

# 2021 Annual Report

## Metropolitan Community Churches



# Summary

2021 was a year that really showed us what resilience looks like, as MCCs around the world continued to share the message of God's inclusive love, found creative ways to offer worship and connection, and strived to bring hope and justice to the communities that they serve. A global pandemic, deadly floods, fires, storms and other natural disasters around the world, the storming of the US Capitol building and trials relating to US police killings of Black citizens are some of the significant events that we faced this past year.

MCC Leaders (e.g. Senior Leadership Team, Staff, Governing Board, Council of Elders, and the many other volunteers working on Commissions, Task Forces, and other strategic teams) have been hard at work trying to meet the immediate needs of our constituents, plan innovatively and ambitiously for our future, and amplify our unique voice in the larger public sphere on issues of justice and importance.

In this report, we share with you a few of the highlights of the past year.

A wide-angle photograph of a desert landscape. In the foreground, there is a flat, dark, sandy area. In the middle ground, a single, small, green tree stands on a small dune. The background consists of rolling sand dunes under a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds.

We are Resilient

# Top 5

- 1.** We continued the substantial work done last year to **stabilize and strengthen MCC's finances**. Due to the incredible generosity of our donors and supporters, as well as the conscientious oversight of the Governing Board, we enter the new year with over 3 months of operating reserves and over \$200,000USD in the newly established MCC Endowment Fund. This is a major achievement given the turbulent times we are in and the challenging state of our finances a few years ago.
- 2.** We opened three pathways to hear the stories of those within MCC who have experienced racism and other issues within MCC. The Commission on **Pathways of Healing and Reconciliation** produced a report summarising these initial findings. Alongside that work, MCC staff have established the groundwork to push out a **broader anti-racism, anti-oppression, anti-colonialism** training schedule.
- 3.** We **streamlined and improved MCC communication** to include completing a new Visitor-Based Website to attract those who don't yet know about MCC, and beginning work on a redesigned Internal Website to better resource MCC churches, leaders, and members. We also sought to more actively amplify MCC's voice in the public sphere by making numerous statements on justice issues.
- 4.** We worked diligently to plan for MCC's next **General Conference** (2022) in a constantly changing world, when the ability for trans-national travel is more difficult and the wisdom and safety of gathering in-person make this more challenging. We have tried to think "outside the box" to ensure that despite challenges, as many MCCers around the world as possible can fully participate in worship, programming, and business meetings.
- 5.** We focused efforts on **building partnerships** with other organizations and movements that share our values. We supported the National Trans Day of Visibility (USA), Queer Youth of Faith Day, the Charter for Compassion, and the LGBTQI-Religious Archives Network (among others).

*The following pages include more, in the categories of our 5 Strategic Aims.*

# SPIRITUALITY

## *Strategic Aim I: Spirituality*

*Clear articulation of our queer, inclusive theology with rites and sacraments that reflect our values.*

We appointed, approved, and blessed a diverse, global Council of Elders (COE). The COE has spoken out on justice issues, such as racial justice, climate change, welcoming refugees, and reproductive rights. They have also provided pastoral and spiritual support to the diverse constituents of MCC.

The COE assumed responsibility for a weekly online “Tea Time” -- an informal space for MCCers to gather to offer support and build community, and for the Elders to listen and respond to the pastoral needs of our broader community.

The Council of Elders also engaged in a larger conversation about “Authorized Pathways to Ministry,” which offers a new framework for ministry within MCC.



We consistently promoted a variety of opportunities for MCCers to connect, engage, and nourish their spirits through our CONNECT newsletter and other communications.

We created community for chaplains to meet with one another monthly. This was especially meaningful this year as chaplains in a variety of settings have been comforting and supporting people affected by COVID (i.e. those dying, bereft, confused, exhausted, and experiencing trauma).

We enjoyed two global, virtual concerts featuring the best of MCC's musicians and choirs.

