
NEW IMAGE



METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH † KNOXVILLE, TN

Volume 29, Issue 6

Spring 2009



Words from the Pastor

1 Cor. 11:23-26 - "Let me go over with you again exactly what goes on in the Lord's Supper and why it is so centrally important. I received my instructions from the Master himself and passed them on to you. The Master, Jesus, on the night of his betrayal, took bread. Having given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, broken for you. Do this to remember me.' After supper, he did the same thing with the cup: 'This cup is my blood, my new covenant with you. Each time you drink this cup, remember me.' What you must solemnly realize is that every time you eat this bread and every time you drink this cup, you reenact in your words and actions the death of the Master. You will be drawn back to this meal again and again until the Master returns. You must never let familiarity breed contempt."

The next months contain two of our Christian seasons of Lent and Easter. In the Old English, Lent means "spring". It is also the time when days start to lengthen. Lent was also called the time of hunger because the winter food supplies had been used up and new supplies not yet brought. Lent is the time of breaking the soil and planting. In the church, it is the time of breaking our charades and being honest. It is the time of admitting our brokenness so that room for growth might be allowed. The season of Easter is the celebration of Christ's resurrection. New life breaks into the midst of hunger, wholeness is promised, and our brokenness is being healed. In the middle of these seasons is Maundy Thursday, which is the celebration of the Great Thanksgiving, the Last Supper, and the institution of communion. Here, in Christ's brokenness, we can be thankful for the brokenness of our own lives. In the brokenness, the way to growth is opened. Here, in Christ's poured-outness, we can be thankful for our own brokenness and growth being

poured out into the world. Here, we remember and make something new...new life in Christ.

Our Church is currently dealing with the brokenness of Rev. Ray Neal leaving us to serve MCC Seattle. It is a time of grief in the loss. It is also a time to celebrate that our brokenness makes a space for growth and change both here and in Seattle. It is a time to remember that Ray is part of our pouring out to the world that new life may pop out all over the place. In Ray's move, our body is remembered and expanded to now incorporate not only Ray in Seattle, but the MCC there and all the new life that will occur in their congregation. Ray was a blessing to this congregation and to me. He saw places we needed to move into ministry and led us into those places. He gave a face to the church for our visitors and new folks. He was there to create new lines of communication. He leaves us with new teams to continue these ministries. I thank God for Ray's work here at MCC Knoxville. I will pray for his work in Seattle and I expect that into the brokenness, God will prepare a place for our next steps. Shalom, Bob

Pastor Ray Neal Resigns from MCKK

Letter from Pastor Ray

My dearest friends in Jesus Christ - I cannot express my deepest emotions about you in mere words. Even as I write this I am overwhelmed by the knowledge of your great love for me, and mine for you, and the tears flow freely at having to tell you goodbye. You have been and will continue to be some of the most important persons in my life. You have truly taught me what it means to be a part of a true Jesus community bound together by love, respect, trust, mercy, and grace. You have demonstrated all of those things to me and more. I can only hope that I have somehow repaid you for your kindnesses and ministries to me over the five years I have been privileged to know you.

You restored my faith in myself when I was at the lowest point in my life following my divorce five years ago. You helped me go through a marvelous "coming out" as a Christian man. You loved me as I grieved for my middle daughter who was killed in an automobile accident. You prayed for my youngest daughter when she was hospitalized for more than four months. You prayed again for my son and his three children when their mother (his former wife) died a year ago. You encouraged me to renew my calling as an ordained minister and then made room for me on your pastoral staff the past two and a half years, giving me financial support and time to attend educational events so I could complete the many requirements to transfer my ordination status to Metropolitan Community Churches. Somehow, simply saying "Thank you" seems to be insufficient.

Metropolitan Community Church of Seattle voted on Sunday, February 8, 2009 to call me as their pastor. As you read this, I will already be in Seattle, where I will preach for the first time as their new pastor on Sunday, March 1. Please keep me and MCCS in your constant prayers as we attempt with God's help to build a growing, loving church in that great city, that reflects as much of the glory of God I found with you, my dearest friends, at MCKK.

Seattle is the 15th largest city in the US. More than 13% of the population self-identified as same-sex couples in the last US census. This is the largest concentration of LGBT persons of any city in the US except for San Francisco. It is a number that continues to grow. The potential for building a growing MCC congregation with a loving and redeeming outreach to that large LGBT community is astounding! Currently, the church meets in the chapel of a reformed Jewish Synagogue near the heart of the centralized LGBT neighborhood. The facilities are wonderful and will serve MCCS well for years to come. Like MCKK, the church is a regional church with many persons driving from long distances to worship and serve.

