out their own salvation. While we are a Christian church who follows Jesus, we respect those of other faith traditions and work together with them to free all those who are oppressed by hate, disregard and violence.

Human Rights Protocol

Written by Rev. Elder Diane Fisher
Adopted by the MCC Board of Elders, 11 August 2008

What is the Human Rights Church?

Metropolitan Community Church mission in the world is Tearing Down Walls, and Building Up Hope, as we respond to issues of injustice in our world.

Philosophy

We are called as Christians to:

- stand in solidarity with those who are marginalized and oppressed,
- be partners in working for change,
- be witnesses who call attention to Human Rights abuses,
- be a voice in the international community for justice,
- lift up new generations of remarkable, far-reaching spiritual activists,
- build on hope and create our future.

What is justice?

Harper's dictionary defines justice as:

The demand of God for justice is so central that other responses to God are empty or diminished if they exist without it (Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:6-8; Matthew 23:23).

God is the defender of the poor and the oppressed (Jeremiah 9:23-24, Psalm 10:17-18)

When we properly carry out justice, we are agents of divine will (Isaiah 59:15-16)

The context for the carrying out of justice is the creation of community and the preservation of people in it (Leviticus 25:35-36; Job 24:5; Psalm 107:36; Luke 7:29-30).

What are our baseline standards?

- to only go where we are invited
- to assume we have a lot to learn
- to listen to our hosts
- to forge partnerships
- to respond when requested
- to be flexible to the realities and differences in establishing churches internationally

To only go where we are invited:

MCC is approached by people and organizations from around the world asking for our assistance and support. Prioritizing our response is critical in managing our resources and responding to cries for justice around the world.

Criteria for Potential for Success:

- Assessment is key – need to consider nature of the contact, who, what, where, when, why and how
- We need to consider the impact of our involvement – are we the best people/organization to respond
- What resources, personnel and financial will be required and are they readily available
- Are there organizations willing to partner with us on this response
- Need to consider, potential for impact for the LGBT community, history of Christian Church in the region, political stability of country, nature and severity of the treatment of LGBT community, windows of opportunity

To assume we have a lot to learn:

MCC has been invited to work in community with many cultures and countries.

- Do your research, read everything that you can find on the country you are going to, a useful tool in gathering information about nations is the internet. Also, The World Guide 2005/2006: See the World from a Different Angle (Paperback) by Third World Institute.
- Check for recent stories in the news
- Look at what is happening regionally
- Check the political realities in countries near the region you are travelling to
- Find out everything you can about cultural and religious norms

To listen to our hosts:

MCC has been invited and the experts on what is happening in any country are the people who live there.

- Listen and learn from the community who offered the invitation
- Check on the local customs and culture and imagine the implications
- Never do any press/media work without members of the indigenous community present and advising, listen to what it is they want the message to be

To forge partnerships:

It is critical that we form partnerships and build bridges that unite as we do this work.

- There are often links with international organizations that are possible and supportive e.g.: Human Rights Watch, ILGA (ILGA Europe, ILGA Africa, ILGA Latin America), Amnesty etc.
- Many nations have limited LGBT organizations, but check with local groups to make contact with any organizations they might suggest
- Look for places where NGO's are invited to participate and try signing up
- Look for meetings that deal with Human Rights issues and get involved
- Stand with others who are marginalized and oppressed

To respond when requested:

MCC is often asked to be present at or to do press conferences and/or TV and Radio.

- Always have a clear message that has been crafted with the community you are presenting with
- Ensure that you are always with an indigenous leader for all media coverage
- Create a short statement of introduction of yourself and the primary topic
- Never argue, just politely disagree
- Carry many business cards with local contact information
- Have MCC printed materials available in the language of the country if possible and English
- If you are clergy, wear your collar
- If you are participating in a public event, such as Gay Pride, wear a rainbow stole (it attracts the media)
- Bring a local member of the community when you are answering questions, something as simple as turning and asking them if they have anything that they would like to add
- Practice before hand

To be flexible to the realities and differences in establishing churches internationally:

People are often in situations where safety is the primary concern and until that is starting to become a reality, church is often not possible. The Human Rights work helps us to understand the culture and the issues and to build trust.

- A worship service may happen, but that does not mean that a church is being planted
- MCC's church planting initiative can be involved when the time has come for a church plant
- Church planting must be culturally relative and sensitive. The religious culture which is predominant within a community will often influence people's expectations and/or fears
- Church planting is a long term goal not may not be an immediate reality and that is okay