

Moderator's Report May 2021

Submitted to Governing Board Meeting 1st June 2021

Good self-care is important and the month of May began with a week's leave and vacation, which was much appreciated.

The major focus this month has been the work of the Commission on Pathways of Healing and Reconciliation. The Commission will be offering 3 pathways for receiving input from MCCers around the world about their experience of racism and other issues within MCC and I have been working with the Commissioners to prepare these pathways. We want to hear stories from individuals and also learn more about what action local congregations are taking to address racism. Information about these pathways will go out by the end of June.

As a follow-up to the 4 session anti-racism training programme for white faith/spiritual leaders I participated in, I held meetings with MCC colleagues who had also completed the training to share our experience and talk about what next steps might be. I have applied to be part of a small group coaching circle for a further three 2-hour sessions, where I can reflect more deeply on my own journey with racism and white supremacy, as well as deepening my understanding about what needs to change in MCC.

Our planning for General Conference 2022 is now reaching a significant point. I meet regularly with Mike Haase and Lauren Bennett to discuss the many and complex aspects of organising an international event during a global pandemic. I also participate in the monthly GC 2022 Core Team meetings and the GC Commission. The latter is an excellent "ideas lab" to actually inform the work of the Core Team who are planning GC 2022. I am very grateful to all the volunteers on both bodies who serve with commitment and passion.

The Senior Leadership Team (me, Rev. Dr. Kharma Amos and Rev. Elder Hector Gutierrez) had a half day retreat where we reflected on the 5 year strategic aims and also what MCC means to each of us. We spent the last hour of our time together praying for our congregations and church leaders by country, our retired clergy, chaplains, networks, online communities and leadership bodies. It was powerful and moving to go through the list of where our MCCs are located around the world.

The <https://visitmccchurch.com/> website is aimed at those who have no knowledge of MCC and is our "visitor centre" for those who want to get to know us. It was one of my early priorities to update our <https://www.mccchurch.org/> to make it a great resource for church leaders, lay delegates and congregants. I worked with Rev. Dr Kharma Amos, who is the Team Lead for communications to find a suitable person to do this work. Tara Nelson is our web design contractor for this work and it was good to meet with her this month and hear her ideas for our website could be.

Other areas of work include:

Connection with MCC churches and Networks

- Participated in two webinars on Hybrid Church organised by MCC staff and funded through the Lilly Foundation Thriving in Ministry programme.
- Recorded video greetings for church anniversaries and ordinations
- Offered weekly time of prayer and reflection on Facebook Live
- Individual conversations with MCCers around the world

Diversity and Inclusion

- Recorded video message with Rev. Dr Roland Stringfellow, encouraging MCCers to engage with the Commission on Pathways of Healing and Reconciliation (to be released by end of June)
- Met with Jessie Daniels, academic and author, and colleagues on staff to discuss possible workshop at General Conference on racism and white supremacy
- Worked with SLT to support “Beloved Arise – Queer Youth of Faith”.

Outreach

- Sent congratulatory greetings to Bishop-Elect Meghan Rohrer, Evangelical Lutheran Church USA on their election
- Sent congratulatory greetings to Beatitude-Bishop Jones, UNITY USA on his elevation to Presiding Prelate
- Sent congratulatory greetings to Bishop Yvette Flunder, The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries and Rev. Elder Darlene Garner on being honoured by the National Black Justice Coalition (USA) and the American Association of Retired Persons
- Started dialogue with the European Forum on how MCC might work with other LGBT+ Christian organisations

Governing Board

- Participated in the Governing Board Executive Team planning meeting
- Held Executive meeting to discuss property issues
- Attended GB Finance committee meeting
- Attended HR team meeting

Staff

- Regular meetings with Rev. Elder Hector Gutierrez and Rev. Dr Kharma Amos as Senior Leadership Team
- Met with Rev. Dr Kharma Amos and Marina Laws to discuss ideas for connecting with our Partners in Hope supporters
- Met with staff to discuss situations in different churches
- Led weekly staff briefings and monthly staff meeting

Council of Elders

- Participated in Council of Elders planning team meeting
- Participated in Council of Elders meeting
- Participated in Council of Elders pastoral and spiritual support meeting
- Held meetings with individual Elders to discuss their particular calling as an Elder

Commissions

- Co-chaired Commission on Pathways of Healing and Reconciliation (CPHR)
- Participated in CPHR sub group to develop personal pathways for healing
- Participated in CPHR sub group to develop process for receiving individual testimonies
- Participated in Commission on General Conferences meetings