

After almost a year's search, Metropolitan Community Church of Portland will welcome a candidate for its senior pastor position, left empty when the Rev. Roy Cole resigned to further his education.

The Rev. Glenna Shepherd, interim pastor at MCC Tampa in Florida, will be in town for a week of activities from Jan. 7 to 12, after which a vote will be taken. She is the pastoral search committee's choice out of three final candidates.

Shepherd was born in 1951 and grew up in Knoxville, Tenn., which she describes as "an Appalachian mountain city, a diverse university city and home of the Tennessee Valley Authority," which brought in people from all over the world. The three influences, she says, resulted in her being raised "with both local folk culture and the concerts, theater and athletics of a large university." She credits her family with giving her "a high regard for the values of community, hospitality and friendship as well as implanting a belief that I could be and do anything that I wanted."

In 1972 she received a bachelor's degree in music theory from University of Tennessee. In 1978 she graduated with a master's degree in conducting, which has benefited her well in the musical groups she has led in and out of various MCCs.

As a youth she attended a progressive Baptist church and became a musician at Presbyterian, Episcopal, Lutheran and United Methodist congregations. Before her involvement with MCC, she served as an associate pastor in the United Methodist Church.

Shepherd came out in 1989 "with little internal struggle but quite a bit of external drama. The Methodist Church was not thrilled—nor was my family."

She adds, "MCC's 'outness' attracted me im-

GOOD SHEPHERD

Metropolitan Community Church of Portland considers pastoral candidate by Patricia L. MacAodha

diately." She sees the denomination as "a prophet in the contemporary church" and considers diversity its greatest gift and challenge. "That call to be a diverse people—theologically, in how we live, in regard to gender, race, class—and to be open to other ways attracted and still attracts me to MCC."

Drawn to the ministry, Shepherd returned to academic life in 1989, earning a master's degree in preaching and theology from Emory University while serving as artistic director of Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus. She now is pursuing a doctorate in congregational development at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, Calif.

Shepherd was ordained in 1992 at Christ Covenant MCC in Decatur, Ga., where she was the founding pastor. She served as interim pastor of All God's Children MCC in Minneapolis/St. Paul from October 2000 to May 2001 and was on staff at Cathedral of Hope MCC in Dallas as minister of worship and music from 2001 to 2002. Outside the church she has ministered to women coming out of prison and homeless people.

Shepherd looks forward to pastoral work in Portland, which will be significantly different from Christ Covenant, her longest pastorate. Portland, she says, has a long and rich history with a legacy and "a solid ground from which to grow," whereas at Christ Covenant, "we developed our own culture, established new traditions and defined ourselves as we developed."

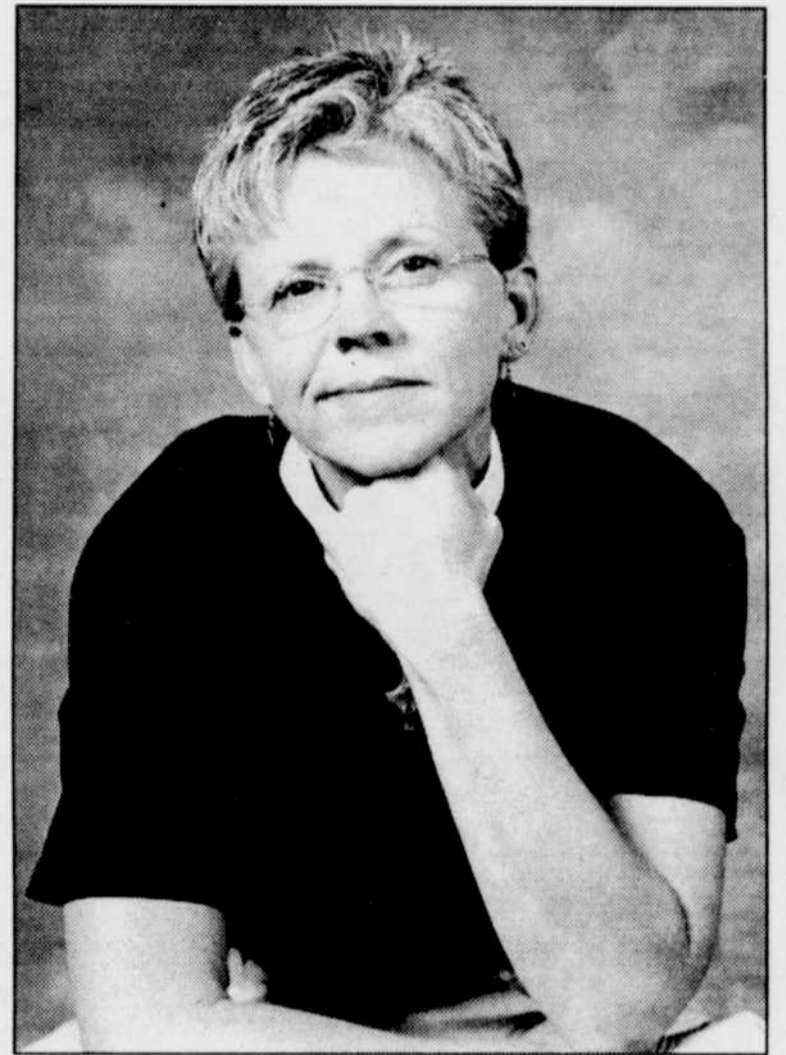
Asked what attracted her to MCC Portland,

