

Board of Director Candidates

Valerie “Val” Torstenson – Board of Director Candidate

Valerie has been a regular member of MCCGSL, since spring of 2016. She helps in the kitchen (Chef’s Team), has assisted with Pride events, and has supported many other MCCGSL. Val would like to be a part of the MCCGSL Board because she wants to continue to give back to this very special community by leveraging her background and experience to help propel this community forward – to ensure it continues to grow as a living, spiritual, vibrant, and welcoming home to everyone. This is important to Valerie because MCCGSL became her path back to a wonderful spiritual life – greater even than she had ever known. She wants to help ensure MCCGSL is always there for others to have the same opportunity.



Val brings valuable “board member” experience, as she has served on several Boards professionally, as well as within the greater Saint Louis community: DAMA International Board of Directors (Professional), Sheldon Arts Foundation Board of Directors (Arts), Kingsbury Square Association (Community), and Skinker-DeBaliviere Community Council (KSQ Representative).

Valerie has a B.S. in Human Resource Management and has been a featured speaker at many industry conferences nationally and internationally. Professionally, Val is a seasoned Information Management professional with thirty years of results-oriented management and information management, and information systems experience. She has led teams in very turbulent industries in systems development and large project level management. She has performed as VP-Chief Information Officer, VP, and Senior Director. She has experience in retail, financial services, public sector (e.g., education, county government), insurance, energy, pharmaceutical, and healthcare industries (i.e., Payer and Provider).

Melānie Elick - Board of Director Candidate

Melānie has been a regular member of MCCGSL since 2014. Melānie and her husband, Zeke, came to MCCGSL after seeing newscasts with Rev Katie Hotze-Wilton performing marriages on the courthouse steps. She comes from a widely diverse faith background and has served in leadership positions in the Lutheran, Assemblies of God, and Episcopal churches. She has been actively serving at MCCGSL since arriving. She was instrumental in the design and creation of our Pride float in 2015 and has also served as Lead Usher since that time. She works with Zeke in developing ideas and activities for the interfaith Transgender Day of Remembrance every November, and works with Connections Gathering in holding monthly meet, greet, and eat sessions for newcomers to our church. She is passionate about radical welcome and ensuring that every person that comes through our doors feels the unconditional love that flows through each of us from the Divine.



Melānie’s background includes being an x-ray (Radiologic) technologist for over 25 years. During that time she functioned as a clinical and didactic trainer for those in the technologist programs at BJC and at Mercy hospitals. Later she served as manager of training for remote Training Specialists for Philips Medical Systems-CT divisions. After receiving her Master’s in Education, she now supervises a staff that designs, develops, and delivers everything from technical systems training to soft skills to corporate leadership sessions for the dental arm of HCSC (Blue Cross Blue Shield of OK, Montana, IL, TX, MI, and New Mexico).

She believes that our faith community needs transparency, improved communications, and unqualified support as we move through to the place that God is calling our church to occupy in Soulard, St. Louis, and in the world.