

Sr. Pastor's Report for Fall Congregational Meeting 2024

Dear Members,

Over the last six months, I've seen a wonderful change: We Are Growing! Yes, we're growing in attendance as well as ministries. This makes my heart rejoice! After a pandemic that left us unsettled and unsure of our future, we have finally started living WITH one another again, seeing each other in person, and worshipping together again. I know there are quite a few of you who are still worshipping online; isn't it wonderful to have options?

As I mentioned, our ministries have begun to grow. One, in particular, has really "caught fire," Holy Ghost fire: our Spanish-speaking ministry. Recently, seven of us from the 1:30 p.m. service attended the denomination's Latinx Conference in San Antonio. That was a catalyst for our folks, and they have been very busy ever since, getting more and more involved not only in worship, but also in representing FMCC-ICMF in the community.

You may have noticed another person or two at all our community events: our new Student Clergy, Bam Noriega, and their wife, Maria. Bam hit the ground running even before we had a beautiful Installation Service (complete with a blessing from none other than our Founder, Rev. Elder Troy Perry!). That was part of our 56th Anniversary Celebration service. We enjoyed hearing a message via video from Rev. Troy Perry.

Also as part of our Anniversary Month, we heard interviews from Elder Larry Rodriguez, Pastor Lucia Chappelle, and Mark Hahn, all who have been associated with MCC for more than 50 years! Thanks to Oriol Briguella Mueller for conducting/filming those interviews.

Some of the other events we've either sponsored or participated in include:

We celebrated Rev. Troy Perry's birthday;

We have continued to employ Louis Ramirez as the Music Director (for English and Spanish services!) and Administrative Assistant. What a God-send he has been to this church and to me personally. In addition, Reyna Montoya and Tony Martinez have volunteered countless hours in administration for both English and Spanish services.

We have continued to employ a private cleaning crew – Lucas, Erica, and Inez. They do a wonderful job with cleaning, and they have been very gracious to work around many changes as new groups rent space from us all through the week.

We continued to use Church-Biz to manage our finances. Our treasurer, Ed Shaughnessy, has worked tirelessly with them, along with PushPay, to keep our finances in order.

We have continued our Food Pantry, led by Martin Miny and Rodolfo Romero. This team receives food on Fridays and distributes food on Saturdays regularly to many families! Thanks to Mark Talgo for picking up and delivering an extra food source each Friday. Thank you to all the volunteers that make this important ministry happen.

We have continued our Trans*Unity ministry over the last year. We've had wonderful leadership with Amy LaCoe and Ina Serene. They have had many yard sales to raise money for the annual Christine Daniels Scholarships. We gave out \$5500 in scholarships this year! They were able to do some work on the denominational level, as well. This team was also responsible for helping us enjoy the Trans Chorus of LA at several services. Thanks to all of you!

We continued our Glenn Payne Card Ministry under the direction of Pam Fairbanks and Lea Polumbarit.

We expanded our Media Team (broadcasting and sound) under the leadership of Sandra Contreras and Don Mueller. Jair Bula, Larry Rodriguez, and Patricia Wahle have joined this team! Thank you!!!

Our Creative Worship Team always does an incredible job of getting our services together. I'm so thankful for their faithfulness in making sure we have quality worship.

We continued our Saturday Night Spiritual Interfaith service each month, led by Rev. Sheena Metal.

Our church has hosted a mobile vaccination unit, and our plans are to continue doing so in the future. More than 30 people have taken advantage of this ministry.

We hosted the Hollywood Queer Festival.

We have continued to represent FMCC in the community, having participated in LA Pride, WeHo Pride, DMH Pride, Santa Monica Pride, and Trans Pride. Thanks to Oriel Briguella Mueller and Fernando Alfaro for leading the Pride Team again this year. They designed a new tee-shirt for us to show up in solidarity! We had booths at Models of Pride and an ofrenda (altar) at Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) celebration in Santa Monica. We also participated with finances and walkers at AIDS Walk LA.

We held a Pet Blessing day.

Our church has hosted the LaQuICC (queer clergy) group several times, and we continue to be involved in that community ministry. I've been a part of the monthly Clergy Roundtable sponsored by LA County Dept. of Mental Health (Thanks, Brian Navarro, for bringing me on board!). I've also represented the church in several community forums, giving speeches, fighting for rights, and receiving awards.

Our Board of Directors has worked tirelessly to make sure we are good stewards of the finances that come to FMCC-ICMF. Through their promotion and your help, we are getting a new roof. We're also getting (through a security grant) new doors, windows, and cameras. What a blessing!

I've named some of the ministry groups here at Founders along with their leaders. There are many volunteers involved in each of these ministries, and we could not survive without them – without YOU. THANK YOU to all who give their time, talents, tithes, and testimonies so freely.