I can only hope that MCCS will be able to grow in the same manner as MCKK has over the last five years. Did you know that MCC Knoxville was listed as the number one church for attendance growth in the UFMCC for December 2008? Not the first time you have been in the top ten churches for growth in the last few years. You should be honestly proud of the work you have done to achieve the growth you have experienced. You are blessed to have a pastor like Rev.

Bob Galloway who speaks the truth of God in loving and redeeming ways. Mere words cannot express the appreciation I feel for how Pastor Bob has ministered to me. He has truly become my spiritual mentor and one of my best friends! I pray that you will keep in touch with me! My email is hrnjr@comcast.net.

In God's Great Love Forevermore,
Pastor Ray Neal

Trent Gilmore Accepts Invitation to become Choral Director at St. Paul AME Zion Church and Dale Jolley accepts MCKK pianist/accompanist position

Much beloved MCKK Pianist Trent Gilmore accepted the invitation to become the Choral Director at Saint Paul AME Zion Church in Maryville, where he served in the same position from 1990-2005. Trent has blessed our worship services for the last three years with his worshipful music and has been a fantastic accompanist for our continually growing choir!

Ray Evette, MCKK Choir Director, has announced that Dale Jolley will be taking over Trent's responsibilities at MCKK as accompanist for the choir and for coordinating pianists for worship services. Dale and Trent played a piano duet at the Christmas Choir program at the Bijou Theatre.

Trent's resignation letter to the Administrative Council:

It is with a heavy heart that I resign my position as Coordinator of Accompanists/Choir Accompanist effective January 31, 2009. I will be returning to Saint Paul AME Zion Church in Maryville as Choir Director. This is the church for which I served from 1990-2005. Even though I will no longer be an employee of MCKK, I will remain as active as I can (playing for evening services when needed, attending church events, etc.). I have enjoyed playing piano for the morning services at MCKK. However, my degree and most of my experience are in Vocal Performance, which includes choir directing. I have been happy at MCKK over the past four years, but there has been a void. Receiving the call to return to Saint Paul is an answer to my prayers. I will miss the services at MCKK and will miss the wonderful people. MCKK is my only link to our "Community". Therefore, I will attend services on Sunday evening when possible.

God bless you all!

Trent Gilmore

***Doing the Best of Things in the Worst of Times--
Giving During Difficult Financial Times***
by Kathy H.

It is a natural human tendency during difficult times to withhold, curtail, and withdraw. Many of us at MCKK probably are fearful that we will lose our job. Some of us have actually lost our job or had our pay and hours reduced. It is very natural to reduce or eliminate giving to the church during such times. However, there are many reasons why we should keep giving. I believe that God asks us to tithe for many reasons and promises blessings to those who do. Following are three bible verses that I believe reflect this message.

Mahachi 3:10 - *Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. "Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."*

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 - *Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*

Luke 12:34 - *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

When times are difficult, we want to maintain a sense of control. Controlling our spending is one way to maintain a false sense that we are in charge. But we are not in charge. Tithing helps us remember we must step out in faith and turn to God to take care of us. By relinquishing that false sense of control and giving our worries to God, we reduce the stress that comes from trying to control the uncontrollable. Tithing also helps us to focus on using our resources, our gifts from God, in a wise manner. We live in such a materialistic world. It is easy to fall into the trap of holding on to our "things." By giving the first 10% to God, we are acknowledging God's generosity to us and renewing the promise to use God's gifts well. God promises to pour out blessings on us when we give generously. I

believe that is a promise that we need to stand on today. I, myself, am losing my job. It is scary. But I trust that I can keep giving to the church and that God will continue to bless me as God always has.

At MCKK, we need to reach out during these difficult times. Many individuals will begin to seek a closer relationship with God when their lives seem desperate and out of control. MCKK is a place where those individuals can turn to find God. Giving allows us to continue and even grow the ministries that allow people in our community to find Christ. Finally, tithing is voluntary. No one from MCKK will ever pressure you to give. You are welcome at MCKK if you do not give a dime. Please consider the role of giving to the church in your walk with God. Consider doing "the best of things in the worst of times."
-Kathy H.



**Spectrum Diversi-Tea &
Coffee House**

Spectrum Cafe meets on the first and third Saturday of each month from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. at the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church. Spectrum Cafe is a social gathering place for Knoxville area high school youth (age 14-18) who self-identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. Individuals may be questioning their sexual or gender identity or may feel left out because of who they are or what they believe, or where they come from. Everyone is invited who wish to socialize in an atmosphere that reflects a full spectrum of people and ideas. Find out more at www.spectrumcafe.org.



