1994

- MCC receives a grant of $140,000 from the Lilly Endowment to create Youth Study Circles.

- The Council sponsors "Staying Ethical: Keeping the Trust" at Bangor Theological Seminary and at St. Bartholomew's, Cape Elizabeth.

- Seeds of Promise VI highlights "What Does It Mean to Proclaim the Good News?"

- Land on U.S. Route 1 is sold to Messiah Christian Church for its campus.

- Testimonial dinner honors Daniel Johnson, longtime MCC Board member and Episcopal layman.

- With the Portland Newspapers, MCC co-sponsors Reader Roundtables.

1995

- A Religious Coalition Against Discrimination (RCAD) is created with Council assistance to work on gay rights issues. It produces "A Call for Justice and Compassion" to encourage defeat of a ballot question limiting "Protected Classes Under Maine Law."

- Testimonial dinner honors Ruth and Robert Ives of The Carpenter's Boathouse.

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**Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly...** - Micah 6:8

A Publication of the Religious Coalition Against Discrimination in Maine Fall 1995

**A Call for Justice and Compassion**

**MAIN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**

Dialogue Statewide

In the winter of 1994, the Maine Council of Churches teamed up with Gay Gunnett Communications in a unique project called 'Reader Roundtables'.

Over 700 Maine citizens met in 55 Roundtables from Presque Isle to Berwick for four consecutive weeks to discuss public education - its strengths and weaknesses. Using in-depth articles printed in the Maine Sunday Telegram as the basis for discussion, Roundtable participants joined in a statewide "conversation" on a current social issue.

The Roundtables used a small group model called 'study circles' to promote meaningful dialogue and understanding. A project of the Council's Education Committee, another Roundtable is planned for the fall of 1994.

The study circles model is available for use in other groups such as churches and ecumenical groups as well, with the Council able to provide material on a broad range of topics.

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THE EWELL YEARS

1996

- **Kaleidoscope of Justice**, a restorative justice newsletter, is launched.
- Reader Roundtables is spun off into a separate organization: The Roundtable Center.
- Seeds of Promise VII (at Woodfords Congregational Church UCC) features Howard Hanchevich, with worship led by Brian Wren and Susan Heafeld.
- MCC co-sponsors “Building Community Partnerships: Mental Illness Issues in the Criminal Justice System.”
- MCC co-sponsors “Life Planning for Caring Families” (estate planning co-sponsored by Lutheran Social Services).

1997

- MCC endorses the US Catholic Bishops’ statement: “An Ethic for Economic Life.”
- MCC sponsors Eco-Spirituality and Earth Stewardship Day in Newcastle and Damariscott (the 1st Watershed Event).
- A “Spirituality and Earth Stewardship” advisory board is created, headed by Dr. Susan MacKenzie.
- The greater Damariscotta area celebrates its watershed as a spiritual gift.

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**Kaleidoscope of Justice**

Edited by Evelyn Hanneman, Kaleidoscope of Justice earned a national reputation as a cutting edge journal of Restorative Justice.
1996-1999

1998

- MCC co-sponsors “Reclaiming Our Faith” conferences in Lewiston and Somesville (with Maine SpeakOut) to encourage gay men and lesbians to speak out from faith perspectives.

- Youth Study Circles engages more than 700 young people in dialogues on issues of ethics.

- Dr. Susan MacKenzie leads Spirituality & Earth Stewardship workshops.

- Seeds of Promise VIII is held at BTS, Bangor, with keynoter Rev. Raymond Collins of Catholic University of America.

- Evelyn Hanneman receives the Watering Can Award from Maine Initiatives for her contribution to criminal justice reform.

1999

- Dr. Larry Harcourt institutes the End of Life Program, and MCC hosts an Interfaith End of Life Conference at Temple Beth El, Portland.

- With a grant from the Department of Justice, Suzanne Rudalevige leads five “H is for Hell, Hope & Healing” statewide clergy conferences.

- “Reclaiming Our Faith” conferences are held in Lewiston, Camden, Machias, Dover-Foxcroft, Caribou, and Bangor (co-sponsored by Maine SpeakOut).

- Susan MacKenzie speaks at “Caring for the Earth” series co-sponsored by MCC, Bangor Theological Seminary, and the Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM).

The Council’s 1998 Annual Report was designed and edited by the Council’s Communications Director, Karen Caouette, and MCC Development Director, Doug Cruger, to tell the Council’s story of justice, compassion, and reconciliation.
THE EWELL YEARS

2000

- MCC helps create Maine Interfaith Power & Light, the first IPL in the United States, making it possible, by 2003, for Mainers to purchase 100% renewable energy to heat and light their homes.

- Dr. Larry Harcourt conducts Congregational End of Life Conversations, MCC's part in a $450,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

- 200 Community Justice professionals attend “Strengthening Maine’s Community Justice Partnerships,” co-sponsored by MCC, at the Samoset Inn, Rockland.

A $100,000 grant to MCC from the Beldon Fund makes possible the success of Maine Interfaith Power & Light.

2001

- MCC Legislative Day initiates a “Campaign to End Homelessness in Maine.”

- Mafya Dawn keynotes Seeds of Promise IX.

- With leadership from staff member Suzanne Rudalvige, MCC brings Rev. Pierre Allard to speak at Bates College about “The Restorative Justice of the Bible.”

- MCC sponsors “A Celebration of Restorative Justice” at the Senator Inn, Augusta, honoring five Maine restorative justice pioneers.