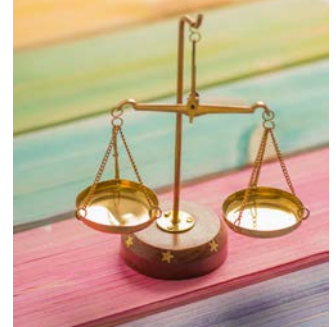




Our Moderator provided regular space for prayer and reflection on Facebook Live.

She also provided recorded sermons for Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas to be used by local churches.

MCC made public statements on issues such as conversion therapy, the Chauvin trial following the murder of George Floyd, same gender marriage, and numerous social justice issues. Always, our justice work flows from our spirituality.



The Commission on Rites and Sacraments have begun their work to discuss, discern, and make recommendations for revisions of Sacraments and Rites and related topics within the UFMCC Bylaws. This follows the adoption of a new Statement of Faith for MCC, and builds upon increased theological conversations throughout our fellowship.



*Community Food Pantry from “The Lord’s Tree” in Fresno, California (USA)*

We were able to authorize several Spiritual Communities. “Wounds to Wisdom” is a virtual spiritual community focusing on spiritual direction. This is the first of its kind and has the potential for future growth. The “Lord’s Tree” in Fresno, California (USA) continues to partner with their community to feed and assist the homeless. We also began “Travessia,” a community in Belo Horizonte, Brazil and “Emerging Inclusive Ministry” in Mombasa City, Kenya. Our spiritual communities are places for those without access to a local MCC. Many continued online during the height of the COVID pandemic. A participant in our spiritual community in Vienna (Austria) says, “What I like about the MCC Community is the welcoming atmosphere. One can sense that sharing similar personal experiences and the same belief creates a familial atmosphere.”

# PRESENCE

## *Strategic Aim 2: Presence*

*Global presence which is locally appropriate and globally robust.*

The Council of Elders and Governing Board approved new criteria for the Affiliation of Churches, which offer greater flexibility on what it means to be “church” in MCC.



We began a partnership with the international organization Charter for Compassion, and celebrated their incorporation of the Troy Perry Awards in their annual gala.

We are partnering with the Charter on their relatively new LGBTQI area of focus.

Our General Conference Teams have worked tirelessly to plan (and re-plan) our 2022 General Conference to ensure the greatest access

to MCCers around the world. GC will include robust and diverse programming to resource and inspire our congregations and leaders. And, the on-line MCC Business Meeting will ensure greater inclusion of all who wish to participate.

We are nurturing relationships across the globe, with other religious movements/leaders such as the Unitarian Universalist Association, The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries, the United Reformed Church, and the World Council of Churches.

ICM in Latin America held a shared monthly worship service to unite folx across Latin America in a spirit of collaboration, cooperation, and prayer.







ABOVE: Good Hope MCC (Cape Town, South Africa) - Carols in the Park



ABOVE: MCCs in Brazil  
Shared worship service



ABOVE:  
MCC in the Valley's  
(California, USA)  
Food Ministry

RIGHT:  
St. Jude's MCC  
(North Carolina, USA)  
Lunch Bag Angels

FAR RIGHT:  
MCC Marakina  
(Philippines)  
Disaster Relief Efforts



LEFT:  
MCC Kampala (Africa)  
HIV/AIDS outreach

MCC churches and spiritual communities around the world are continuing with their life saving ministries despite the challenges presented by the global pandemic.

# DIVERSITY

## *Strategic Aim 3: Diversity*

*Increased integration of diverse people in a holistic and measurable way.*

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are incorporated into every staff workplan and every team charter. The Staff and Governing Board are working to ensure that appointments to teams and commissions reflect MCC's diversity as much as possible.



Our Community Development Team is working to more broadly incorporate anti-racism, anti-oppression, and anti-colonialism education and formation for leaders, volunteers, and pastors across the organization.

The Pathways for Healing and Reconciliation opened three pathways for those with experience of racism or other issues in MCC to share their stories. The Commission, Senior Leadership Team, and Council of Elders have reviewed previous inclusion and diversity recommendations to see what can still be actioned.

MCC supported the National Trans Visibility (USA) and Queer Youth of Faith Day (Global), as well as the LGBTQ Religious Archives Network.

