



Transition at the Top in MCC

REV. ELDER TROY D. PERRY receives a NY City Council Proclamation in his honor from Councilmembers **Phil Reed** and **Margarita Lopez** (*photo by Deacon Danny Gonzalez*) at an MCCNY tribute to Rev. Perry on Holy Saturday at Union Theological Seminary. Rev. Perry, Founder of the world-wide predominantly-LGBT Metropolitan Community Churches denomination, retires as MCC Moderator on October 8th. Excerpts from Rev. Pat Bumgardner's citation: "Troy re-read the Scriptures and discovered the truth: God's love is for all people. Nine months before the Stonewall Rebellion, Troy Perry took out an ad in a local newspaper and opened his home in suburban Los Angeles to what would become Metropolitan Community Churches. From 13 people at that first Service on October 6th, 1968, to tens of thousands today in over 300 churches in 23 countries—the

Rev. Troy Perry founded what would become the world's largest Queer organization... His bravery and conviction opened the door for the recognition of Queer rights as human rights... His voice and his vision have become synonymous with the quest for just and right relationship prevailing in this world... The Rev. Troy Perry is the living embodiment of God's cry in this world, 'Let my people go!' He is the Moses of our people and the Prophet of God."

REV. ELDER NANCY WILSON (*at right*) will be elected the next MCC Moderator at the MCC General Conference in Calgary, Canada (July 21-26) and will take office on October 8th. She is the Pastor of MCC Sarasota in Florida and former Pastor of MCC Los Angeles (the "mother church") and other MCC congregations. She was elected to the MCC Board of Elders in 1976 and served as MCC's Ecumenical Officer for 20 years and MCC Vice Moderator for 10 years. Rev. Wilson is the author of *Our Tribe: Queer Folks, God, Jesus and the Bible* (Alamo Press). Before her MCC ministry, she was active in the United Methodist Church. She lives with her partner of 27 years, Dr. Paula Schoenwether.



Pride Sunday : June 26th

Pride Sunday Services at MCCNY, 446 W. 36th St. NYC:

9 a.m., 11 a.m., 7 p.m.

Rev. Pat Bumgardner, preaching,
with MCCNY Choir and special musicians

Look for MCCNY's contingent in the 36th annual LGBT Pride March—giving away MCCNY's signature "God Made Me Queer" stickers, marching with colorful banners and flags, and featuring a giant float with **David Raleigh's Band** and the MCCNY Choir directed by **John Fischer** aboard performing award-winning live Gospel and inspirational music.

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Metropolitan Community
Church of New York
446 West 36th Street
New York, NY 10018

Summer
2005

The Query Newsletter

Metropolitan Community Church of New York
Church of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People Open to All

Shelter for Homeless LGBTQ Youths Begins 4th Year of Operation at Church

Every night of the year, no fewer than six homeless LGBTQ youths—the most needy and vulnerable people in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community—find desperately-needed refuge—safe emergency housing— at the **Sylvia's Place Shelter** operated by Metropolitan Community Church of New York (MCCNY) at the church on West 36th Street in Manhattan.

Many of the LGBTQ youths who come to the shelter have been thrown out by hateful, bigoted parents because of their sexual orientation or gender identity; others are the victims of poverty, racism or other incredibly cruel circumstances. The one thing they have in common is that they are LGBTQ and homeless, so they have no other safe place they can go.

Sylvia's Place Shelter is named for Saint **Sylvia Rivera**, the legendary fiery longtime LGBT activist who served as Director of

MCCNY's **Food Pantry** in the years before her death in February 2002, and whose deathbed wish to Rev. Pat Bumgardner was that a way be found against all odds to open a homeless queer youth shelter at the church.

THREE YEARS AGO:

The Query Newsletter reported the opening in June 2002 of a shelter for homeless queer youths at MCCNY.

Shelter for Homeless Queer Youths Opens at the Church

A long-sought dream became reality on June 16th when the **Ali Forney Center for Homeless LGBT Youth** opened its doors at Metropolitan Community Church of New York. Every night of the week, from 8 p.m. until 8 a.m., the church's social hall becomes a shelter where homeless queer youths can find a safe place to shower and sleep, and be assisted in getting the social services they need to move from surviving to thriving. While the shelter seeks to help and counsel all who enter, by law its cots can sleep no more than six youths a night at the present time.