Since our last congregational meeting, two members have transitioned to Glory: Harvey Boykin and Scott Nash. We miss them dearly.

I could go on and on about all that is happening, and I know I haven't listed everything we've done. This is a taste of the amazing work that is happening at FMCC-ICMF. It's your calling, your purpose, your community, and your stewardship that is making us what we are. I am so proud to be the pastor of such an amazing group of people.

Let me encourage us all to continue visioning our future. As our stewardship theme said, *If We Can See It, We Can Be It!* I truly believe that.

Pastor Keith

FMCC Social Justice Ministry Report

Fall 2024

Founders Metropolitan Community Church calls **Social Action one of our four Core Values:**

Working to talk less and do more, we are committed to resisting the structures that oppress people and standing with those who suffer under the weight of oppressive systems, being guided always by our commitment to global human rights.

FMCC Social Justice Ministry attempts to embody that calling.

Since our Spring Congregational Meeting, FMCC's Social Justice Ministry has been involved in four main projects: Faith Climate Action Week activities, participation in Pride Month activities, partnering with Azania to support denomination's People of African Descent: The Next Generation Conference, and encouraging involvement in the upcoming elections.

Faith Climate Action Week is organized around Earth Day in April each year by the organization Interfaith Power and Light. As in years past, FMCC has distributed IPL educational materials and raised consciousness about voting on environmental issues. In person and on social media, we encouraged participation in the Earth Day global Climate Blessing. We brought this year's theme, "Common Ground: Cultivating Connections Between Our Faith, Our Food, and the Climate," to life with the start of an informal FMCC Gardeners' Email Group.

LGBTQ Pride Month 2024 took FMCC all over the greater Los Angeles area, and our Pride Team is an important extension of our Social Justice Ministry. In addition to all of the Pride events where we had a presence, Pastor Lucia Chappelle preached a Sunday sermon at All Saints Episcopal Church in Pasadena, and several FMCCers attended All Saints' special Pride service.

Pride Month took an artsy turn when FMCC linked up with **Skylight Theatre's** production of *The Sandwich Ministry*. The play revolves around three church volunteers – two of them lesbian – whose work to feed people during a climate change-driven disaster reveals things about relationships, faith, community and justice. Skylight was committed to donating the brown-bag meals prepared during the course of the drama to people experiencing homelessness. FMCC helped provide the ingredients, and volunteers from our church helped prepare extra meals for distribution.

People of African Descent: The Next Generation Conference was held in Detroit, Michigan the last weekend of July. FMCC Social Justice Ministry, FMCC's Azania: People of African Descent and MCC/UCC in the Valley joined forces to run an "opportunity for chance" (a.k.a. a raffle) to raise more than \$2600 to help three people attend the Conference. Prizes were tickets to *A Strange Loop, Mrs.*

Doubtfire and *Peter Pan*. Social Justice also lent support to ICM members to attend the denomination's Latinx Conference.

U.S. Elections 2024 have been weighing heavily on all of our minds, hearts and spirits. The Social Justice Ministry has provided voter registration and ballot issue information. Volunteers have been involved in "get out the vote" efforts with the Poor Peoples' Campaign, and with the campaign to support California Proposition 3, which would enshrine marriage equality in the state constitution. Worship services, tabling information and social media posts have highlighted the dangers of Christian Nationalism and the far-right playbook known as Project 2025, working in concert with the organization Faithful America.

In addition to these activities, FMCC members continue to participate in justice-related actions, such as demonstrations against war in the Middle East. We're present in UFMCC's international Zoom cohorts such as PAD:TNG, Latinx and transgender groups. Our members are also active in AIDS/LifeCycle and the L.A. Tenants Union.

Our new clergy intern Bam Noriega has a background in justice work, and will add much to our effort to maximize congregational participation over the next few months.

Creative Team Ministry Fall Update

October 26, 2024

Members: Reverend Keith Mozingo, Lucia Chappelle, Sandra Contreras, Bam Noriega, Louis Ramirez, Larry Rodriguez

Overview

The Creative Team is charged with bringing worship alive, and deepening the worship experience through meaningful, worshipful, spiritually-grounded, multisensory, and transformative ritual actions and activities.

Major Accomplishments In The Past 6 months:

The Creative Team has been blessed by the addition of Bam Noriega to the team. They bring new perspectives on the work of the Creative Team, as well as a passion for social justice.

The number of All-Church One Worship Multilingual Services has allowed us to work out details so that those particular services now flow much easier, and participants in multiple languages can all feel more engaged in those services.

Lucia Chappelle's dramatic scripture reading for Ascension Sunday was well-received, as were the services honoring our beloveds on Mother's and Father's Days.

