



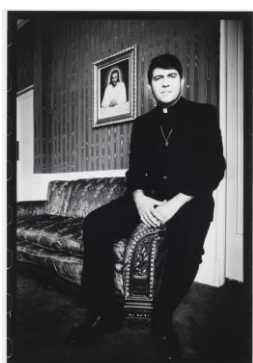
## A Brief History of MCC Sydney 1975-2020

On May 11, 1940 the first foundation stone was laid for the Christian Science Church on the corner of Crystal Street and Brighton Street Petersham. The Auditorium was built to seat 350 people. There was an ample foyer, reading room, usual offices and a Sunday School to seat 200. The Auditorium is octagonal shaped. August 11, 1940 the first service was held.

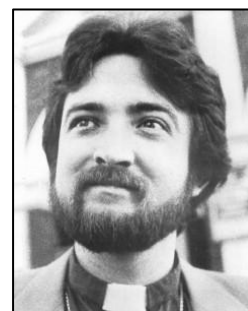
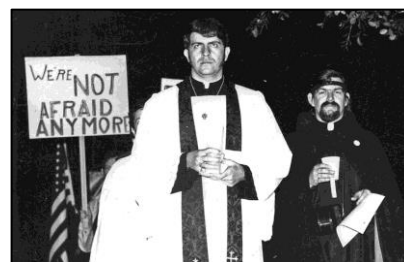
Who would have guessed that MCC Sydney would buy this church in 1999 and become the first MCC in the Southern Hemisphere to own its own church building?

It all began in 1968 when after a long, hard and violent struggle. MCC worldwide was founded in October, in Los Angeles by Rev. Troy Perry. You can find out more about the history or UFMCC at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Troy\\_Perry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Troy_Perry)

On July 11<sup>th</sup> 1974, **Rev. Troy Perry (the Founder of MCC)** and **Rev. Lee Carlton** arrived in Sydney from the USA after first visiting Brisbane.



Sponsored by the Gay Catholic Group Acceptance, it was their first visit to Australia. On July 15<sup>th</sup> 1974 Rev. Perry and Rev. Carlton held the first MCC worship service in Sydney at the home of Graeme Donkin (deceased), 5 Scahill Street, Campsie. Rev. Perry asked

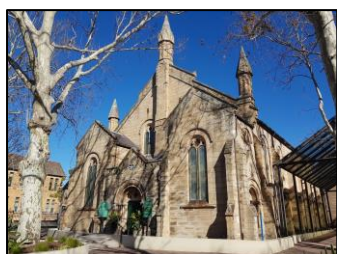


the 12 attendees *“Those who would like to see an MCC established in Sydney raise your hands.”* These 12 formed the nucleus of the first MCC Study Group in Sydney.

The first Study Group service was held on August 25 that year at Don Rankin’s home, 28 Attunga St. Woollahra and was conducted by Ray Griffin. 25 people attended. The name of the Church at that time was Christ Community Church (CCC). When Rev. Carlton returned on March 30 1975 he was asked to Pastor the CCC. He agreed but only if it was held as an MCC Study Group. The first service was held in the **Quakers**



**Meeting Hall, Devonshire St Surrey Hills** with 30 in attendance. It was with much excitement that on July 6 1975 at 3pm at the Quakers Hall, MCC Sydney became a Chartered Church of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches with Rev. Lee Carlton as pastor. 113 people attended the service, and a great journey was begun.

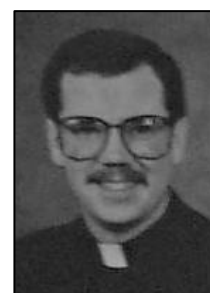


By **August of 1975 MCC Sydney** was sharing the worship space of **The Village Church, Paddington** thanks to the friendship of Rev. Russell Davies and support of Rev. Rex Matthews.



Another great friend of MCC was Rev. Clyde Dominish who led many services until he became Moderator of the Uniting Church. In 1976 MCC Sydney hosted the Australian District conference with Rev. Perry returning from USA to attend.