Shepherd mentions the size and involvement of the congregation; programs such as Esther's Pantry, which provides food and personal care items to low-income people with AIDS; the urban nature of the church; and "commitment of the congregation to be a vital, spiritual presence in the community." She looks forward to experiencing the Pacific Northwest culture, anticipating the differences and similarities of MCCs everywhere.

After a welcome greeting 10:45 a.m. Jan. 7 at Portland International Airport, Shepherd will begin an extensive circuit of meetings with groups and individuals inside MCC Portland and throughout the metropolitan area. She also will be feted at a welcoming reception 8 p.m. Jan. 10 at Peace House, 2116 N.E. 18th Ave., and a spaghetti feed 6 p.m. Jan. 11 at the church, 2400 N.E. Broadway.

Chuck Harvey, chairman of MCC Portland's pastoral search committee, articulated the congregation's enthusiasm about Shepherd's upcoming visit. "We were very impressed with her worship, music and administration credentials. The variety of churches she has been associated with and the growth they experienced also spoke well of her gifted leadership."

"Rev. Shepherd Explains Everything" is sched-



The Rev. Glenna Shepherd comes to the Rose City from Tampa, Fla.

uled for 7 p.m. Jan. 8, and she will preach Jan. 12 at both the 9 and 11 a.m. services, followed by a brief question-and-answer forum and a congregational meeting. If the vote that concludes this meeting meets the 85 percent requirement, she will be MCC Portland's next senior pastor. □

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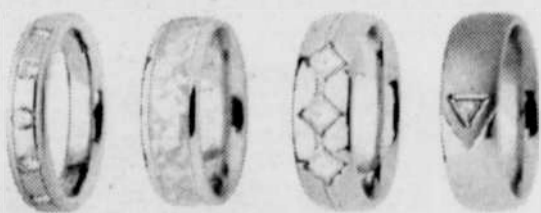


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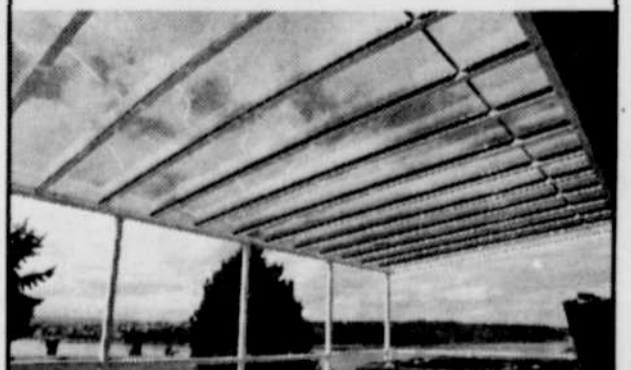
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