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Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work.

– Aristotle

Labour Day, Pride and MCC :

A History of Making a Difference



It's easy to think of Labour Day as just another long weekend – one last holiday to signal the end of the summer. But Labour Day's roots are deeper than end-of-season barbecues and back to school shopping.

Much like Pride at the beginning of summer, Labour Day began as a protest. Here in Toronto, the first Labour Day demonstrations were held in the 1870's. Back then, workers demanded a 9-hour workday – the standard workday at the time being 12 hours, 6 days a week!

In the 130 years since, workers have organized to fight for fairer wages, safer conditions, better benefits, and greater protection against discrimination. In many cases, organized labour helped shield LGBTQ+ people from employment discrimination before such protections had become widespread policy.

As you head into this long weekend, here's a bit of history that connects labour activism and the struggle for LGBTQ+ rights with a tie-in to one of our sibling congregations within the Metropolitan Community Churches...

The story begins with the birth of the Gay Activists Alliance in New York City in 1970. The GAA wanted to get politically active, and one of their first initiatives sought to get a bill through city council to protect LGBTQ+ New Yorkers against employment discrimination. One young GAA member threw herself into the initiative, hitting the street to gather signatures for a petition supporting the nondiscrimination bill. When a police officer saw the young activist on the street corner collecting signatures, he told her to leave. She refused.

Soon, through shouts that she was being discriminated against, she was being dragged into a squad car. What began as a campaign for fair labour practices landed this young GAA member in court a few months later facing disorderly conduct charges. She had no legal representation that day, but she *did* look fabulous in her purple jumpsuit and large sunglasses. Fabulous enough, in fact, to attract the attention of a young attorney who, upon learning the details of her arrest, agreed to represent her on the spot. After several months, five aborted hearings, and another arrest for "female impersonation," the original charges against Sylvia Rivera were finally dropped. Sylvia's trial, and especially her connection with the lawyer who agreed to represent her, helped turn the GAA into a legally oriented organization.

A few years later, the GAA's legal work led to the founding of a spinoff organization – Lambda Legal Defense Educational Fund, or Lambda Legal for short. Lambda attorneys were the first to take up the fight for same-sex marriage in the States. They stayed in that fight until they reached the Supreme Court, who ruled in favour of equal marriage nationwide in 2015.

So as you celebrate this Labour Day weekend, remember that workers' rights and LGBTQ+ rights have often been advanced side by side...and sometimes, by the same activists.

But wait – what does this story have to do with MCC Toronto?

Not much, perhaps, but there is a minor tie-in. You see, Sylvia Rivera was a long-time member of the Metropolitan Community Church of New York, a congregation founded in the same era as MCC Toronto. A tireless activist, Rivera later dedicated herself to supporting homeless LGBTQ+ youth.

When she passed in 2002, her dying wish was that her beloved faith community would do something to help homeless LGBTQ+ youth. Today, MCC New York is home to an overnight shelter for homeless LGBTQ+ youth that's open 365 nights a year. That shelter is called Sylvia's place.

Rev. Junia Joplin,
Associate Pastor, Programs & Congregational Care

Save the Date | Homecoming September 18



Reminder! MCC Toronto's Homecoming will be celebrated in-person and online on **September 18 at 11 AM**.

For the uninitiated - or for those that need a reminder - Homecoming is when we throw open the doors and welcome back congregants and members who we might have not seen whether in-person or online during the summer. It is a time to recommit to MCC Toronto and to rejoin your faith family as we continue our spiritual journey - together!

And while our Social Hall remains under renovation, we will be holding a special "Social Hour" get-together on the sidewalks around MCC Toronto following the Homecoming Service (weather permitting). Light refreshments will be served.

Musical Guest



Beau Dixon is our Offertory Performer this Sunday!

Beau is a self-taught, award-winning songwriter, musician, actor, playwright, music director, sound designer, producer and artistic director for Firebrand Theatre. As a songwriter and musician, Beau has shared the stage with Serena Ryder, Rufus Wainwright, Feist, Ron Sexsmith, Jeff Healey, Jully Black and countless others. He has toured extensively throughout Canada, the U.S. and Europe and has three albums under his name, available on iTunes, Bandcamp and other streaming platforms.

As an actor, he has performed on many reputable theatre stages throughout Canada. *NOW Magazine* and the *Toronto Star* have listed him among Toronto's top ten theatre actors, multiple years in a row. Beau is currently performing in *Porchside Songs* with Musical Stage, as well as music-directing a show he created for Stratford Festival entitled *FREEDOM 2.0: Black Music That Changed America*.

In 2011, Beau was inducted into Peterborough's Pathway of Fame for his leadership in the arts. His website is www.beaudixon.com.

[CLICK HERE TO JOIN THIS SERVICE ONLINE](#)



For August , MCC Toronto celebrates our Digital Usher team as our Angels of the Month.

Formed in January, the Digital Usher Team is made of volunteers who welcome folks, answer questions and engage congregants on YouTube chat during our weekly livestreamed Worship Services. We believe their participation has made our livestreamed Services more lively, more engaging and more responsive to the hundreds of folks who watch us every week.

Please join us in celebrating our Digital Usher team of Susan Clark (Team Lead), Neil Betteridge, Michelle Bowring, Lori Boyce and Ben James!



We are looking for a **Regional Sponsorship Coordinator** to support our LGBTQ+ Refugee Programs and help increase our capacity to privately sponsor LGBTQ+ refugees.

If you are interested, please apply! If you know someone who would be ideal, please share!

Compensation: \$22/hr

Hours: Fulltime (36 hours per week), 9 months contract with the possibility of renewal.

READ MORE AND APPLY HERE

Volunteer with us!

Volunteers have always been at the heart of MCC Toronto. We would not be the strong, inclusive and welcoming community we are, without the support and dedication of volunteers who help support our Worship Services and our other public programs.

Right now we urgently need volunteers familiar with **webcasting, sound operation multimedia and information desk.**

To sign up for these or other opportunities, please click the link below.

SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER HERE

Congregational Care

Taking care of each other is more important than ever these days, and if you are in need of some care we are here for you. Just hop on the link below and fill out the form to let one of our pastors know about your needs.

Want to learn more? [Watch this video by Rev. Junia Joplin!](#)

REQUEST CONGREGATIONAL CARE HERE

Every Gift is a Blessing. Please consider making a gift to MCC Toronto today.

DONATE

**Online and In-Person Programming
September 4 - 10**

SEPTEMBER
4 - 10

SUNDAY

04

11 AM - Online and In-Person
Sunday Service

MONDAY

05

TUESDAY

06

WEDNESDAY

07

THURSDAY

08

10:30 AM - Ever Wonder
Group Discussion
(ZOOM)

FRIDAY

09

SATURDAY

10

Sunday:

11 AM - Online and In-Person Sunday Service

Thursday:

10:30 AM - Ever Wonder Group Discussion
(Email: everwonder@mcctoronto.com)



Sunday Service Worship

Online | 11 AM | In-person | MCC Toronto YouTube

Share Us Digitally!

If you know of anyone who might be interested in anything we're doing at MCC Toronto please invite them to join us digitally via the button below.

SHARE THE QUERY HERE

Questions? Comments? Inquires?
We'd love to hear from you!

Connect with us at
communications@mcctoronto.com



Sent with love 

on behalf of MCC Toronto | 115 Simpson Avenue, Toronto, M4K 1A1 Canada

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