The theme for the month of June was Pride, and Saturday services on WeHo and LA Pride weekends were inspiring. The Father's Day – Juneteenth – TransPride service on the 3rd Sunday of June was blessed by the Trans Chorus of Los Angeles, and we were challenged to action in the video from Reverend Andi Woodworth. Nikki Mohr and Vinny Mougeot graced us with their musical and dancing gifts, and Glenn Hill touched us with his spirit filled singing of "Sometime I Feel Like A Motherless Child."

The Ramirez Family blessed us with a joyful musical service on the 5th Sunday of June.

The first Sunday in July was focused on the negative impact of Christian nationalism on our community. The service was a challenge and a call to action. The "Prayer For The Church" video portion of the service was so well-received that it was published separately on our YouTube channel.

As July closed, we celebrated the birthday of our founder, Reverend Elder Troy Perry. Many of you submitted videos thanking Troy for the difference his ministry has made in your life. These videos were compiled into one video that was shown during service with Troy present. Troy was moved.

In August, the Creative Team held its semi-annual Long-Range Planning Session to work on plans through the start of the Season of Epiphany (January, 2025).

September kicked off the Recovery Series. Because of the roof repair, the HVAC was not operable. This presented a special challenge on Sunday, September 8 when temperatures were expected to top 105°. The Creative Team recommended and the Board of Directors agreed that we hold the services in the Chapel with overflow in the Hunter Room. It took a great deal of coordination and planning, but we

successfully held services both onsite and online on that date. Thanks to everyone who made that change in venue a success.

October has been a month of celebration for our 56th anniversary, with an added focus on Stewardship. A special presentation of Reverend Elder Perry's sermon on the occasion of the dedication of the first property owned by MCCLA was presented on the first Sunday, with a special thank you to Troy. Oriel Briguela Mueller did a tremendous job of interviewing and video recording people about what MCC has meant to them. These messages were used on social media and in worship. Additionally, Oriel interviewed and videorecorded Larry Rodriguez, Lucia Chappelle, and Mark Hahn, people who have journeyed with MCC for 50+ years. These 3 interviews were featured at each of the subsequent Sundays in October.

Major Goals For The Next 6 Months:

The next few months are the busiest time in the church year. We will continue to work out the details of plans for Transgender Day Of Remembrance, World AIDS Day, Advent, Christmas, Kwanzaa, and the Feast of the Epiphany.

Needs and Challenges:

The need for more crew (volunteers) continues, especially in the areas of worship participants (readers, celebrants, prayer partners), broadcast crew (camera and broadcast sound), and inhouse crew (ushers, sound, altar setup).

Also, the need continues for a crew to work on Sanctuary design and set up for each of the church seasons, and for special occasions.

Music of Minister Fall 2024 Report

In reflecting on almost two years at Founders, I can definitely say that God has beautifully blessed me. I am in awe of God's goodness to me: I feel that I could have been the one to have penned and composed Cece Winans' "Goodness of God. I still count it a joy to lead you in worship every Sunday! I lead a growing group of singers each Sunday, and their dedication and commitment never cease to amaze me! It is for the joy and love of singing that they each commit to arriving on weeknights and early before church to rehearse.

In my last report this spring, I reported that in the 16 months I have been here, I had taught/used 148 songs to the 10am praise team, and in the 7 months that I had been leading the 1:30 singers, I had taught/led 64 songs. 5-6 months later, that number has increased to **182** and **87** respectively.

It was also about 5-6 months ago that our media team realized that we could no longer use performance tracks as that violated news copywrite laws, although we do have a license to use the worship songs in our services. That called for additional time to learning the piano performance of needed songs by our soloists—guests and residence.

Because of Peter Kirkpatrick's resignation of the position of Music Director for the Latino congregation, and Rev. Alejandro Escoto's resignation as Pastor of said congregation, both towards the end of 2023, in 2024 our responsibilities expanded to fulfill musical and administrative needs for the week-to-week leadership of this congregation, aiding the pastoral leadership of Rev. Keith Mozingo.

I'm happy to report that as we wind down 2024, both congregations seem to be flourishing and growing, both in attendance and in Spirit. Pastor Keith Mozingo continues to lead with an anointed voice, and in the Latino congregation, we are blessed to have the very knowledgeable and capable voices of member-preachers, ministers Raul Radilla and Fernando Trejo, who give timely and needed inspired messages week and after week.

In both congregations, I am honored to lead and usher in the glorious, powerful presence of Worship. But I don't do it alone. I have the aforementioned beautiful and heartfelt voices behind me. And I have capable sound technicians and broadcast/camera operators—we are a team! Thank you!

