



# Metropolitan Community Church of San Francisco

Pastoral Transition Portfolio 2011



## Diverse Beliefs. Common Values. A Home for Queer Spirituality.

On behalf of the MCC San Francisco Pastoral Search Committee, and the congregation we represent, we welcome you, and invite you to browse through this profile of our community—past, present, and future.

For further information on MCCSF and our pastoral search process, please see the search committee [website](#), or feel free to contact us directly and confidentially via [email](#).

MCC San Francisco Pastoral Search Committee

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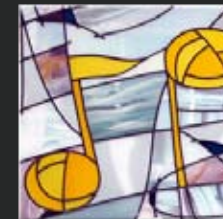
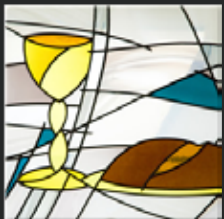


WE ARE A **HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL PEOPLE**  
AND A **HOME FOR QUEER SPIRITUALITY.**

WE SEE A **TRANSFORMED WORLD,**  
WHERE **EVERY LIFE MATTERS** AND  
**EVERY PERSON BELONGS.**

# Our Story

41 Years Of Leadership,  
Healing,  
& Transformation



## **“Community” is our middle name.**

In 1970, MCCSF held its first service – in a bar room.

As we claimed our right to be spiritual, we grew a new confidence in our own dignity. Grounded in that dignity, for four decades we have organized politically to combat discrimination, from fighting the 1977 Briggs Initiative (to fire lesbian and gay teachers) to protesting the treatment of Iraqi gays in 2009.

But it hasn't been easy. The most violent attack came in July of 1973, when an arsonist burned down the church where we met. Two days later, 500 congregants marched—with police protection—along with local and state officials and other community members to a new host church.

In 1979, members mortgaged their own homes to make MCCSF the first LGBT group in the city to own its own building—a dilapidated church at 150 Eureka Street in the Castro. The restrooms were little more than outhouses and the building had some structural issues. We promptly removed the orange shag carpeting and neon “Jesus Saves” sign and settled into our new home for social justice work.

## **A new “queer” theology changes us, and sustains us through the HIV/AIDS epidemic.**

MCCSF began as a short-term solution to homophobia in mainline churches, but we soon realized we would have to create our own “queer” spirituality. The first step was feminist theology. At a time when gays and lesbians were at odds with each other, our mostly male congregation hired a female pastor, reached out to lesbians, and adopted gender-neutral language for the divine.

In the meantime the AIDS epidemic was devastating our church and the San Francisco community. It was not uncommon for MCCSF to hold five memorial services in a week. In the midst of this difficult time, our church was on the front lines advocating for people living with HIV/AIDS—from offering rent-free space to AIDS groups to using our building as an illegal medical marijuana dispensary in the 90s. And we continued to expand spiritually. In 1985, we began sharing our worship space with a gay and lesbian Jewish congregation, Ahavat Shalom. During that time, a bomb was thrown through the glass window of our sanctuary.

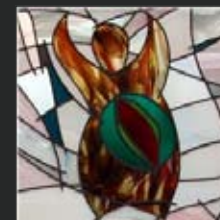
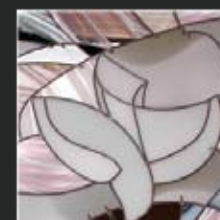
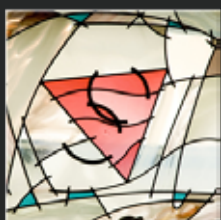
## **After devastating loss, a new period of spiritual expansion and social justice work.**

In the late 1990s, the advent of new medications miraculously transformed the lives of people with HIV/AIDS and changed the arc of the U.S. epidemic. With this blessed reprieve, members of MCCSF were again able to extend care outward to the broader community, and in 1997 formed the Metropolitan Community Foundation (MCF) as the church's social justice arm. We began a partnership with the public elementary school in the Castro, Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy, providing a reading program, supplies, and a part-time music teacher.

Through a variety of outreach programs MCF fed, showered, and clothed homeless people, sex workers, and LGBT youth. By the 2000s we were co-sponsoring an AIDS orphanage in Zimbabwe and providing holiday gifts for homeless children. More than 2000 people, including dozens of recovery and community groups, used our building every week, literally wearing it out. By the time structural problems closed half of the Eureka Street building in 2006, we had served more than 100,000 meals. In 2008, after a year and a half in exile in two other rented spaces, we returned to our own building with a new appreciation for how it has held our community.