Following Rev. Carlton’s return to the USA, the position of pastor was filled in succession Associate Pastor, Rev Peter Alexander-Smith (July 25 1976 to January 30 1977); then by Exhorter Cliff Connors, Interim Worship Coordinator (February 6 1977 to March 13 1977); Rev. Ron Burcham

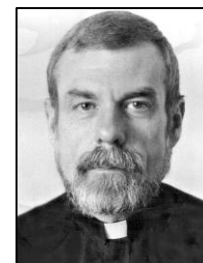


(March 13 1977 to September 1977); Associate Pastor Rev Jan Weymouth (September 1977 to December 13 1977); then by now, Rev. Cliff Connors as Pastor (December 13 1977 to March 16 1978- retired due to illness); then Worship Coordinator, Don Rankin (March 1978 to August 1979) and eventually by Rev. Don Johnson (affectionately known as DJ) (August 26 1979 to January 2 1983- returned to the USA due to illness (January 1983 to April 1984).



In the early 1980's MCCC started an Outreach in the ACT.

A key change in MCC Sydney's focus occurred when Rev. Jim Dykes arrived to replace Rev. Johnson (April 24 1983 to July 1988). This coincided with the sudden growing of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and under Rev. Dykes leadership the church stepped forward to provide much needed care and support for people with AIDS. During this time MCC Sydney was involved with the founding of key AIDS care organisations such as Community Support Network, Ankali and The Bobby Goldsmith Foundation. Rev. Dykes also served as the Australian District Coordinator. On December 6, 1986, Rev. Cliff Connors founded and led Good Shepherd, who would meet in the Unitarian Church, Woollahra, East Sydney for many years before moving to Parramatta. And are now worshipping in Granville. Also during this time, MCC of the Southern Cross was founded and led by Rev. Gary Walker.



In July 1988 Rev. Jim Dykes resigned unexpectedly and suddenly. 1989 Rev. Jim Dykes retires from the clergy ministry of UFMCC but continues his work with Albion St. Centre. Given an Outstanding Achievement Award at the Human Rights Banquet for his fight against HIV AIDS. Greg Smith, who was completing his ministry studies, was elected as Worship Coordinator that same month. 1989 Greg Smith became licensed

as a clergyman in UFMCC General Conference. Rev Greg later resigned from MCC and move to Mudgee with his partner hoping to undertake rural ministry in MCC. From Mudgee Rev Greg filled the position of Australian District Coordinator. Rev. Gary Walker took over as Pastor of MCC Sydney (July 1988 to 1993).

February, 1989, The Jersey Rd Uniting Church (formerly Congregational Church), on which negotiations had begun, was burned down by arsonists. 1989 Rev. Gary Walker and his spouse, Peter Klobe, were badly beaten by thugs in Sydney.

During this time, under Rev. Walker's leadership, MCC Sydney made its next big move in 1991 on November 2 and left The Village Church in Paddington to take on full time tenancy of the Heffron Hall in Darlinghurst, paying the City of Sydney Council \$1 per year as rent.

Rev. Walker retired in 1993 and Rev. Greg Smith returned from Mudgee and was elected as Pastor (1993-2005). This



period saw further outreach and growth within the church. The MCC welfare shop "The Out of the Closet Emporium" was opened on Broadway in 1994 by



Rev. Elder Troy Perry. Sunday lunches were provided at Heffron Hall for people living with HIV/AIDS and their Carers. The first Christmas Eve

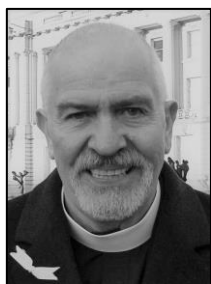


Service was held in 1994 and an extra Sunday morning worship service, in addition to the Sunday evening service



was added. Each year, MCCS entered a float in the Mardi Gras, and most years, continues to do so to this day. An Outreach was established in the Central Coast on December 17, 1995. It was called MCC On the Coast.





In 1997 the UFMCC worldwide General Conference was held in Sydney and hosted by MCC Sydney. This was the first time in the history of the Fellowship that the conference had been held outside the USA.

In 1998 Rev. Shelagh Zincke was ordained as MCC clergy. Rev. Zincke became Assistant Pastor of MCCS and remained so until she moved to the Central Coast to establish NewCoast MCC in 2002. Under Rev Shelagh's guidance the number of women attending dramatically increased.



In 1999 an event occurred that changed the history of MCC Sydney. A church member, Barbara Bikasi, noticed a church building for sale in Petersham.