MCC-K Music Notes



Our choir has resumed rehearsals on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. and on Sundays at 10:30 a.m. After a wonderful Christmas season and a month of rest, it is time to regroup and continue our work of sharing the gospel message through music. Now is a great time for new members to join, for former members to rejoin, and for the faithful to recommit to our largest church ministry. It doesn't matter if you can or cannot read music, can sing solos, or even have a great voice!

If you want to praise God through this ministry, you are welcome!

Mark your calendars now for our Easter worship celebration on Sunday, April 5, at the 11:00 a.m. service. The choir will be presenting the story of Holy Week and the resurrection of Jesus at that time. Scripture, readings, and music will blend to tell this exciting story. Please be present, and invite your friends to join us!

Gay Men's Group—16 years together! **Topics for March and April**

March 2009

- 2 – Open Discussion – Free HIV Testing at 8:30 p.m.
- 9 – Healthy Masculinity – Guest
- 16 – Disastrous Dates
- 23 – My Favorite Gay Myths
- 30 – Gay Men & Our Mothers

April 2009

- 6 – Open Discussion – Free HIV Testing at 8:30 pm
- 13 – Out in the Workplace
- 20 – In Search of Prince Perfect
- 27 – Gay Men & Our Fathers



New Women's Group

A new lesbian women's group is forming at TVUUC. The group meets two Tuesdays a month at 7:00 p.m. at TVUUC 2931 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, TN. The next LBT Women's Group meeting will have a reading from the book "Coming Out Spiritually". Here is a taste of it:

"Coming out is a profoundly spiritual act. It is an ongoing process that once begun, never stops for the rest of our lives. Coming out means letting go -- letting go of fear; letting go of limitation; letting go of anything and everything that has held us back, or anything we have been grabbing on to."

There will be a time of sharing after the reading. There has also been a suggestion for attendees to share a recent "Ahh haa" moment or epiphany in their life. So, if your spiritual light bulb has lit up lately, think about

sharing that with the group. After the meeting, the group will move on to some sort of fun group activity. Also, you may find my blog interesting, which was written after the last meeting called "I am Home". It can be found <http://auroraforest.blogspot.com/>. The blog will be updated regularly about... whatever. So drop in if you like, post a comment if you want. Please visit www.tvuuc.org for more info.

Blessings to you. –Shonna



Mark Your Calendar! **Spring Retreat 2010** **“God Whispers Your Name”**

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the 2009 Spring Retreat has been cancelled. However, there will be a Spring Retreat during the weekend of May 14-16, 2010. The retreat committee is working on a smaller, one day retreat for 2009. More details to come as plans are finalized.

MCC Regional Elder Rev. Arlene Ackerman Visited MCC Knoxville

Rev. Elder Arlene Ackerman, Region 3 Elder, and currently assigned to supervise some of the churches in Region 2, including MCC Knoxville. Rev. Ackerman preached at MCCK on February 15 and after the service met with the Administrative Council before leaving to visit the new MCC in Asheville, N.C. You may remember that we honored Rev. Ackerman in 2007 for 30 years of service and leadership in UFMCC. On February 22, Rev. Ackerman will hit the milestone of 60 years of an active and faithful life as a child of God. We encourage you to send cards, emails, or voicemails. You can write to her through the Region 3 Office, P. O. Box 276, Landisville, PA 17538 or email her at revarleneackerman@mccchurch.net. This was a rare opportunity to meet one of our denominational elders!

Congregational Meeting Sunday, March 15, 2009 at 1:30 p.m.



Michael T. Irwin Deacon's Pantry Food Baskets

The next Congregational Meeting will be held during potluck lunch and will begin after all have been served on Sunday, March 15. Two Administrative Council positions currently held by Cassi W. and Cynthia H. are up for re-election. Person's seeking positions on the Administrative Council must be members-in-good-standing for at least six months and may not be related to another council member. Employees of the church and clergy candidates may not serve on the council. Join us during the March meeting to hear reports from our pastors, administrative council, treasurer, deacons, ministry teams, as well as conduct other church business. An official member is a person who has completed the membership class, signed the membership form, and has been inducted into membership during a worship service. Only official members may vote on issues during the meeting.

Tennessee Equality Project Advancing Equality Day on the Hill

The event *Advancing Equality Day on the Hill* was held on Tuesday, February 17 from 8:30 am until 3:00 pm CST and was sponsored by The Tennessee Equality Project. The LGBT community is once again facing renewed attacks on our rights in the legislature this year and our participation in this event was very important as it gave us the chance to speak face to face with the lawmakers who have the power to have an impact on our rights.