Blessings,
Louis Ramirez, Minister of Music

Property & Facilities Committee (Dean Coffey & Martin Miny)

2024 Accomplishments

1. Roof Replacement

Over the last two years of heavy rains, our church has sustained considerable water damage in several parts of the building that required the replacement of the roof before repairs can be done to the inside of the building. The Board of Directors obtained and evaluated bids from three large roofing companies and chose to contract with The Newhaus Roofing and Construction to provide a full roof replacement. The cost for the replacement rose during the construction phase due to the need to replace and reinforce the decking, install new coping metal on parapet walls, and rewire the HVAC systems. Total cost is estimated at \$158,196.

The *Hard Hat* Committee was recruited to support fundraising for the roof replacement. As of the end of October, \$80,261. has been raised in four months. Special thanks to committee members Mary Margaret Smith, Patricia Wahle, and Consultant Rev. Wayne Lindsey who met through the summer to plan fundraising efforts; and to the congregation for their generosity in giving toward this effort.

We hosted The California Men's Gatherings (CMG) sponsoring the Hollywood Queer Short Film Festival during our 56th Anniversary weekend October 5-6. Proceeds from the weekend were to benefit Founders MCC roof replacement and Outfest.

2. California State Nonprofit Security Grant Construction

Early in 2024, our church was awarded a California Nonprofit Security Grant in the amount of \$148,778 to do target hardening through replacement of 11 doors, 12 casement windows, 5 basement windows, courtyard gate improvements, CCTV motion activated camera system, high intensity security lighting, and a monitored surveillance alarm system. Construction bids were solicited from several companies, and general contractor, Malloy Construction, was selected to do the work. The CCTV camera system has already been installed and is working.

The performance period is 12/1/2023 to 12/31/2025. The mechanism for payment of the award is reimbursement of payments made by the church. As of the end of October, payments have been made for construction materials in the amount of \$65,720; and \$54,452 has been approved by CalOES for reimbursement by the CA State Controller. We anticipate that construction will be finished in early 2025.

3. Facility Rentals

As of October 29, 2024, facility rental income was \$53,361 that included rental income from 29 recovery groups and the bilingual, neurodiverse congregation, La Conexión, which meets in our Fellowship Hall on Sundays and Thursdays. This does not include any income from the previous preschool lease, which expired 6/30/2023. Projected facility income for 2024 is \$64,033.

Goals & Opportunities for 2025

1. Enhancement of Church WiFi

The church has a need to upgrade our WiFi network capability to support church business functions, broadcast of church services, WiFi access for recovery groups, and use of Zoom platform for remote and hybrid business meetings. The Board of Directors is currently considering a discounted bid of \$11,319. From ECM Security Systems.

2. Lease of Preschool

Trans Unity Ministry Report FMCC
Prepared by Ina Serene and Amy LaCoe
Oct 26 2024

Trans*Unity Ministry (TUM) this year was involved in (1) raising monies for annual student awards, (2) supporting national Pride and Transgender events, (3) FMCC facility repairs and (4) choir and worship opportunities.

TUM used congregation's contributions of household-goods and support of sponsors to raise monies for the 'Christine Daniels Student Fund'. This year FMCC gave out 4 awards of \$1000 each and a special award of \$500 to a student transitioning from high school to college. The board of directors also gave approval to raise funds for a 'Trans*Unity Service' (TUS) category. The TUS fund supported performances of the Trans Chorus of Los Angeles (TCLA) and pizza service at FMCC hospitality events, such as Transgender Day of Visibility (March 31st) and Student Awards Day (Aug. 18).

Trans*Unity Ministry (TUM) provided support for national Pride events in June this year including LA Pride, LA Trans*Pride (June 15th), Santa Monica Pride, and LA's Dept. of Mental Health Pride. TUM also supported Miss Laura Law in her goal to raise over \$1000 for AIDS charity. Participants in the LA AIDS Walk this year (Oct. 13th) included Ava, Bam, Marie, Ina, and of course Miss Laura Law.

Facility support provided by TUM included cleaning and painting Kindergarten school (July 2023), creating 'For-lease' banners on Prospect frontage, repairing vandalism to concrete walls on Rodney, laying sandbags along Rodney walls, remounting sails above patio, and weeding Prospect frontage.

Additional Brief Ministry Reports

Fall 2024

Deaf Ministry: Continues to provide ASL interpretation for the 10am service, ably managed by Jennifer Eagle. Jennifer has also become the interpreter for the Trans Chorus of Los Angeles, and has assisted other groups who have reached out to FMCC to inquire about ASL services.

Archive Committee: Remains on hiatus while volunteer Ricky Padilla works on database methodology for FMCC's collection of pictures, artifacts and documents. We continue to seek volunteers to help develop a church history timeline.

Azania - People of African Descent: Remains on hiatus, although it reappears when a particular need arises.

Women's Spirituality Group: Remains on hiatus.