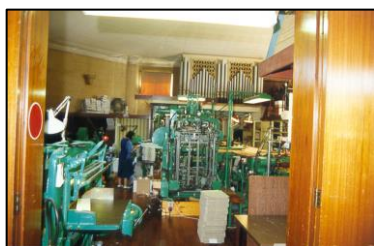
She excitedly informed Rev. Smith, who, along with several Board members, went to Crystal St to have a look. This



started a mammoth and determined effort by the entire congregation to become the first MCC outside North America to own their own church



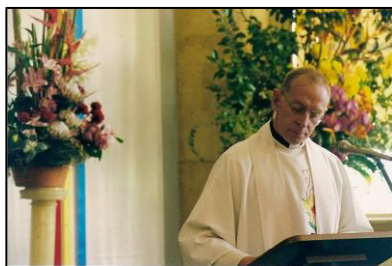
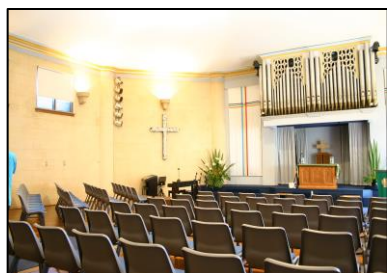
building. Once the commitment was made and the property purchased, work began on the old building, which had been last used as the Mastertouch Piano Roll Factory.



Then the work began to transform this 'factory' back into a house of God that welcomed everyone.



The first service at the 'Crystal St Cathedral' took place on May 21 2000.



The Dedication Service was held the week after on May 28, and the first Holy Union (Sarah & Lee's) took place the week after the Dedication on June 3, 2000.



In August 2001 Rev. Jonathan Jones (the youngest ordained MCC Minister) began the first MCC Youth Ministry in Australia. This saw the formation of Crave Youth Ministry. Rev. Jones left Australia in 2004 to take up a Calling as Pastor of MCC Anchorage, Alaska.



In 2002, Rev Shelagh Zincke left MCCS to establish an Outreach church in the Central Coast, Hunter Region, called NewCoast MCC.

Another major change occurred in 2005 when Rev. Smith followed a Call to work in Cambodia with vulnerable children. Without a Pastor, the Board of MCC Sydney undertook a valiant effort to keep the church running smoothly. In 2008, Rev. Karl Hand



was appointed by UFMCC as Interim Pastor, a position he held till he left MCC Sydney to start CRAVE MCC (in Paddington) in 2009. Rev. Gavin Ward was elected as Senior Pastor in 2009. He continued in this role until 2010 when Rev. Smith returned from Cambodia and was, once again, appointed Senior Pastor (2010-2016).



In 2015, MCC Sydney celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at Petersham Town Hall. This photo includes five original members of the Church from its inception.



Rev. Smith continued as Senior Pastor of MCC Sydney in a part time role until 2016, when he 'retired' from MCC to work as Supply Minister at the Mudgee and Rylstone Uniting Churches. During this part time period, Rev Greg was supported by Rev. Gavin Ward as Minister of Congregational Life. Rev Gavin continued in this role until 2017. At the end of July 2017, we commemorated the resignation of Reverend Gavin Ward.

Once again, the Board and the congregation stepped up and continued the ministry of MCCS, week in and week out, whilst the search for a new pastor continued. In July 2018, Reverend Dale Yardy and



his Husband, Jordan, arrived from Canada after 20 years of Ministry, in both the North Coast of NSW and in Canada. It was with great excitement that we welcomed Rev Dale as our first full time Pastor in many years. Since that time the programs have been increasing with



our Women's Meeting, Men's Meeting, Young Adult Meeting, Progressive Bible Study and our long-awaited congregational care program, Stephen Ministry, which we have called Be Upheld.

Over the 45 years of the history of MCC Sydney, countless numbers of people's lives have changed as they have discovered the inclusive love of God within MCC Sydney's ministering. Many have stayed for years and even decades, and have developed a deep love and commitment to the Church, her people and her ministry. One fact that has held true, each and every day of the 45 years of ministry of MCC Sydney, is that everyone is welcome.

From our humble beginnings 45 years ago, we now have 3 MCC churches in Sydney that have shown that they are here to stay. MCC Sydney, MCC Good Shepherd and CRAVE MCC Paddington.

And each Sunday morning and evening you are able to attend services where the celebration continues as we gather together in worship and around the Communion table to celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, in whose name we meet.

We have been blessed with 45 years of incredible ministry and, by the Grace of God, look forward the next 45.

## **Sources**

Shane Anderson

Barry Heller

Marc Goodacre

Rev Greg Smith



MCC Sydney

is a place of inclusive and authentic worship and service

For information contact

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MCC Office ([office@mccsydney.org](mailto:office@mccsydney.org))

Sunday Services

10am (Traditional) & 6.30pm (Contemporary)

Everyone is welcome