Our Diversity and Inclusion Co-ordinator is working to reorganize, revitalize, and resource various Kinship Groups in MCC to engage our differences and provide opportunities for community-building and support.





# LEADERSHIP

## *Strategic Aim 4: Leadership*

*Robust recruiting, training, and mentoring plans to raise up a new generation of leaders.*



*Left to Right/Top to Bottom:*

Rev. Alejandro Escoto, Velma Garcia, Rev. Goudy, Rev. Karl Hand, Rev. Cecilia Eggleston,  
Rev. Miller Jen Hoffman, Rev. Carolyn J. Mobley-Bowie, Rev. Maxwell Reay, Rev. Troy Treash

As mentioned earlier, a new, diverse Council of Elders was appointed, affirmed, and blessed. They will serve a 3 year term.

We ensured that, wherever possible, appointments to volunteer teams and commissions included individuals who have not served at a denominational level and those who are under 40.

Our sponsorship of and participation in the Queer Youth of Faith day was a wonderful opportunity to reach out to young queer people committed to their faith. For many, this was their first encounter with MCC and our inspiring story.

In 2021, there were 9 ordinations and 13 retirements.

A Readiness for Entering Vocational Ministry (REVM) weekend was held in February 2021 to assist those who were discerning a call to ministry. There were 8 students and 4 faculty for the retreat which was reimagined and held virtually due to COVID restrictions.

So that the vocational leadership experience and requirements may be relevant, areas of the world have Vocational Leadership Liaisons so that people who actually live in the areas and understand the culture may best be positioned to assist in providing vocational support to the people in their areas. These are the areas that are currently covered:

Rev. John Fowler	Australia
Rev. Kate Harford	Europe
Rev. Francisco Junior	Brazil
Rev. Greg Tobar	Argentina and Spanish Speaking people in other areas
Isabel Marquez	Mexico



MCC's Thriving in Ministry's mission is to provide pastoral leaders with structures for mentorship, peer support, continuing education, healthy living and strategic planning and to provide a solid grounded, and adaptable foundation for their successful leadership over the arc of their career.

Each year we have had a successful cohort of pastors who have participated in training to be a mentor and then were assigned a mentee to walk with them over a one-year period.

Training was conducted in person and during the pandemic we pivoted and provided the same training via Zoom. We have learned many lessons and have impacted over 29% of our Pastoral Leaders.

Thanks to the Thriving in Ministry Program, "Respite Support" was introduced in 2021 for all US Pastors (restricted by the grant to the US) to ensure they had the time and opportunity to renew themselves. Respite means something different for each pastor. It comes in many forms such as pulpit supply, spiritual direction, retreats, rock climbing, and boxing to name just a few of the creative applications we have approved.

# RESOURCES

## *Strategic Aim 5: Resources*

*Abundant and appropriate resources that reflect and embody the generosity and creativity of our people.*

We approved the re-design of our internal MCC website (vs. our external website intended for newcomers/visitors to MCC). Our contractor has been working with staff to transform this site into one that serves the people and churches of MCC by providing quick and easy access to the information and resources they need to do their best ministry.

The MCC Finance Team and Governing Board worked with Henderson Financial Group, Inc to establish and manage our new MCC Endowment Fund. We worked throughout the year to develop appropriate investment strategies and policies.



We continued to grow our Partners in Hope program of monthly givers to MCC (above and beyond their generous contributions to their local churches/communities). This included some direct work with individual churches to talk about stewardship and partnership.



We worked to get our PPP loans forgiven, and to apply for the Employee Retention Credit (US), both of which have provided significant assistance to MCC in this challenging economic environment.

