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Freedom

"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."
—Galatians 5:1

The Newsletter of the Metropolitan Community Churches in Lancaster and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Vol. 1, No. 4

July, 1982

Where is Everybody?

I know you're out there. I see you at La Cage on Wednesday nights (along with me, enjoying a marvelous evening of music and mirth with Anne Billmyer), at softball and/or volleyball games (Go Team!), picnics (Yum), flea markets (Sold!),...almost everywhere...except at MCC on Sundays. So I ask you WHY?????

Some of you will say "What IS MCC?" Come and find out who/what we are. Some "Saturday is my night out & I like to sleep late the next day." Well, our service in Harrisburg is at 7 P.M. and in Lancaster at 5 P.M. Then there's the "I was raised in the Catholic (or Lutheran, or Baptist or Methodist, etc.) faith and I wouldn't be comfortable there." reply. Let me say that in MCC's all over the world, no two services are exactly alike. We are an ecumenical Christian church for ALL people, with a special ministry to gay men and women. You do not have to be a member of our church, or of any other, to attend MCC.

For me, one big factor was that, unlike the church in which I was raised, here was a church I could attend with my lover/mate/spouse if I so chose. Somehow I can't quite imagine my "good brothers and sisters" at the Good Shepherd Church in SW Philly smiling approvingly as Karen & I, hand-in-hand, receive Communion together (and, for me, Communion is something very special, and therefore, it is important to share in that specialness with my significant other).

Some people I've spoken with are even under the impression that we're just a "bunch of faggots & dykes playing church"....or have difficulty incorporating their Christianity with their homosexuality. While living in Atlantic City, I took a friend of mine, Larry, with me to an MCC-AC service. Unfortunately, Larry couldn't understand how someone could be a minister and be gay at the same time. How sad!

1 Timothy 4:4 states "Everything that God has created is good; nothing is to be rejected, but all is to be received with a prayer of thanks.."

Finally, if you're "just not into the religion bit", come and "check us out" anyway. There's more to MCC than our Sunday services. Following each service we have a period of "fellowship", a time of caring, laughing, and sharing over coffee, tea and munchies. We have raffles, parties, picnics, trips, and just-plain-good-old-fashioned get-togethers.

Whenever possible, one or more of our readings are done in Spanish for our Spanish-speaking brothers and sisters.

So, friends, like I said, come and join us, won't you please? We'd love to meet you, and get to know you. I know you're out there...and now, you know we're here.

—Diane B. Riggins—

Harrisburg News

TITHES ARE DOWN

Hi folks! Not so good news from the Sunday Collection Dept.-- Since January (and compared to last year) our tithes have mostly been decreasing.

Here are the boring (but honest) figures:

January	\$372.90
February	323.51
March	365.09
April	326.50
May	310.05

And June has only \$236.70 with one week to go.

Expenses have been running an average of \$500 each month. If it were not for the fund raisers -- misc. donations (i.e. aluminum can drive, people paying for things, etc.), we could not afford to go on, let alone be able to help others out.

Something most of us have not seriously thought about is the fact that we need to work at affording a minister.

GLORIA ROOT PULPIT CANDIDATE

No doubt about it -- it was wonderful having Gloria Root here in the Harrisburg Area. Gloria, our current candidate to fill the Harrisburg and Lancaster pulpits, was here from Friday, June 18, until after our Sunday worship service on the 20th.

We all had excellent opportunities to meet and talk with Ms. Root. She joined in on the Friday picnic, the Saturday Potluck in Lancaster, a feminist brunch on Sunday morning and finally the church service Sunday evening.

Gloria is the current worship coordinator for Dayton MCC (Ohio). She feels called to grow and reach out in new directions in her ministry. Sept. 1, is the date that Gloria could begin in a new pulpit.

GAY PRIDE DAY--NEW YORK CITY

On the 27 of June two bus-fuls of Harrisburg's finest left for a trip to the Big Apple. No this was not a business trip or a visit to "Bloomies" although some of the group did get in some shopping. They were there to celebrate the great "Stonewall Riot" on Christopher Street in New York many years ago.

Within the busses were MCC'ers and other groups from the Harrisburg Gay Community. The trip was sponsored by Dignity Central PA. We thank that group for opening up the trip to all within the Gay Community.

When we reached New York the group broke into the different marching groups and some watched as a Great Gay Group moved up Fifth Avenue to Central Park. There were Lesbian Women and Gay Men moving together in a great show of support for our freedom.

CONGRATULATIONS, TOM!

Tom Prokop, of the Hbg. congregation, was the winner of the afghan Friday night at the picnic at Negley Park.

Ed Meyers made the afghan himself and donated it to the church to be raffled off at the picnic. Thanks to Ed's donation, the money brought in by the raffle was all profit. Ed, you're a doll!

Everyone had a great time at the picnic, playing UNO, basketball, and just having a good time together. The drawing of the winning ticket served as an added highlight for the evening.

Once again, Tom, Congratulations. And a thank-you to EVERYONE who helped by buying the tickets.

D.B.R.

Lancaster News

THIRTY-SIX TRIPPED TO GAY PRIDE DAY

As the sun slowly rose over the plaster head of Elby's "big boy" to illuminate the Lancaster Shopping Center parking lot, thirty-six bleary-eyed, individual voyagers merged into a unified group, with one distinct destination--Gay Pride Day in Washington, DC.

It was a pleasant bus trip. Time passed swiftly as stewards served doughnuts and soda--not Julia Child's recommended Sunday brunch, but somehow apropos. Mr. Bill, the driver, made good time, actually getting the group to Washington ahead of schedule.