Food Pantry Items are traditionally brought on the third Sunday of the month, but you are encouraged to donate food any time to help those in need. The following items are needed throughout the year (minimum sizes are listed—larger sizes welcomed as well):

- Chicken Noodle Soup - 10.75 oz. can
- Tomato Soup - 10.75 oz. can
- Macaroni and Cheese Dinner - 6 oz. box
- Corn bread or Muffin mix - 8.5 oz. package
- Saltine crackers (low fat) - 1 lb. box
- Whole Grain Cereal - 14 oz box (such as All Bran, Bran Flakes, Cheerios, Wheaties, Wheat Rice or Corn Chex, Grape Nuts, Cream of Wheat, Kix, Shredded Wheat)

For those who don't have time to shop, the deacons will shop for you! Monetary donations for the Deacon's Benevolence Fund can be placed in the envelopes located in the Sunday bulletin, on the round table in the front of the church, or placed in the weekly offering.

I Hate February (The Death of My Son) Amy MacDougall

I hate February as it looms in the distance - that awful anniversary comes upon me every year. I hate February - seems the longest month in winter - his birthday and death combined. Then I see dear Mother Mary kneeling at the Cross of Jesus. I see her tears. I hear wailing as she gives up her Son to the world. I hate February, but when Easter comes, I'm filled with joy. Out of the brightness she came to me: Heavenly mother. I fell on my knees - her hand on my face - a sweet, gentle touch. "Sweet child, I love you. I love so much. I love you, I love you, and I'll always be here. The weeping, the tears, I'll wipe from your eyes. Look up precious daughter and see the blue skies. Look in my eyes now - look very deep. It's time now, it's time now, and you can go to sleep. Sleep now, sweet daughter, the night's falling nigh. I hear you, my angel, that deep, sleeping sigh . . . good night, dear one. Mother's watching over you."



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Date	Event
February 25, 2009	Ash Wednesday Worship Service (7:30 – 8:30 p.m.)
February 26, 2009	Administrative Council
March 15, 2009	Annual Congregational Meeting (1:30 – 3:00 p.m.)
3 rd Sunday of every month	Pot Luck Lunch at Church (12:30 – 1:30 p.m.)
3 rd Sunday of every month	Pot Luck Dinner at Church (7:00 – 8:00 p.m.)
April 12, 2009	Membership Inquirer's Class – MCCK (1:30 – 5:00 p.m.)
3 rd Sunday of every month	Deacon's Food Pantry Collection (11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.)
1 st & 3 rd Saturdays each Month	Spectrum Café – TN Valley Unitarian (5:00 – 7:00 p.m.)
1 st Tuesday of Each Month	Queer Cinamatini – The World Grotto (7:00 p.m.)
2 nd Thursday of each Month	PFLAG Meeting - TN Valley Unitarian (7:00 – 9:00 p.m.)
3 rd Tuesday of Each Month	Knoxville Human Rights Group Meeting (7:00 p.m.)
4 th Friday of each Month	Coffee House Group (7:00 – 9:00 p.m.)
Weekly every Monday	Lambda Student Union (6:00 – 7:30 p.m.)
Weekly every Monday	Gay Men's Discussion Group – TN Valley Unitarian Church
Weekly every Friday	St. Ninian Meal & Worship at Community of St. Ninian (6:30 – 9:30 p.m.)



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Driving Directions to MCC Knoxville

- Exit I-40 at West Hills
- Turn left at foot of ramp onto Kingston Pike
- Turn right at first corner onto Morrell Road
- Go 1.3 miles (count five stop lights)
- Turn right at Nubbins Ridge Road (4 way stop sign)
- Go Three Blocks
- Turn left on Tranquilla (at crest of hill)
- Turn right on Redeemer Lane
- Go up the hill through two red brick gateposts into the church parking lot



LECTIONARY

Date	Gospel
March 1	Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:9-15
March 8	Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Psalm 22:23-31; Romans 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38
March 15	Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; John 2:13-22
March 22	Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22; Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21
March 29	Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-12; Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33
April 5	Palm Sunday: Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Philippians 2:5-11; Mark 11:1-11
April 12	Easter: Acts 10:34-43; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; John 20:1-18
April 19	Acts 4:32-35; Psalm 133; 1 John 1:1-2:2; John 20:19-31
April 26	Acts 3:12-19; Psalm 4; 1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48
May 3	Acts 4:5-12; Psalm 23; 1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18
May 10	Acts 8:26-40; Psalm 22:25-31; 1 John 4:7-21; John 15:1-8
May 17	Acts 10:44-48; Psalm 98; 1 John 5:1-6; John 15:9-17
May 24	Acts 1:1-11; Psalm 47; Ephesians 1:15-23; Luke 24:44-53
May 31	Pentecost: Ezekial 37:1-14; Psalm 104:24-34, 36b, Acts 2:1-21; John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15

Rev. Bob Galloway, Pastor

Sunday Worship: 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

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