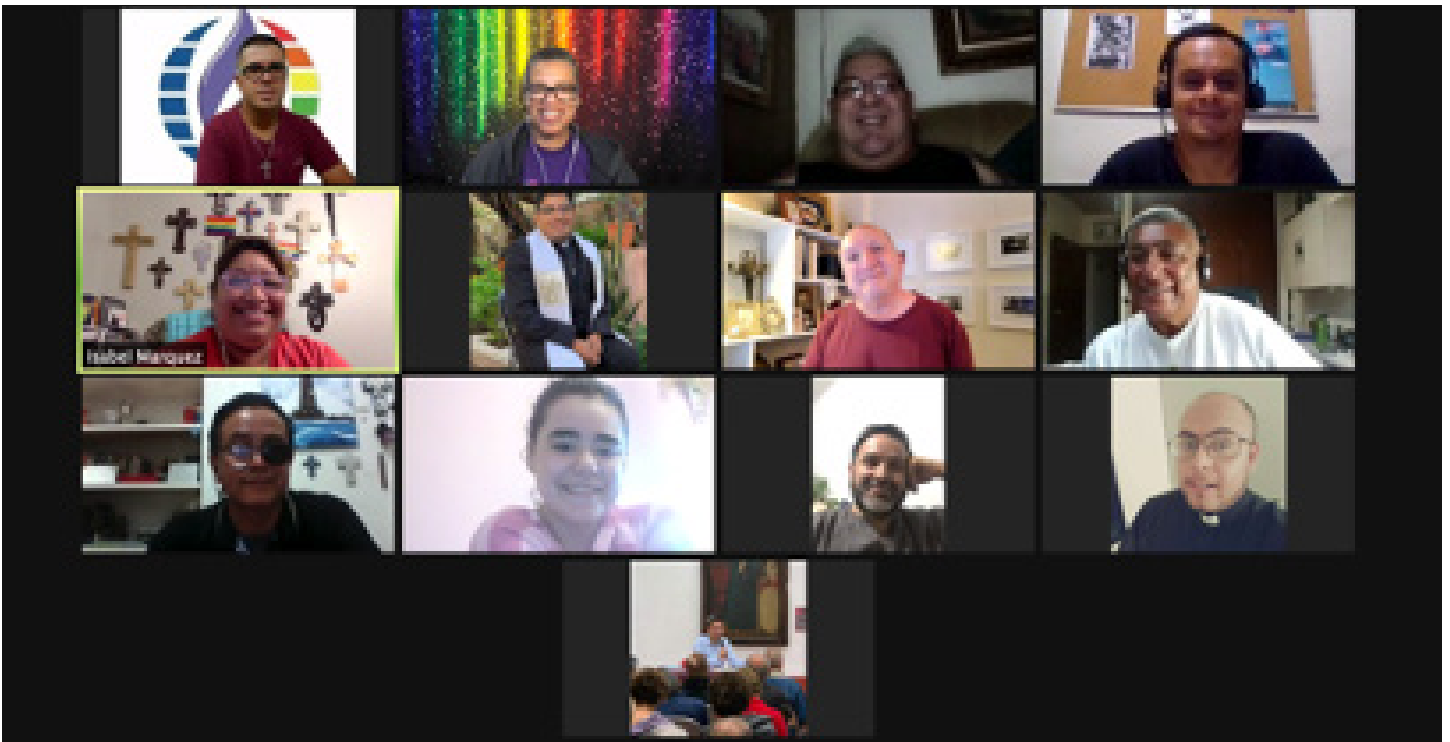
Our staff created a Resource Clearing House (spanning our two staff teams), which meets monthly to discern the types of resources our churches/leaders are needing, and to collaboratively resource those needs. We hosted a number of webinars on requested topics.





We created an MCC Resource Bank that will be incorporated into the new internal website, but which is already full of resources for leaders and congregations, including worship resources by season, educational materials, board and treasurer manuals and support, etc.

MCC staff facilitate calls with the leadership of churches in Mexico, Latin America and Brazil. These connections are vital resources for emerging ministries, and will continue to be instrumental in 2022 as we find partners for new emerging churches. There is also a monthly cohort call with people in Africa. This group is a safe space for Africans to talk and share about theology and what MCC might look like in Africa.



MCC Staff are one of our most valuable and consistent resources. They regularly provide personalized and contextual individual and group support to MCC churches, leaders, and communities around the world. This support includes and is not limited to training for Boards of Directors; conflict management; guidance in times of pastoral transitions; facilitating conversations on values, mission and vision; strategic planning, finance and stewardship; identifying and equipping new leaders; starting new ministries and strengthening existing programs and outreach.


