



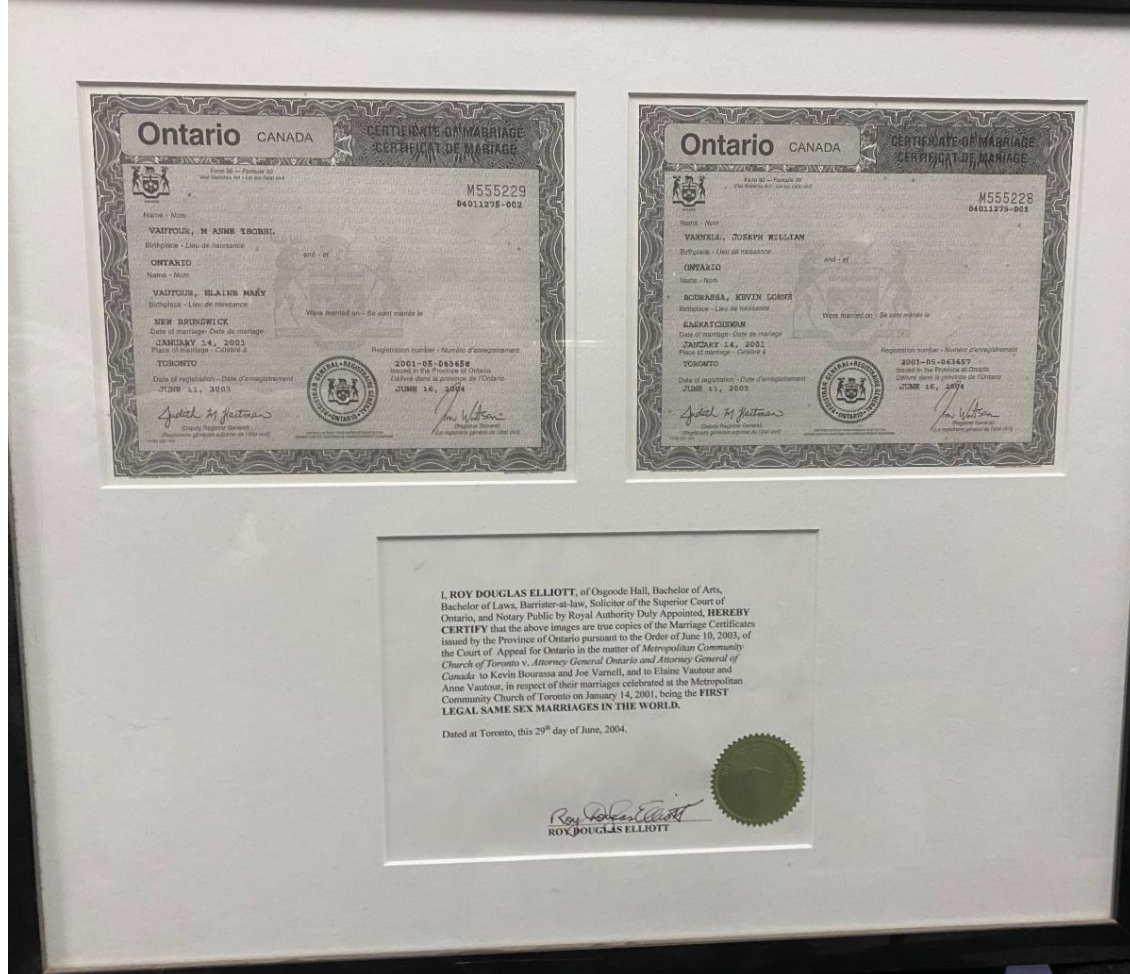
“

When anything really new begins to germinate around us, we cannot distinguish it – for the very good reason that it could only be recognized in the light of what it is going to be.

–Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Act of Faith and Act of Protest:

Beginnings of Same-Sex Marriage at MCC Toronto



Picture of first same-sex marriage certificates at MCC Toronto

The French priest and paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin had it right – beginnings are hard to distinguish. When it comes to the beginnings of same-sex marriage, there are plenty of stories and plenty of claims.

Were the first same-sex marriages held at MCC Toronto? The short answer is *kind of*. There are stories of same-sex marriages from throughout history.

Elagabalus, the third-century Roman Emperor, married an athlete named Zoticus in an extravagant public ceremony. But not only did the emperor's privilege not extend to ordinary citizens, Elagabalus could probably be considered a trans woman.

Elisa Sanchez used the name Mario and wore a suit and tie so she and her girlfriend Marcela could marry in Spain in 1901. The couple had to flee to the Americas when authorities discovered their ruse.

There have been countless blessing ceremonies, civil unions, and other special rites to unite same-sex couples over the years. MCC Toronto began celebrating these unions almost 50 years ago.

The Netherlands was the first country to enshrine same-gender marriage in law, with the legalization taking effect on April 1, 2001. The mayor of Amsterdam himself performed four same-sex weddings at the stroke of midnight on that date. Our friends in the Netherlands deserve plenty of credit for their history-making role in the fight for equal marriage. But 11 weeks before those four weddings happened in Amsterdam, two same-sex couples stood at the front of our sanctuary and were joined in marriage by Rev. Brent Hawkes.

Were the marriages legal? At the time, *not exactly*. But the ceremonies were conducted publicly and deliberately, as an act of faith and an act of protest. These weddings weren't held to trick authorities, to be civil unions rather than marriages, or to be sacred but legally nonbinding. They were held to confront injustice and to influence lasting social change.

And that's just what they did. The resulting legal battle took years to resolve, but love, as they say, *wins*. Ontario made marriage equality official in 2003. By that time, a few other countries had legalized same-sex marriage. But Ontario's marriage equality law came with legal recognition of the two marriages held at MCC Toronto in January 2001.