As the Need Grows, NY City Council Considers Increasing Funding

In recent weeks, the urgency of the crisis confronting thousands of LGBTQ youths on the streets—the grave disparity between the magnitude of the problem and the inadequacy of the response—has been the focus of hearings by the New York City Council and of major articles in both of NYC's gay weekly newspapers (*see below*). There is a new spotlight on the unique life-saving work of Sylvia's Place Shelter and its need for increased funding, particularly from Government sources. Thanks to volunteer grant-writer Lynda Marsh, funding for the shelter has gone up. But much more is needed for expansion of shelter services: Send donations to MCCNY, 446 W. 36th St., NY, NY 10018, attn: Sylvia's Place Shelter.

Spearheading an intensive year-long effort to increase funding from the City of New York for queer youth facilities, including the Sylvia's Place Shelter, is **Dirk McCall** (*below left*), president of the Stonewall Democratic Club of New York and chief of staff to City Councilmember Alan Gerson. Other recent social justice accomplishments by Dirk and Councilmember Gerson include winning passage on May 11th by the City Council of a Resolution, endorsed by **Rev. Pat Bumgardner**, demanding an end to the discriminatory "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy by the nation's largest employer, the U.S. armed forces.



A lengthy article in GAY CITY NEWS (Apr. 28-May 4) made graphically clear why LGBTQ youths cannot stay at youth shelters like Covenant House, where appalling violence and discrimination against them seems to be officially tolerated, even encouraged:

Queer Youth Options Remain Slim
As small facilities targeting LGBT young people grow, City Council weighs greater funding.

Her first stint at Covenant House was brief. She arrived one evening, while still dressed and identifying as a boy, with a group of friends. One of her friends told the other young male Covenant House residents that Artis was gay. They ganged up on her quickly, pelting her with batteries and calling her a faggot. At dinner, they pushed her to the floor, telling her, "Faggots don't eat with us."

She spent the night sleeping on the floor—"faggots" don't sleep on beds, the other clients told her. "It was scary, it was hard, but I thought positive," she said. "You know, I have Sylvia's Place."

GayCity
28 APR - 4 MAY 2005

Sylvia's Place Shelter was the subject of a full-page article in the May 13th edition of the *NY BLADE*, including a vintage picture of Sylvia Rivera waving a Rainbow LGBT Pride flag outside MCCNY to signal that the Food Pantry was open.

Sheltering homeless youth

show helps homeless

30,000 kids on the streets

The city has an estimated 30,000 homeless youth, 40 percent of whom are gay or transgendered, according to Rev. Pat Bumgardner, the out-gay pastor of Metropolitan Community Church. MCC runs the shelter, which houses queer youth ranging in age from 16 to 23.

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PAGE 12

Sylvia's Place is named in honor of captainess Stonewall veteran Sylvia Rivera.

Pastor's Pride Proclamation Rev. Pat Bumgardner

"In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets."
—Jesus

June 2005

Dear friends:

As Matthew closes what we have come to know as "The Sermon on the Mount," he offers a central principle by which all our struggles, personal and political, are to be addressed:

"In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets." (Matthew 7:12)

The law and the prophets are often at odds in our society:

Mayor Jason West's bold and prophetic actions in New Paltz on behalf of marriage equality, set him in conflict with the law (or, at least one interpretation of that law) and he will shortly stand trial for his courage and conviction.

Florin Buceanu, founder of ACCEPT, and The Rev. Diane Fisher, found themselves in conflict with the representatives of "law and order" as they prophetically battled for the first Queer Pride March in Bucharest last month. In culmination, Rev. Fisher celebrated the first open MCC worship service in Romania with coverage on national television.

Sometimes what is "legal" and what is prophetic are at odds, but the call of the Gospel is to bring the two together; to make what is legal, prophetic in its vision.—And that I believe is what Queer people all over the globe are doing right now. From Warsaw where Queer rights advocates struggle to imitate the victory in Bucharest to the recent

victory in New Jersey giving baby Vivian two legal mommies on her birth certificate to Housing Works winning its case against New York City and contract law that essentially robbed people living with AIDS of the kind and quality of shelter needed. AND—we are not alone in our efforts: The Health Minister of Kenya simply declared universal health coverage in that country. Her prophetic vision is becoming a legal reality. The NAACP joined over 300 other organizations in calling for marriage equality in California—"different laws for different people have no place in our society," they said.

"Equal rights—no more, no less" is the Pride theme in New York City this year, and it is a theme that resonates deeply with the call of the Gospel—a theme, a vision, a mission that is at the heart of our witness at MCCNY. Every day, we try to make what is legal match the prophetic vision of this world living as one people—in our consistent and persistent battle for equal marriage rights; in our consistent and persistent efforts to make sure that no one falls through the cracks when it comes to food, shelter, health care or a job. And that is something to be very proud of.

