



Don Borbe served as MCC's second pastor from 1979 to 1981, fully engaging in community activities like Pride.



Just Out founders Jay Brown (center) and Renee LaChance (left of Brown) supported MCC in newspaper articles and columns.

They were the 47th congregation in the growing worldwide denomination. Perry came to Portland for the chartering service Jan. 9, 1977. Many skeptical gay community members had anticipated the third MCC attempt flopping like the first two. But they turned out in force at The Old Church for the gala event, Roxy Neuhardt and Darcelle included.

Nine months later, the Portland MCC congregation did something unusual. It mustered the down payment and bought a derelict wood frame church in the hippie-infested Sullivan's Gulch area near Irvington. Real estate people in September 1978 figured it was good enough for the gays. MCC Portland was only the third congregation in the UFMCC to buy its own building, and the mortgage was not burned until 1993. It was a far-sighted venture that has paid off. The church is still the only major piece of gay-identified urban real estate in Oregon.

Amerine left the congregation to become the first coordinator of the Northwest District of the UFMCC in June 1979. The Rev. Don Borbe, the Rev. Jim Glycer and Delores Berry followed him, each serving an average of 15 months. When Harvey Milk was murdered in San Francisco in 1978, a memorial was held at MCC. Speakers were Barbara Roberts, Jerry Weller and Holly Hart. In October 1979, MCC and the Portland Town Council jointly sponsored a candlelight march down Broadway. In 1980, the Portland Gay Men's Chorus was organized at the suggestion of MCC's first choir director, Gary Coleman. PGMC rehearsed at the church and held its earliest concerts there.

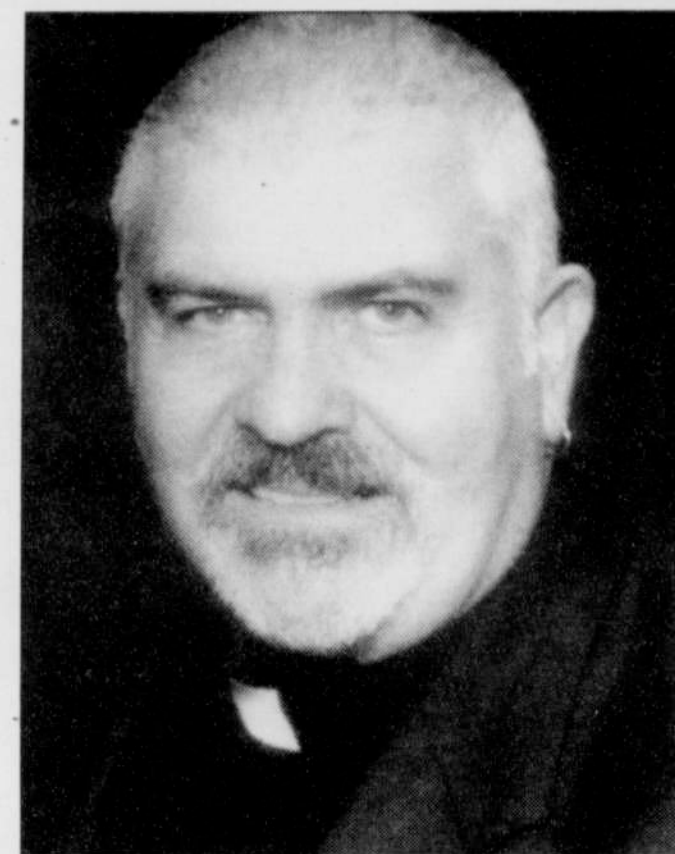
Challenges and Responses to AIDS in the Community

AIDS reared its ugly head in 1981 and became a primary focus of the gay community and the church by 1983. Several members of PGMC and MCC formed early support groups, which led to Phoenix Rising, the Personal Active Listening Project and Community Health and Essential Support Services. Cascade AIDS Project later incorporated these groups. Esther's Pantry opened at this time, first housed behind the Dirty Duck, then under the Embers Avenue before moving under the Everett Hotel across from Ray's Ordinary Grill on Northwest Broadway.

The Rev. Gary Wilson arrived in 1986. His contributions to the congregation and the gay community included assisting Pat Schweibert and others with the startup of Our House of Portland. In 1986, MCC planned the first 50-hour AIDS prayer vigil. In 1987, many churches throughout the city joined in the event, as they did for the next several years. This led to Portland's observation of World AIDS Day.

In 1988, Measure 8 was the first political battle at the ballot box concerning "no special rights" for gays. The gay community was stunned. Terry Bean, Karen Keeney, Jim Wegher and John Grigsby formed what became known as Equity Foundation to help the gay community get financially organized. National Coming Out Day was proclaimed for that October.

Continued on Page 22



Raised in the Church of God of Prophecy, the Rev. Troy Perry has fasted, led marches and met with presidents in his quest for justice for all oppressed communities.



Special Celebration Events

- Jan. 27: Reception, 5 p.m. at Peace House, 2116 N.E. 18th Ave. Sanctuary concert, 7 p.m. at Metropolitan Community Church of Portland, 2400 N.E. Broadway.
- Jan. 28: "A Curious and Peculiar People" history evening featuring speakers and displays, 7 p.m. at MCC.
- Jan. 29: Festival worship with special guest the Rev. Troy Perry, 9 and 11 a.m. at MCC.



Sister Paula Nielsen returned to Portland after working with the Angelus Temple in Los Angeles. She was church secretary for 10 years before launching her cable access ministry.



Austin Amerine returned for several anniversary celebrations.



Weddings and holy unions have been part of the UFMCC since Troy Perry founded it in 1968.

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