

Rev. Nancy Wilson Installed as Moderator of MCC

By Bob Roehr
Contributing Writer

The Metropolitan Community Churches installed Rev. Nancy L. Wilson as Moderator on October 29 in a ceremony that blended pomp with the down home feeling of community. The event drew about 1200 people to the gothic National Cathedral, an Episcopal church, which overlooks Washington, DC.

A censer led the processional, vigorously swinging the smoking brass pot, perfuming the path for the robed dignitaries.

The afternoon sun streamed through stained glass windows to dapple the carved limestone vaults with blue, red, and yellow.

The organ and choir resounded magnificently.

Rev. Canon William Barnwell welcomed them to the Cathedral saying, "It is an honor to have you in this celebration today." However, in speaking to the press, spokesman Jim Naughton made clear, "This is not a shared ceremonial thing. We're not laying hands on their moderator."

The Cathedral has been used by many organizations and for many purposes, including the televised memorial service for former President Ronald Reagan.

Among those offering words of congratulations was Fr. Malcolm Boyd, wearing a rainbow stole, needing assistance in walking. He called Wilson "the ideal choice to lead MCC into the future." The two had worked together on the book "Amazing Grace."

The furniture designer Mitchell Gold said this was perhaps the fifth time he had ever been in a church; "Being raised Jewish, I have not always felt welcome, but today there is no place I would rather be."

In her homily, Rev. Wilson noted that the GLBT community is suspicious of institutions such as the church that often have not treated them well. She said, "That makes for an interesting

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The Rev. Nancy L. Wilson participates in a laying on of hands at her installation at moderator of MCC. Nancy Wilson, below left, and the front of the National Cathedral.

Photos by Bob Roehr



Faith and Fairness

Finding Strength & Tools for
Advocacy in Your Faith Tradition

By Bob Roehr
Contributing Writer

"We are mimicking the same old oppressions of the churches we came out of," said Bishop Yvette Flunder. What the GLBT community needs "is not religion as usual, but religion

The pastor of San Francisco's City of Refuge United Church of Christ was speaking at a Faith and Fairness forum that was organized by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) in Washington DC, on November 2. It was part of a new area of program activity for the national organization.

Bishop Flunder said gays have wandered in the wilderness of not being seen as a whole person or as being loved by god. She asked, "Where did we get our strength to find our way through?" She suggested that part of the answer is that gays are "prophetic people with prophetic gifts" and a unique experience of survival.

Black lesbians and gays are asked to come out. But in doing so, they risk homophobia and separation from family and the broader African American community.

She urged the GLBT community "to create safe places for people to land," where they do not feel "disconnected from all of the places they have come to love...Where they do not have to play straight. If we create those safe places to land, they will not have to play straight."

Rabbi Steven Greenberg, the first Orthodox rabbi to come out and author of "Wrestling with God and Men: Homosexuality in the Jewish Tradition," urged GLBT people to tell their stories and to bring that experience to interpre-

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