



“No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark.”

— Warsan Shire

## Mid-Year Update on MCC Toronto’s LGBTQ+ Refugee Programs

Recently, there has been an increase in the number of refugee claimants seeking assistance through our LGBTQ+ Refugee Programs. In 2022, our intake orientation sessions typically saw an average of 20 participants. However, since January 2023, we have experienced a significant increase, with an average of around 120 participants per session. This trend is reflective of the increasing recognition that MCC Toronto continues to provide a welcoming space for LGBTQ+ asylum seekers. We are proud to see more and more refugee claimants finding solace in our community and benefiting from the inclusive and empowering environment we have cultivated over the years.

Beyond our Peer-to-Peer support for asylum seekers, MCC Toronto’s LGBTQ+ Refugee Programs maintain a strong focus on private sponsorship. Through a partnership with the Government of Canada, we continue to sponsor and support LGBTQ+ refugees worldwide, providing a fresh start in Canada. We aim to extend our global impact for 2023 by sponsoring **5 to 10 more refugees**, bringing the total number of refugees MCC Toronto has helped bring to Canada to almost 90. Through our collaboration with Rainbow Railroad, so far in 2023, we have welcomed **11 individuals** from countries where LGBTQ+ persecution remains a pressing issue, including Syria, Iran, Eritrea, Lebanon, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Nigeria. Our unwavering dedication to building a safer, inclusive world continues as we advocate for the rights and well-being of LGBTQ+ refugees, transforming lives and instilling hope.

As we continue to encourage the formation of more sponsorship teams, we strongly invite our MCC Toronto family to lend a hand in assisting refugees. If you are interested in making a difference, please feel free to reach out to me directly at [dkerr@mcctoronto.com](mailto:dkerr@mcctoronto.com). Your support can make a significant impact on the lives of those in need.

We’re also delighted to announce the launch of a new Volunteer Empowerment Program, which is aimed at supporting asylum seekers awaiting their hearing to integrate into the Canadian workforce and find their desired career paths. By collaborating with other organizations, the Volunteer Empowerment Program creates a nurturing environment that equips refugee claimants with essential tools and resources to acclimate to the Canadian job market.

Please consider making a gift in support of our LGBTQ+ Refugee Program. Your support

gives safety and empowerment to LGBTQ+ refugees in Canada.

- Dave Kerr (He/Him),  
Director of LGBTQ+ Refugee Programs

MAKE A GIFT TO OUR LGBTQ+ PROGRAMS



## BACK IN 1973 .....

WHEN REV. DEANA MADE HER  
FILM DEBUT

***As MCC Toronto celebrates its 50th Anniversary in 2023, we have launched a new column looking back at the year 1973 to identify the news, happenings and trends that defined the year of MCC Toronto's founding. (Bonus Edition)***

When we asked Rev. Deana a few months ago what she recalled about 1973, it appears she missed sharing the surprising news that she appeared as an extra in George Lucas' acclaimed 1973 film *American Graffiti*!

The film was partially shot at Tamalpais High School in Mill Valley, California, where Rev. Deana attended high school. Rev. Deana appears as an extra at a high school dance. We've screen captured the moment below.



Alas, this was Rev. Deana's only brush with Hollywood fame. Apparently she found another calling, one of which, we are very glad she did!

- John R. Farrell (He/Him),  
Senior Director of Development & Communications

## August Sermon Series - VBS for Grown-Ups

If you were a Sunday School kid, you will know what VBS is. Vacation Bible School was a summertime staple in many churches. It would consist of some Bible stories, a cartoon if you were lucky, possibly some craft activities, and always juice (well, more likely Kool-Aid) and cookies. During the month of August, our sermon series will be "VBS for Grown-Ups," with some Bible stories that they never told us as kids! Alas, there will not be any craft activities, but there will be a few cartoons, and of course juice and cookies after service. **Many thanks to Debra Williams**, who is sponsoring our "Social Hour & Cookie Situation" for the month of August!

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## MCC Toronto 50th Anniversary T Shirts!



If you have pre-ordered a T Shirt, you can pick it up this Sunday (**August 6**), at the Service.

If you are interested in buying one, you can purchase with **debit/credit or exact change**.

ORDER YOUR T SHIRT ONLINE TODAY

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## Musical Guest



**Danah-Lee** (She/Her) is our Offertory Performer this Sunday!

Danah-Lee is a Contemporary Christian/LGBTQ musician, producer, award-winning music educator, entrepreneur, author, and church music director. In addition to her strong faith in Christ as a member of the LGBTQ community, she owns and operates an inclusive music school.

Danah was nominated for Louder Than The Music's "Christian Album of the Year" (2020) and the "Impact Award" at Ottawa's Capital Music Awards (CMA) (2021).

**August 6 | 11 AM | MCC Toronto's YouTube Channel**

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

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☐ **Donate Your Summer Clothes to a Good Cause!** ☐





As the summer heat intensifies, let's come together to make a difference in the lives of those in need!

We're organizing a Summer Clothes Donation Drive to support our LGBTQ+ Refugee Programs and our community members who are less fortunate and in need of some relief from the sweltering temperatures. Whether it's breezy dresses, cool t-shirts, shorts, or sandals, your gently-used items can bring joy and comfort to someone else's summer!



MCC Toronto is incredibly grateful to the hundreds of volunteers who help support our Worship Services and other public programs. Please note at this time we are unable to accept new applications for Worship Team volunteer demands due to a high volume of interest. Please click on the link below to view other volunteer opportunities.

[SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER HERE](#)



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](mailto:giving@mcctoronto.com) for more information.



Taking care of ourselves or others is always important. 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

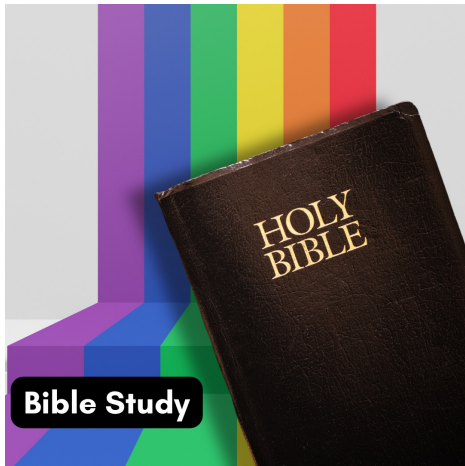
## This Week at a Glance August 6 - 12

### Sunday:

11 AM - Online and in-person Worship Service

### Thursday:

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



Bible Study

Bible Study

Resumes in September



Digital Fellowship Hall

Digital Fellowship Hall

Resumes in September



*Join us for*


## Online and In-Person Worship Services

Sunday 11 AM | MCC Toronto YouTube

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

Connect with us at [communications@mcctoronto.com](mailto:communications@mcctoronto.com)



*Sent with love* 



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