PULSE Memorial Service
Live from Orlando, Florida

12 June 2017
7:00 pm EDT/11:00 pm GMT

TOOLKIT for MCC CHURCHES
Hosting the PULSE Memorial Service
on 12 June 2017
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7 June 2017

Thank you for taking a leadership role in hosting a PULSE Memorial Service to commemorate the lives lost and recommit to acts of justice and compassion.

A global, virtual service will be held at Joy MCC in Orlando, Florida, USA, and broadcast through Facebook Live. We hope you will join our virtual service and personalize your local service to meet the needs of your congregation and community.

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PULSE Memorial Background
June 12, 2016, the sanctuary of Pulse, a popular gay bar in Orlando, Florida, USA, was shattered when a gunman came in near 2:00 am and started shooting, killing 49 people and wounding 53 others. It was the deadliest incident of violence against LGBTQ+ people in U.S. history, surpassing the fire at the Upstairs Lounge in 1973 that killed 32 people.

In addition to being a bar that catered to the LGBTQ+ community, Saturday night at Pulse was Latin night, with a variety of different kinds of Latin dance music played and attracting Latinx queer and straight people from across the region. This shooting was an attack clearly targeting LGBTQ+ people of color. It was an event that rocked the entire world as the effects of hate and violence evoked responses of shock and disbelief, then turning to actions of compassion and solidarity.
Order of Worship

Gathering Music
Words of Welcome
Opening Prayer
Words of Introduction
Reading of the Names
Moment of Silent Remembrance
Prayer of Commitment
Closing Prayer

Prayer of Commitment:

God of life and justice, we thank you for your creation. For bodies that sweat, that move to the beat of music, that embrace one another with passionate desire. We thank you for the ministry of the dance floor that connects us to one another across generations, languages, skin tones and economic status.

Hear our prayers for the dance floor...

God of healing, we know you are present to us in all things that are good. But, when there is tragedy, it is easy to feel your distance. Help us to see you at work in the midst of difficulty; open our senses to be diligent defenders of hope.

Thank you for these moments of openness in tragedy....

Holy Spirit, help us live with the mystery and tension of sacrifice. As we are called to taste and see God is good and called to rest, we also must serve our neighbor, labor, and offer our first fruits. Some sacrifice willingly, others unknowingly. Hold our questions with care. Take our concern seriously. Know what lies behind our apprehension.

Bless the offerings of our churches, organizations, and individual efforts that work in the tension...

God of justice and tender mercy, we are grateful for the progress of human rights in our world, and we are angry at the denial of justice that still exists. Spark in us compassionate anger that will not cease so, together, we can continue in the unfinished work of Christ in the world to build peace.

Hear our prayers for injustice that yet exists...

God to you we lift these prayers, spoken and unspoken, written in text and written in our hearts. We know that you work in ways we don’t always understand, we know you are at work to rectify wrongs in our world as you use us to be in the tension of life and death. Even as we remember the tragedy, we recommit now to acts of compassion in our communities and in the world. Give us hope, give us courage, give us power to make real your inclusive love. Amen.
Litany for Remembering Pulse:
We gather to remember the lives of 49 people who were murdered in the Pulse nightclub shooting.

_God who remembers, hear our prayer_

We place in your tender hands families that were torn apart, lovers who lost their love, parents who lost their children, friends who lost their friends.

_God of reconciliation, hear our prayer._

We remember the 53 people who were wounded and the countless others who were wounded spiritually, psychologically and physically in other ways.

_God of healing, hear our prayer._

Grant us the strength to seek forgiveness for the shooter.

_God who forgives, hear our prayer._

Bind us together in our compulsion to continue our unfinished calling and prophetic destiny to demand, proclaim, and do justice in the world.

_God of enduring love, hear our prayer._

Allow us to be ever mindful of the important work to unite sexuality and spirituality, working to be united in body and spirit. Help us affirm our bodies, our genders, our sexualities and the bodies, genders, and sexualities that surround us.

_God of glitter and grit, hear our prayer._

Allow us to be people of radical hospitality at every occasion as we work toward a world where everyone flourishes, wars cease, and all creation lives in harmony with one another, the land, sea, and air, where people of all nationalities, ethnicities, races, religions, and languages truly come together in equality and peace.

_God of creation, hear our prayer._

Even when the day is overcast and courage may fade; even in the midst of loneliness, despair and degradation, may we always know that you are near and may we ever know the joy of being in relationship with you.

_God of silence, hear our prayer._

Hear the prayers today that been spoken aloud, and hear the prayers in our hearts we silently offer you now (pause).

_God of mercy, hear our prayer._

And so, let us raise our voices together saying the prayer the Jesus taught us in whatever language is closest to us: “Our Creator...
(SAMPLE MEDIA RELEASE: add local clergy and leadership quotes, dates, times—who, what when, etc. Email to print and broadcast media outlets in your local area.)

MEDIA RELEASE

DATE: 8 June 2017

Contact: Name Email Mobile Phone

MCC Church to Host Global Pulse Memorial Service

Community faith leaders are joining Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC) in a global virtual memorial service June 12, to commemorate the 49 victims of the deadliest act of violence against the LGBTQ+ community in U.S. history.

