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### ***THE PASTOR'S PEN***

I'm still riding high from the first LGBT Pride event in about a decade! Planning for 50, and hoping for 100, we were overwhelmed at the 300-400 attendance! It all began about a year ago when some reparative therapy billboards appeared in town. It was the consensus of members of the local LGBT community that the best way to respond to those billboards would be to celebrate ourselves. So we made plans for that celebration on October 14, the first Saturday after National Coming Out Day. We gathered sponsors from businesses, organizations, and churches to underwrite its costs. We ordered T-shirts. We purchased ingredients for hotdogs and received donations of beverages from Coca-Cola, Dr. Pepper, and Starbucks. We gathered speakers and musicians, and we made plans for fun, games, and entertainment. It took the hard work of a whole bunch of dedicated community volunteers. And our efforts were rewarded!

And because of the generosity of so many people, next year's event will be even bigger and better. It will take place at a larger location. We will be able to sell things, which will attract local and out-of-town vendors. And we will be able to bring in food trucks for the event. Plans are already being made for next year's event. If you're interested in being a part of that planning, mark your calendar to join others in the Social Hall at our church on **Tuesday, November 7** at 7:00 p.m.

But there was another benefit from the event which I hadn't counted on: more people at church on Sunday morning. When asked how a newcomer found out about us, the response is almost always, "I found out about you online." Over the last two Sundays, at least seven newcomers joined us because they heard about us at the Pride event! Last Sunday's attendance was the largest it has been since Easter 2016, and one-fourth of those in attendance were first-time attenders.

We have been blessed by God with new faces. But the pressing question for me is what are we going to do with that blessing? Will we continue doing what we have always done, and hope that the newcomers stick around? Or will we open ourselves to new possibilities, new ways of experiencing God's presence among us, and new ministries? Will we see this bump in attendance as God's invitation to re-vitalization and renewal? And what might that look like?

These are questions each of us needs to consider. Please feel free to share your feedback with me at any time. My email is [centexmcc@earthlink.net](mailto:centexmcc@earthlink.net); drop me a line. My Facebook profile is <https://www.facebook.com/charley.garrison.3>; send me a friend request and message me.

Peace and blessings,  
Charley

## **MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

*The following is a tentative list of upcoming church activities and community events. Contact the church for a confirmation of the calendar.*

### **Weekly Events:**

- **Central Texas MCC Worship** (1601 Clay Ave.) on Sundays at 11:00 a.m.
- **Live and Let Live AA Group** (4209 N. 27<sup>th</sup> St.) on Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.

**Sunday, October 29 – Restaurant Sunday.** Join us after worship for lunch at a local restaurant.

**Saturday, November 4 – Women's HIV Support Group.** If you are an HIV+ woman, then join others for a support group followed by a home-cooked meal.

**Sunday, November 5 – Time Change.** Set your clocks back one hour.

**Sunday, November 5 – Accessibility Sunday.** Worship will take place downstairs in the Social Hall.

**Sunday, November 5 – All Saints/All Souls Sunday.** A worship service devoted to remembering those who have died in the past year.

**Tuesday, November 7 – Post-Mortem Meeting for Pride 2017** at 7 p.m. in the social hall.

**Sunday, November 12 – CROP Hunger Walk** at Bledsoe-Miller Park. Registration at 2PM, Walk begins at 3PM.

**Monday, November 13 – Interfaith Thanksgiving Service** at 7:00 p.m. at Richfield Christian Church.

**Thursday, November 16 – HIV Support Group** at 6:00 p.m. in the Social Hall begins with a home-cooked meal and continues with connection and conversation.

**Sunday, November 19 – Accessibility Sunday.** Worship will take place downstairs in the Social Hall.

**Sunday, November 19 – Potluck Sunday.** Join us after worship in the Social Hall for good food and good fellowship!

**Sunday, November 19 – Annual Congregational Meeting** immediately after the potluck social. Come and find out what Central Texas MCC has done over the last year and be a part of what we will be doing in the coming year!

**Sunday, November 19 – Transgender Day of Remembrance Service** at 5PM at Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Waco.