2002

- 30 religious leaders join 1,200 colleagues nationwide in a letter to the U.S. Senate urging an environmentally and economically just energy policy.

- MCC sponsors “In the Big Inning,” an Intercultural/Interfaith welcoming event, at a Portland Sea Dogs baseball game at Hadlock Field.

- Annual Assembly initiates an Economic Justice Program. Dolores Vail is hired as its director.

- MCC gathers 10,000 signatures in support of a $12,000,000 affordable housing bond.

- In September 2002, the Council issues “A Statement for a Just and Non-Violent Resolution to the Impending Military Action in Iraq.”

- Staff member Anne D. “Andy” Burt organizes “The Great Anti-Gas-Guzzling Gathering and Gala.”

Pioneering Women in Ministry Dinner
Episcopal Cathedral of St. Luke, Portland
November 30, 2000

September 12, 2001
Tom Ewell leads an interfaith prayer vigil on the steps of the Blaine House on the morning after terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.
2003

- The MCC Board of Directors issues “A Pastoral Peace Letter.” The Council becomes a lead organization in the Win Without War Coalition.

- While the MCC Board opposes the casino referendum, it vows to support tribal economic development.

- Thirty EarthCare teams, organized by MCC’s Environmental Justice Program, celebrate at The Chewonki Foundation in Wiscasset.

- MCC Board accepts a challenge goal from the River Rock Foundation to raise $120,000 to create a Restorative Justice Center to support restorative justice practice within Maine.

- Board of Directors begins an intensive strategic planning process to chart the Council’s course for the next decade.

- MCC receives a grant from the Presbyterian Church USA to launch the General Assistance Project, to educate congregations and communities about the inequities within Maine’s municipally administered General Assistance Program.

2004

- Economic Justice Program Director Dolores Vail works to launch “Hear Our Stories, Know Our Names,” a real-life performance piece by and about homeless. The drama introduces dozens of congregations to the realities of poverty in their midst.

- Andy Burt organizes “Walk on the Wild Side,” an environmental sleep-over for middle school boys and girls.

2005

- MCC launches the “Giving Winds Campaign” in conjunction with the Four Directions Development Corporation (FDDC) to create a loan fund to stimulate economic development within Maine’s tribul communities. The campaign leverages more than $1.4 million for the tribes.

- Tom Ewell resigns after nearly 20 years as Executive Director.

- Rev. Jill Job Szaby is hired as the Council’s second Executive Director and accepts the challenge to lead the Board in creating a plan to eliminate the Council’s deficit within ten years.

In November, 2005, MCC’s new Executive Director, Jill Job Szaby, speaks at a rally in Portland’s Monument Square in support of maintaining legal protection for LGBT people under Maine’s Human Rights Protection Act.
A VOICE AND A RESOURCE

2006

- The Board of Directors adopts a new mission statement and a new logo.
- MCC and Bangor Theological Seminary co-sponsor “A Conversation with Belden Lane” at Sky-Hi Center in Topsham, about faithful living in an age when the moral underpinnings of past days are being called into question.
- MCC sponsors “How Shall We Live So That All May Thrive?,” a major environmental conference for congregations, at the Augusta Civic Center. Gary Gardner from WorldWatch Institute is the keynote speaker.
- The No-Idling Project, launched in Freeport by churches and the community, spreads to other communities through the leadership of MCC Environmental Justice Director Andy Burt.
- In its first years, the “Be a Good Apple” campaign enlists 35 congregations and hundreds of individuals to take the Local Foods Pledge. 
- MCC becomes the first statewide ecumenical group in the nation to join the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT).

2007

- Board of Directors adopts an 8-year Development Plan to grow the Council while at the same time gradually eliminating the draw-down on the invested fund.
- Eric C. Smith is hired as Congregational Outreach Coordinator.
- The final parcel of the land bequeathed to the Council 34 years ago by Elsie Libby is sold to the Preachers’ Aid Society of the New England Conference, United Methodist Church.
- MCC is an organizer of “Maine Partners for Cool Communities” along with the American Lung Association, Maine Energy Investment Corporation, Physicians for Social Responsibility, and the Maine Chapter of the Sierra Club. The partners seek local solutions to Global Warming.
- The Restorative Justice Center concludes its work with the confidence that, thanks to the work of its director Jon Stanley and others before him, the concept of restorative justice has been firmly planted within the Maine judicial branch. Hereafter, the Council’s restorative justice work will fall within the work of the MCC’s Public Policy Committee.
2006-2008

- MCC works on a Leadership Team with Consumers for Affordable Health Care supporting “Consumer Voices for Coverage” (made possible by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation).

- The Council publishes “The Things That Make for Peace: Resources for A Time of War,” marking the 5th anniversary of the start of the ground war in Iraq.

- Jill Saxby works with Jewish and Muslim leaders to create an Action Alert Network capable of responding to hate-incidents within Maine communities.

- MCC is an active partner in developing and implementing Governor Baldacci’s “Carbon Challenge Plan.”

- The Council and its economic justice partners wage a successful campaign to fight cuts to essential services, even in the midst of a budget crisis.

- Maine Council of Churches co-sponsors a major conference on “Mindful Living: Human Health, Pollution and Toxics.”

- The Maine Council of Churches celebrates 70 years of service with a gala at the Hilton Garden Inn in Freeport. Bishop S. Clifton Ives is honored for his more than 50 years of volunteer service to the Council.

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