

Rev. Joseph Eugene Paul Breton

December 1940 - September 2026

The Reverend Joseph Eugene Paul Breton, pioneering religious leader, LGBTQ+ rights advocate, and founder of the Metropolitan Community Church of Washington, D.C. (MCCDC), passed away on September 13 in Pasadena, California, at age 85.

Born in Manchester, New Hampshire, and raised in Connecticut, Rev. Breton served in the U.S. Air Force Security Service (1964–1968) before dedicating his life to faith and civil rights activism. In 1969, he moved to Washington, D.C., working alongside early movement leaders like Frank Kameny and Barbara Gittings. He co-founded the Gay Activists Alliance and, on May 11, 1971, chartered MCCDC out of his Capitol Hill living room—creating a spiritual home for LGBTQ+ Christians.

Ordained by the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC) in 1973, Rev. Breton's ministry spanned the nation. He pastored congregations in Baltimore, Phoenix, San Bernardino, Orange County, and Riverside, and served in New Orleans following the 1973 UpStairs Lounge tragedy. In 1977, he co-founded *Great Outdoors* to foster LGBTQ+ community through nature. Later at UC Riverside, Rev. Breton helped establish the campus LGBT Resource Center, the AIDS Education Center, and an LGBTQ+ Studies minor. In 1989, he co-founded Sarum Episcopal Church and St. Aelred's Chapel, where he ministered until his retirement in 2005.

Rev Breton visited MCCDC in June 2023.