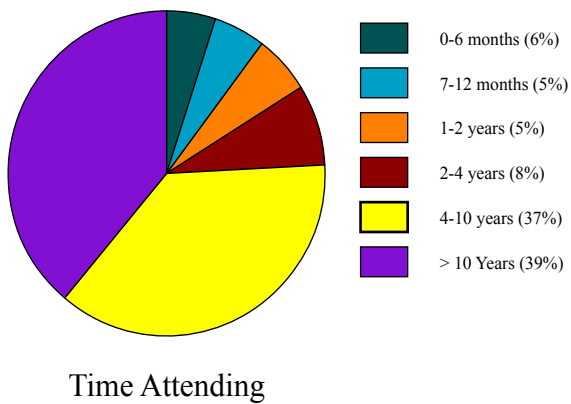
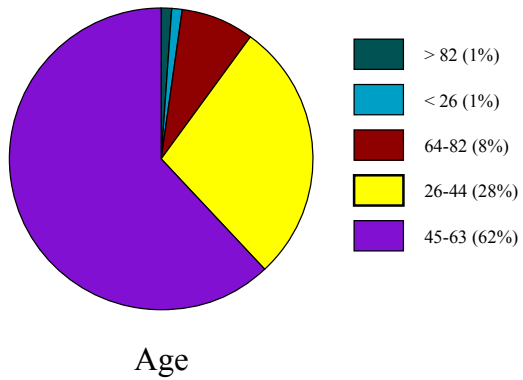
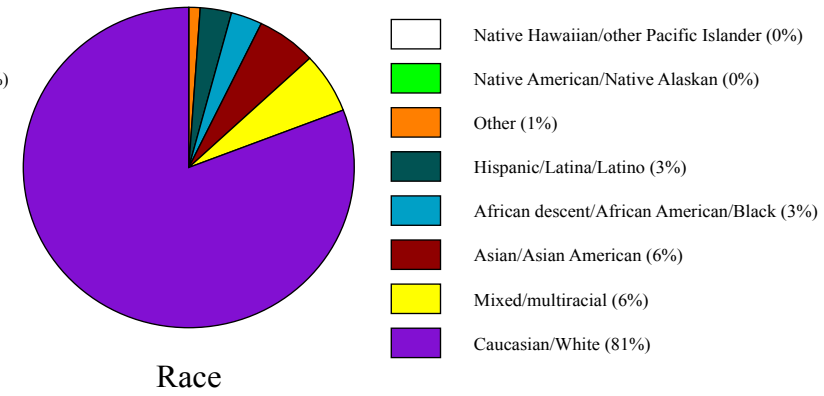
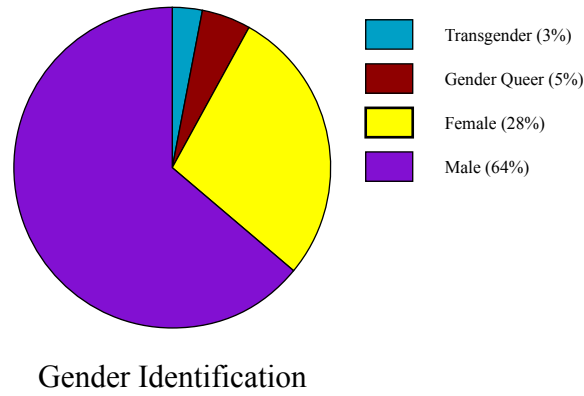
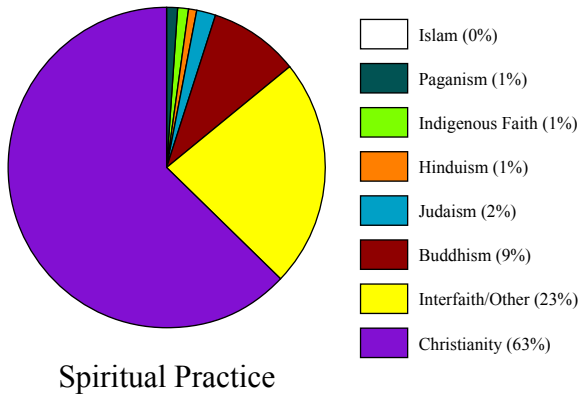
## **A place where all bodies, genders, sexualities, and spiritualities are valued, respected, and loved.**

Over four decades MCCSF embraced feminist theology, then liberation theology, social justice, and AIDS activism, and doing so opened us up to new expressions of spirituality. In 2003 we launched Q-Sangha, weekly Buddhist meditation services, and our Many Lights program brings authentic teachers of various spiritual practices to our sanctuary. Today MCCSF celebrates sacred sexuality, embodied spirituality, and a God/Goddess of many names and forms. We are a queer spiritual center for all people, regardless of their chosen path. Christians, Pagans, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, and atheists (among others) worship here together. At MCCSF we don't just welcome you; we celebrate all of who you are—your gender, your sexuality, your spirituality, your passion. Come see for yourself!



