

JJ Lyon

Jeremiah James, June 18, 1939 - June 26, 2023



Born in Winnipeg, he and his family later moved to Calgary and Moose Jaw. He was an excellent student growing up and skipped from grade 6 to grade 8, received a degree in Interior Design from the University of Manitoba and moved to Halifax to do design for federal government offices, and lived there his remaining days. He made many trips back to Winnipeg and Brandon to visit his brothers, sisters, and nephew.

JJ was predeceased by parents Charles Lyon and Ester C. Lyon (Winnipeg), his siblings Arthur (Winnipeg), Patricia (Brandon), Eileen (Winnipeg). He is survived by brother Charles (Winnipeg) and nephew Lyle (Brandon), great niece Tori and great nephew Nolan, both of Brandon, Manitoba.

Order of Service

Northwood Center, Halifax

July 15, 2023

Music for Gathering: selections from JJ's favourite operas including Scheherazade, La Bohème, The Magic Flute, and Aïda

Opening Words

Lighting the Candle

Prayer

Hymn: All Are Welcome

Scripture and Reflection

Time for Sharing

Prayer

Words of Committal

Benediction and Blessing

Postlude: Nessun Dorma, from the Puccini's opera Turandot



I was transferred down here by the federal government to start an interior design department; that's the business I was in, designing offices.

Then, I worked in the AIDS community for eight years. At that point, I didn't care whether your bathroom was pink or blue -- my friends were dying. After that, I became a clergyman."



JJ was an ordained Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) minister and founding member of Safe Harbour Church, the only church specifically for the Halifax Q community, ever. He was the only person from Atlantic Canada ever ordained into the MCC; he graduated from the Atlantic School of Theology with a Master of Divinity on April 29, 1994.

Safe Harbour was founded in his kitchen back in 1991, when a small group of gay men decided they needed a spiritual home they weren't finding anywhere else.



JJ sang in the 1990 AIDS Vigil Choir and was a founding member of the Halifax Gay Men's Chorus.

He took his sobriety seriously, celebrated his Alcoholics Anonymous family and its traditions, and created an East Coast Canada 12-step LGBT annual conference, *Courage Roundup*.

JJ, how did you get involved with the community in Halifax?

"I was playing bridge with some friends and I was whining about the gay group in the city 'They aren't doing anything!' to which my friends said, 'And you're a member of the group are you?' and I said, 'No' and he said, 'Then shut up.' So I joined the group. I was the next chair of the Gay and Lesbian Association. It was at the time when Rumours had to move from its Granville Street location, and I was the guy leading us up to Gottingen Street."

"When I got involved with the AIDS Crisis, I wanted to use video of driving around Citadel Hill. I said, 'The only way we're going to get the message [of safer sex] to the husbands that live in Bedford is to show them what they know, and what they know is that, driving around Citadel Hill.' They wouldn't let me do it."

JJ was Chair of GALA from October, 1986 to December, 1987, while they moved Rumours from to Granville to Gottingen Street, and was in the 1988 Pride March, the "Paper Bag" march that everyone remembers.

"That we were anywhere, was a problem for some people. That's something that I celebrate when I see the parade and I see that throng of people downtown. I just say, 'Hello! Hello!' - it's remarkable."

In the mid-2000s, JJ began volunteering with spiritual services at the senior's complex, Northwood, where you are right now.

gay.hfxns.org/JJLyon



All Are Welcome

Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live.
A place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace.
Here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where prophets speak, and words are strong and true.
Where all God's children dare to seek to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness and as symbol of God's grace.
Here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where love is found, in water, wine and wheat.
A banquet hall on holy ground, here peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus, is revealed in time and space,
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us;
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where hands will reach beyond the wood and stone.
To heal and strengthen, serve and teach, and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger bear the image of God's face.
Let us bring an end to fear and danger;
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and visions heard.
And loved and treasured, taught and claimed as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter, prayers of faith and songs of grace.
Let this house proclaim from floor to rafter;
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

by: Marty Haugen, b. 1950