**Thursday, November 23 – Thanksgiving Day.** The church office and Red Door Pantry will be closed in observance of the holiday.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

The following people have birthdays this month. If you have corrections or additions to the birthday list, please call the office at 752-5331 or email us at [centexmcc@earthlink.net](mailto:centexmcc@earthlink.net).

**Cory Burns – November 5**  
**Megan Talley – November 8**  
**Rachel Brand – November 12**  
**Kim Grider – November 13**  
**Don Cockrum – November 16**  
**Jaclyn Randolph – November 20**  
**Ryan Harding – November 20**  
**Mary Hicks – November 21**  
**Lisa Umphrey – November 21**  
**Jan Smith – November 28**

## **Restaurant Sunday**



Stick around after worship on **Sunday, October 29** for lunch with friends! The group picks a local restaurant, and then everyone heads over for table-time fellowship!

## **Time Change**



Time change occurs on **Sunday, November 5** at 2:00 a.m. So set your clocks back an hour before going to bed, and enjoy an extra hour of sleep before joining us for worship!

## **All Saints/All Souls Sunday**



All Saints Day occurs on November 1 and honors all saints, known and unknown, in Western Christianity. All Souls Day falls on November 2 and is a day in which deceased friends and relatives are remembered. Join us for the worship service **Sunday, November 5**, which will be dedicated to recalling loved ones who have passed away in the past year.

## ***CROP Hunger Walk***



"CROP" is an acronym for Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty. The CROP Hunger Walks that take place all around the country raise funds for Church World Service which has worked for seven decades with one goal: building a world where there is enough for all.

Join other church groups on **Sunday, November 12** at Bledsoe-Miller Park (300 N. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd) for the annual Heart of Texas CROP Hunger Walk. Registration is at 2:00 p.m. and the walk along beautiful Brazos River begins at 3:00 p.m.

Twenty-five percent of the money raised from the event stays local, benefiting Caritas of Waco. The remainder of the funds go to Church World Service. Join us, and "be the change you want to see in the world."

## ***Interfaith Thanksgiving Service***



Central Texas MCC is a member of the Greater Waco Interfaith Conference (GWIC), and Pastor Charley serves as the secretary of the organization. Its purpose is to "promote harmony, understanding, cooperation and respect among the variety of faith traditions in Waco and the surrounding area."

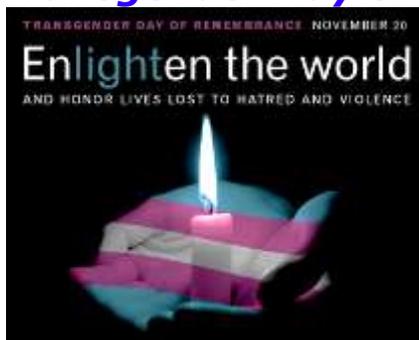
Each year GWIC sponsors an Interfaith Thanksgiving Service. This year's event will take place at Richfield Christian Church (4201 Cobbs Dr.) on **Monday, November 13** at 7:00 p.m. Make plans to join brothers and sisters from different faiths as we give thanks for our blessings.

## ***Annual Congregational Meeting***



At Central Texas MCC, annual congregational meetings are more of a celebration than the approval of reports and budgets, and the election of Board Members. Yes, those things happen, but we take time to celebrate our accomplishments over the past year and look with anticipation toward the coming year's potential. So please make plans to stick around following the monthly potluck social on **Sunday, November 19** for our congregational meeting.

## ***Transgender Day of Remembrance Service***



According to The Advocate, last year was the deadliest year on record for transgender Americans, with 27 homicides reported, most of the victims being women of color. As of September 2017, 23 trans people have been reported killed by violence in the U.S. according to Human Rights Campaign. And Wikipedia reports 46 transgender murders around the world this year, thus far. The actual number killed in any given year is likely much higher, as often the media and police misgender victims, or their deaths are not reported at all.

Please make plans to attend the Transgender Day of Remembrance Service Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Waco (4209 N. 27<sup>th</sup> St.) on **Sunday, November 20** at 5:00 p.m.

**Learn more about the work of Central Texas MCC online at [www.centexmcc.com](http://www.centexmcc.com)**

**Central Texas MCC from the Heart  
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