“It is MCC’s calling to be the leading voice of love over hate, particularly at critical points in history. MCC preaches God’s message to celebrate diversity across cultures and ethnicities. As the victims of the Pulse shooting are remembered, we commit to acts of compassion and justice. We strive to resist structures that oppress people and speak boldly on behalf of those in the margins,” said Rev. Elder Rachelle Brown, MCC Global Interim Moderator. “I commend each clergyperson, each individual, who pauses on the first anniversary of Pulse so that our community can respond in prayer and with hope to influence our future.”

Who: NAMES OF SPEAKERS and their TITLES (FYI: Suggestion: EACH ONE to speak 3-4 MINUTES = 1 SINGLE SPACED PAGE)

What: MCC, a global denomination, to host virtual memorial service for Pulse shooting victims. Local speakers to be featured.

When: June 12, 2017, 7:00 pm ET

Where: Church or location name and address

Why: Commemorate the victims and recommit to acts of compassion and justice.

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Founded in 1968, Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC) has been at the vanguard of civil and human rights movements by addressing issues of race, gender, sexual orientation, economics, climate change, aging, and global human rights. MCC was the first to perform same gender marriages and has been on the forefront of the struggle towards marriage equality in the USA and other countries worldwide. MCC recognizes a state of need around the world in the areas of human rights and justice. As people of faith, MCC endeavors to build bridges that liberate and unite voices of sacred defiance. MCC leads from the margins and transforms.
MCC Statement of Faith

Preamble

Metropolitan Community Churches is one chapter in the story of the Church, the Body of Christ. We are people on a journey, learning to live into our spirituality, while affirming our bodies, our genders, our sexualities. We don't all believe exactly the same things. And yet in the midst of our diversity, we build community, grounded in God's radically inclusive love for all people. We are part of an ongoing conversation on matters of belief and faith, shaped by scripture and the historic creeds, building on those who have come before us. Our chapter begins when God says to us: "Come, taste, and see."

Our Faith

"Come, taste, and see." Jesus Christ, You invite all people to Your open table. You make us Your people, a beloved community. You restore the joy of our relationship with God, even in the midst of loneliness, despair, and degradation. We are each unique and we all belong, a priesthood of all believers. Baptized and filled with Your Holy Spirit, You empower us to be Your healing presence in a hurting world.

We expect to see Your reign on earth as it is in heaven as we work toward a world where everyone has enough, wars cease, and all creation lives in harmony. We affirm Your charge to all of humanity to care for the land, sea, and air. Therefore, we will actively resist systems and structures which are destroying Your creation.

With all of creation we worship You—every tribe, every language, every people, every nation. We know You by many names, Triune God, beyond comprehension, revealed to us in Jesus Christ, who invites us to the feast.

Amen.

MCC Denominational Core Values

Inclusion Love is our greatest moral value and resisting exclusion is a primary focus of our ministry. We want to continue to be conduits of faith where everyone is included in the family of God and where all parts of our being are welcomed at God’s table.

Community Offering a safe and open community for people to worship, learn, and grow in their faith is our deep desire. We are committed to equipping ourselves and each other to do the work that God has called us to do in the world.

Spiritual-Transformation Providing a message of liberation from the oppressive religious environment of our day or to those experiencing God for the first time is what guides our ministry. We believe that when people are invited to experience God through the life and ministry of Christ, lives will be transformed.

Justice Working to talk less and do more, we are committed to resisting the structures that oppress people and standing with those who suffer under the weight of oppressive systems, being guided always by our commitment to Global Human Rights.
Technical Tips

If you have not used Facebook Live yet, you are encouraged to try it out in advance of June 12th. It’s a great platform for posting brief interviews with people in your congregation, promo videos about events going on in your church, online worship services, etc. Here are a few tips:

1. Make sure you have a good Wi-Fi connection or a 4G hotspot.
2. Test your audio for the size of your space.
3. Determine whether you will access Facebook Live by signing into your church Facebook page or signing into the pastor or church member’s personal Facebook page. Facebook Live is only broadcast through Facebook.
4. If individuals open MCC’s Facebook page to post their own comments throughout the service, you may want to ask them to mute their phones to avoid audio issues.
5. The PULSE Memorial Service will begin live streaming on MCC’s Facebook page at 6:55 pm ET, 12 June 2017, at https://www.facebook.com/MCCchurch/. The service will last 30-45 minutes.

If you have any concerns about accessing Facebook Live, please contact MCC Staff member Mike Haase to discuss technical details: MikeHaase@MCCchurch.net, or general questions to Linda Brenner: LindaBrenner@MCCchurch.net.

MCC Hashtag: #BeMCC
Use #BeMCC for your social media posts to connect with other MCC posts.

PULSE Orlando’s Hashtag: #WeWillNotLetHateWin
Use #WeWillNotLetHateWin for your social media posts to connect with posts outside of MCC’s community. You can use both hashtags for photos and other posts.

Facebook Live: Check In
After joining Facebook Live, please post your church name, state or province, country, and approximate attendance of your group.

Participate in the Service
We invite your comments and emojis throughout the worship service including during the prayer of commitment. Individuals can also go to MCC’s Facebook page while also attending your event so they can post their own comments. Consider posting pictures of your group and speakers (with their permission) so that MCC people from around the world can be in community as we share this virtual space.