The band of merry men (and women) dispersed to spend the day as each desired. There were scheduled events such as the parade, the art show, on-going stage performances, and mud wrestling. Some took side trips to such places as Georgetown and the MCC-Washington worship service.

After an exciting day, the weary travelers re-boarded the bus to begin the long trip home. Some chatted--some sang--some slept--but certainly all reflected on the day now ending. It had been great--both intellectually and recreationally.

Arriving back at the shopping center, the plaster big boy seemed to query them all, "Have a good day, folks?"

The universal response-- "Yes, but gee, I'm tired and I wanna go home."

Also, "When do we go again!"

PLANNING SESSIONS CONTINUE

The MCC-Lancaster congregation met on June 6th for a second session of work on the planning process for the summer. Having previously constructed a three-part statement of purpose, the group went on to develop a list of seven goals to help fulfill that purpose.

At the first session, the following statement was drafted.

Our purpose is to ...

1) proclaim the good news that we are all included in God's Kingdom.

2) live and proclaim our faith-- both our individual personal faith journeys and our corporate faith as reflected in the bylaws of the UFMCC.

3) provide a place for Christian worship and fellowship. While our primary ministry is to the lesbian and gay community, our intent is to be inclusive of all people, regardless of age, color, handicap, national origin, gender or sexual orientation.

The outcome of the second session was this list of goals.

1) Have weekly worship (with worship perhaps redefined) beginning Sept. 12.

2) Provide forums for personal testimony, such as worship and the newsletter.

3) Have a working Board by Sept. 12.

4) Achieve average attendance at worship services of 25 by Sept. 12.

5) Welcome five new members to MCC by Oct. 1.

6) If the Sept. goals are met, consider seeking study group status.

7) Achieve per capita giving of five dollars per week by Oct. 1.

The congregation will continue this discussion at their next meeting. Everyone's input is valuable and appreciated. Please plan to attend.

MCC benefit

Sept. 11

8 o'clock

Saturday nite

THERE'S A RABBIT IN YOUR HEART

Friend's Meeting House
6th & Herr Sts. Hsbg.

contributions \$2 advance
\$3 at door

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- JULY 4 Sunday Service, Harrisburg, 7:00 pm, Friends Meeting House, 6th & Herr Streets
- JULY 11 Sunday Service, Lancaster, 5:00 pm, Emerson Hall, Unitarian Center, 538 W. Chestnut Street
- JULY 11 Sunday Service, Harrisburg, 7:00 pm, Friends Meeting House, 6th & Herr Streets
- JULY 18 Planning session, Lancaster, 5:00 pm at Art and Al's house.
- JULY 18 Sunday Service, Harrisburg, 7:00 pm, Friends Meeting House, 6th & Herr Streets
- JULY 25 Sunday Service, Lancaster, 5:00 pm, Emerson Hall, Unitarian Center, 538 W. Chestnut Street
- JULY 25 Sunday Service, Harrisburg, 7:00 pm, Friends Meeting House, 6th & Herr Streets
- SEPTEMBER 11 There's a Rabbit in Your Heart, 8:00 pm, Friends Meeting House, 6th & Herr Streets, Harrisburg, Tickets \$2.00 in advance, \$3.00 at the door.
- JULY 11-17, 1983 MCC General Conference in Toronto, Canada. Imagine, thousands of gay Christians from all over the world in one spot!



RABBIT BENEFITS MCC

On Sept. 11, a rabbit will return to the Friend's Meeting House. Rabbit is the creation of Black American Storytellers of a by-gone century. He is witty. He is clever. He is love. And this September, you will find that "There's a Rabbit in Your Heart".

Twice, last year, Rabbit was brought to life to benefit GSH. Now, he returns with a new collection of tales; new dances from tunes of the 50's, 60's and today; and (impersonations of) special guest stars like MISS PIGGY & Kermit the Frog, Fats Domino and more.

The show begins at 8 o'clock in the eve. And if you're smart, you'll have scarfed up your \$2 advance seat ticket as soon as they go on sale (August 1) and saved yerself a whole buck! And, oh, it'll be joyful when you discover that "There's a Rabbit in Your Heart". Really! Sept. 11.

This is all the room that is left for me to say my piece in this month's newsletter. I am happy to report that all the rest of the stuff herein was written by different people on the staff, and I didn't have to write nuthin' to fill up the space. I would like to thank Kit and Ev and Don and Earl for all their help in making the Lancaster bus trip to Washington's Gay Pride Day such a big success. Without their help it never would have come off. I would also like to thank the owners of the Tally-Ho in Lancaster for the free drinks on our return. God bless all of you who helped make this day one we can remember with pride. And don't forget what I said on the bus, "The day is coming when we won't have to go to Washington or New York for Gay Pride Day. The day is coming when we will have Gay Pride right here in Lancaster. All you have to do is want it bad enough." In the meantime remember this: we are all created by God and God don't make no junk! Until next month...

—Arthur

LANCASTER GAY/LESBIAN HELP LINE 397-0691

Tuesday, Wednesday,
Thursday, and Sunday
6:30 to 9:30 pm

*Have a problem?
We can help.*

FREEDOM Vol. 1, No. 4

FREEDOM is the newsletter of MCC-Harrisburg and the Lancaster Parish. It is published monthly and mailed on the Monday prior to the first Sunday of the month from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania (Lord willin' and the crick don't rise...).

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(Publication of the name of any person, business, or organization should not be construed as indicative of the sexual orientation or ideological stance of that person, business, or organization.)

The Metropolitan Community Church is an ecumenical, Christian church for all people with a special ministry to the lesbian and gay community.