Staff also consult with churches about finances, technology, and communication. In other words, whatever churches/leaders are dealing with, we are eager to assist you.

# Finances

MCC is committed to transparent accounting and timely reporting. We take seriously our responsibility to provide you financial reports each month, and seek to draw your attention to any items of celebration or concern. We are happy to report that 2021 is a great year to celebrate financially.

Below is the final “Dashboard” (Financial Snapshot) of 2021. This is the graphic that we publish each month to keep MCCers informed about our bottom line (numbers) as well as the general highlights/things to note.

We are grateful to the MCC Finance Team, the Governing Board, and the Staff and Volunteers who work so diligently to manage and expand MCC’s financial resources.

UFMCC Financials Snapshot: December 2021 (all numbers shown in USD)				 <b>MCC</b> <small>METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES</small>		
	Designated (Dec 2021)	General/ Operating (Dec 2021)	Total (Dec 2021)	Designated (Jan-Dec YTD)	General/ Operating (Jan-Dec YTD)	Total (Jan-Dec YTD)
Total Income	\$7,791.65	\$293,992.21	\$301,783.86	\$187,752.26	\$1,355,573.78	\$1,543,326.04
Total Expenses	\$10,098.52	\$74,926.75	\$85,025.27	\$128,171.56	\$876,303.38	\$1,004,474.94
Net Income	-\$2,306.87	\$219,065.46	\$216,758.59	\$59,580.70	*\$479,270.40*	\$538,851.10
<p>The Finance Team, Governing Board, Council of Elders and Staff want to <b>THANK YOU</b> for the generosity from MCC'ers around the globe!</p> <p><b>December 2021</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As of December 31, 100% through the year, we are at <b>134%</b> of budgeted yearly income and <b>87%</b> of budgeted expenses. Again, we are in a strong position – <b>34% over budget in income and 13% under budget in expenses</b>. What a blessing!!</li> <li>Year to date through December, assessments income is at approximately 90.5% of budget for the year, which is approximately 9.5% below where we would want to see this 100% through the year. The Finance Team will continue to monitor assessments income in the coming months; and have factored this lower income into our budget for 2022.</li> <li>**We were blessed and so very grateful to receive just over \$21K for our year end offering from generous MCC'ers around the globe; as well as \$200K from an MCC church that has sadly decided to close! As a reminder, we also received 2 Payroll Protection Loans as part of the Cares Act which were then forgiven and did not have to be paid back per the parameters of the program. This added an additional approx. \$200K to our income in 2021. All of these factors make up why year end Net Income exceeded our expectations.</li> </ul> <p>#General/Operating = Money given to the General Fund and used for every day operating expenses. EX: Payroll, Admin, etc.</p> <p>^Designated = Money given for specific purposes. EX: Grants, Disaster Relief, etc.</p>						
Working Capital (3 Months Operating Reserves)			\$261,000.00			
Endowment Fund Balance as of 23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2022 (This balance can change daily based on markets)			\$196,049.18			

# Wrap-Up

## So Much Gratitude!

We are so grateful for the people of MCC who give so much because you believe in our common calling. You share our core values, you know first-hand what MCC can do in the life of an individual or a community, and you partner with us to be and do better. We hope you feel proud of what you have done in 2021. We are proud of you!

Thank you for your commitment, your gifts/talents, and your generosity in sharing them with us.

So many people around the world are still in need of MCC's message that every person is a person of sacred worth and immense value, that queer people are blessed and not condemned, that all people should be free to do their own work to reconcile faith and sexuality. Uniquely, MCC provides this message, as well as a supportive spiritual community for those who most need it.

If you would like to help us do even more, please consider becoming a regular monthly donor (at any amount) to the work of MCC globally. We call this group of faithful supporters our Partners in Hope, and we would welcome you to that group.

If you have questions, please contact us. We love you.

[www.MCCchurch.org](http://www.MCCchurch.org) (internal); [www.visitmccchurch.com](http://www.visitmccchurch.com) (external).



## Partners in Hope

*Faithfully supporting MCC around the world*