# Our Community

## Diverse Beliefs, Common Values



Based on 2010 congregational survey.



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## Natural Beauty

The San Francisco Peninsula and the Marin headlands form Northern California's Golden Gate, where San Francisco Bay meets the Pacific Ocean. Tempered by those two bodies of water, San Francisco's Mediterranean climate is mild year-round.

Within the city, thanks in part to its dramatic hills, one can enjoy a variety of microclimates, from the romantic fog near the ocean to full sun in the Mission district and eastern neighborhoods.

Nearby natural wonders include the Point Reyes National Seashore, the Russian River, Muir Woods and other coastal redwood forests, the Napa Valley, Yosemite National Park, the rugged coastlines by Big Sur and Mendocino, Pinnacles National Monument, the Sierra Nevada range, the American River, Monterey Bay, and many, many other beautiful sites.

San Francisco itself is home to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and more than 220 parks—more green space than any other U.S. municipality (*San Francisco Recreation & Parks*).

## Cultural Abundance

San Francisco has been rated the nation's #1 most walkable city (*Walkscore.com*), and is the second-densest major city in the U.S. (*2000 U.S. Census*). Two of the ten most diverse cities in the country are in the San Francisco Bay Area (*CNBC/2010 U.S. Census*).

Between and beyond famous landmarks like the Golden Gate Bridge, Coit Tower, and the Palace of Fine Arts are San Francisco's distinctive neighborhoods, many of them with their own farmers' markets and street fairs. Cultural offerings here include world-class restaurants, museums, performing arts groups, colleges and universities, libraries, sports teams, arts exhibitions, parades, festivals, and countless quirky "only in San Francisco" surprises.

Of the 50 largest U.S. cities, San Francisco has the highest percentage of gays and lesbians, as well as the highest percentage of same-sex couples of any city in the U.S. (*American Survey of Cities 2005*). Centered in its three queerest neighborhoods, South of Market, Polk Gulch, and the Castro, LGBT culture abounds in San Francisco.

## A Queer Hometown

Since well before Stonewall, San Francisco has been a hotbed of "homophile" activism. In 1955, the Daughters of Bilitis, the nation's first lesbian rights group, was formed here. In 1961, activist and drag performer Jose Sarria, aka the Widow Norton, became the first openly gay candidate for public office in the U.S.. In 1965, local faith leaders from the Council on Religion and the Homosexual protested in solidarity with queer people who had been arrested in a police raid on a New Year's dance. In 1977, the first openly gay city official, Harvey Milk, was elected. In 1979, the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence were founded, and their first charity work was a 1980 benefit for MCCSF's Cuban refugee program.

San Francisco continues to lead the way, becoming in 2001 the first city to provide equal health benefits to transgender workers. In 2004, the mayor ordered officials to begin issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples, and the ensuing case resulted in a state Supreme Court decision mandating marriage equality in California. The constitutionality of Proposition 8, the ballot measure re-instituting marriage discrimination, is now being reviewed by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco.



### San Francisco Bay Area Links

- » Center for Lesbian & Gay Studies
- » City and County of San Francisco
- » Folsom Street Fair
- » GLBT History
- » San Francisco LGBT Center
- » San Francisco Statistics
- » San Francisco Travel
- » San Francisco – Wikipedia

### MCC San Francisco Links

- » 2010 Congregational Survey Results
- » MCCSF Vision, Mission, & Values
- » MCCSF History
- » MCCSF Music
- » MCCSF Stained Glass Windows
- » Many Lights

### MCCSF Pastoral Search Links

- » 2010 Pastoral Search Survey Results
- » Search Criteria
- » Senior Pastor Position Description

For more about the search, visit [www.mccsf.org/psc.html](http://www.mccsf.org/psc.html) or email [mccsfpastoralsearch@gmail.com](mailto:mccsfpastoralsearch@gmail.com).