So, did MCC Toronto host and perform the world's first same-sex marriages?
Well, not really.

But did we *make history* with weddings that, once they were officially recognized, became the first legal same-sex marriages in modern times?

You bet we did. And it happened 22 years ago tomorrow on **January 14**.

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

Musical Guest



Andrew Prashad is our Offertory Performer this Sunday!

Andrew is a solidly trained and versatile dancer, musician, singer, composer, writer and actor. He is one of the leading tap dance artists in Canada, teaching and choreographing around the world.

His self-produced *2: A Short Film* was officially selected to show in 12 festivals around the world and has won four awards, including Best Short Film.

He was a featured singer and dancer on the 20th Anniversary World Tour of *Riverdance*, and has played Cogsworth in Young People's Theatre's *Beauty and the Beast*, Billy in *Once* at Theatre St John's in Newfoundland, and Boutons in Neptune Theatre's *Cinderella* (Merritt Award, *Outstanding Supporting Actor*). He also originated the role of Jonas in *Jukebox Hero* at the Ed Mirvish Theatre.

He recently finished doing *Holiday Inn* at the Shaw Festival and is preparing to tour his multi-medium one-person show *One Step at a Time*, which chronicles his family's journey with spina bifida and hydrocephalus. It has been presented by numerous schools and theatres, raising \$11,500 (to date) for SickKids Hospital and ErinOak Kids.

Andrew is a graduate of the University of Toronto at Mississauga, with Honours Bachelor of Arts degrees in Theatre and Performance as well as French Literature.

January 15 | 11 AM | MCC Toronto's YouTube Channel

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

Save the Date - MCC Toronto Membership Class | January 31

Are you interested in becoming a member of MCC Toronto? Would you like to learn more about what church membership means, and what kind of church we are?

Tune in on Tuesday evening, **January 31** at **7 PM** for our next membership class!

Please note that this class was originally scheduled for January 17. After completing the class, participants may or may not choose to proceed with church membership.

[JOIN HERE](#)

Meeting ID: 811 1423 6966
Passcode: 610780

Winter Clothes for Those in Need



The snow falling outside today reminds us that winter is, indeed, here. For anyone planning to downsize their closets, please consider donating any gently used winter clothing for men, women, teenagers and kids. This includes coats, boots, hats, gloves, scarves, sweaters,

backpacks, and of course, purses and bags! Our primary need is to keep people warm, but kitchenware and other household items are also appreciated!

Items can be dropped off Tuesdays, Thursdays or Sundays. To arrange a drop-off, or to request a pick-up of your items, **contact Margi Wallace** [here](#). Thank you!

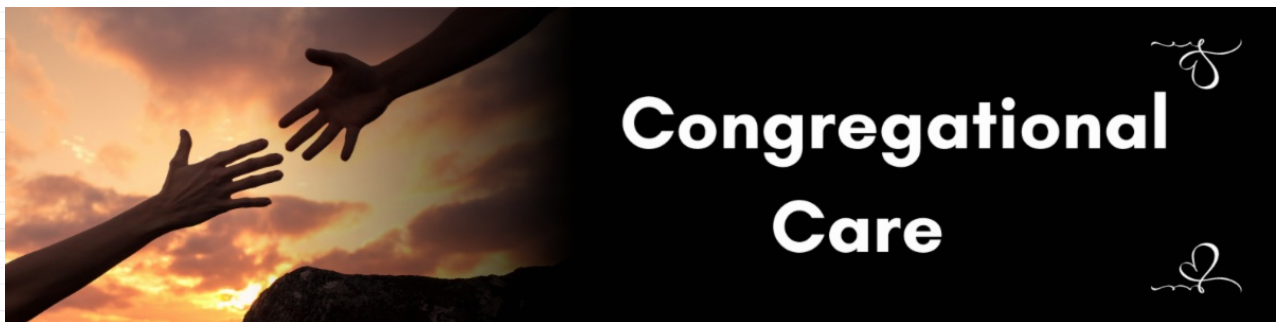
Children's Church | January 21

Our every second Sunday Children's Church returns next Sunday, **January 21**, for kids from kindergarten to grade five. No registration is required but please click [here](#) to tell us about your child/children should you be interested in having them join us.

Become a Monthly Donor



It is always a pleasure to acknowledge and celebrate members and congregants enrolled in our weekly and monthly giving program! The on-going support of our 300+ sustaining donors is so critical to the work MCC Toronto does everyday, and we are extremely grateful for your gifts. However, like a lot of churches, MCC Toronto has seen our weekly and monthly contributions decline over the past two years. Today, we invite you to consider joining our family of weekly or monthly donors. Whether your gift is \$5 a week, or \$25 a month, every bit helps support our operations. You can sign up on our [website](#) or contact giving@mcctoronto.com for more information.



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 about our Congregational Care program? [Watch this video by Rev. Junia Joplin!](#)

[REQUEST CONGREGATIONAL CARE HERE](#)

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

DONATE

Online and In-Person Programming January 15 - 21

JANUARY 15-21	SUNDAY 15 11 AM - Online and In-Person Sunday Service	MONDAY 16	TUESDAY 17	WEDNESDAY 18
		THURSDAY 19 10:30 AM - Ever Wonder Group Discussion (ZOOM) 3 PM - Digital Fellowship Hall	FRIDAY 20	SATURDAY 21

Sunday:

11 AM - Online and In-Person Sunday Service

Thursday:

10:30 AM - Ever Wonder Group Discussion

(Email: everwonder@mcctoronto.com)

3 PM - [Digital Fellowship Hall](#)



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 ❤️