I know of no other single group of people more committed to the vision of prophetic equality than the members and friends of MCC throughout the world, and I am proud to be a part of this great movement for freedom. I am proud of you. I hope you will be here on Pride Sunday as we celebrate our lives and loves and the blessing we, as a people, are to the wider world around us.

With love,



Rev. Pat

Rev. Dr. Edgard Danielsen-Morales Installed As Assistant Pastor for Congregational Life

In a joyful, Spirit-filled ceremony on Pentecost Sunday, **Rev. Dr. Edgard Danielsen-Morales** was installed as MCCNY's full-time Assistant Pastor for Congregational Life. His years of successful ministry as a pastor, professor and liberation theologian in San Juan, Puerto Rico bode well for his tenure in New York. Rev. Edgard has been honored to be chosen as one of a handful of clergymembers from around the world-wide predominantly-LGBT Metropolitan Community Churches denomination who will preach at the **MCC General Conference** (July 21-26 in Alberta, Canada).



Also on Pentecost, MCCNY again thanked former Assistant Pastor **Rev. Kristen Klein-Cechettini** for her more than three and a half years of devoted service at this church. She will continue to conduct MCCNY's church retreats several times a year while residing in Maine with her spouse, Rev. Tawnee Walling.

Rev. Kristen being thanked.



Rev. Edgard and his spouse William Moran at the investiture ceremony on Pentecost.

(photos by Ali Stafford)

"Fashion on Gender" Show Raises \$2,000 For Sylvia's Charities at MCCNY

MCCNY's 250-seat sanctuary was packed to beyond standing-room-only and—sadly—some late-comers even had to be turned away when **Deaconess Moshay Moses** and MCCNY's GenderPeople ministry hosted the "Fashion on Gender" charity fund-raising fashion show on May 24th. The dazzling show was MC'd by **Trai La Trash** and raised money for the church's Food



Deaconess Moshay Moses

Pantry and homeless queer youth shelter, both of which are named for the late legendary transgender activist and MCCNY member Saint Sylvia Rivera. It was the 3rd annual Fashion on Gender show and the best-attended yet, and received considerable publicity in mainstream publications from *Time Out NY* to the free daily *Metro*.



Models on the runway: photos by Willie Davis



Deacon Bali White in India to Work with the Hijras

Bali White (at left), a Deacon at MCCNY and member of the church's **GenderPeople** ministry, is returning to her home of India this summer to help the Hijras, a community of transgender women in India who were the traditional priestesses of their community but have now been cast aside and face staggering rates of HIV/AIDS. Deacon Bali has received a scholarship from the American Institute of Indian Studies to pay her travel expenses to India for this mission, but private donations from many people including MCCNYers will provide for her living expenses. Additional donations to this fund may be made by check to Bali White, c/o the church office.

Queens Borough President's Award Goes To Deacon Noah Seaton

Noah (Buddy) Seaton (pictured at right) is a long-time well-known LGBT activist in New York City—and a popular Deacon at MCCNY. For many years Noah has been a mainstay at **Heritage of Pride (HOP)**, the volunteer group that organizes the June Pride events in Manhattan including the rally in Bryant Park, the march down Fifth Avenue and through the Village on the last Sunday in June, the dance on the pier and the glorious LGBT Pride fireworks over the Hudson. Noah, a health care professional, is also a lieutenant in the **NYPD Auxiliary** and a member of **American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER)**, the LGBT U.S. military veterans organization. So it is not surprising that Noah was named this Pride month as one of 8 recipients of the **Volunteer of the Year Award** in his home borough of Queens. The Pride award will be presented by Queens Borough President Helen Marshall on June 29th at Queens Borough Hall.



Telephoning Topeka for Equal Rights

MCCNYers (picture at left) were among the volunteers who phoned voters in Topeka, Kansas in a successful effort to convince them to defeat a referendum that would have repealed equal rights protections in employment for LGBT people and abolished hate crimes laws in Topeka. The volunteer phone banks were organized by the **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF)**, whose senior field organizer **Elias Rojas** spoke to the congregation. The anti-LGBT referendum was defeated by Topeka voters, 53% to 47%, on March 1st.

Evangelist Preaches & Sings at MCCNY

Rev. Delores Berry, a famed evangelist and Gospel singer in the world-wide predominantly-LGBT Metropolitan Community Churches denomination, preached and sang at MCCNY recently. Her LGBT-inclusified adaptation of the Josh Groban hit “You Lift Me Up” moved many congregants to tears. Rev. Delores’ CD “**God Put a Rainbow in the Sky**” is available at www.RevDeloresBerry.com. The title alludes to the Rainbow LGBT Pride flag, of course, and to Genesis 9:13 where (as the Book of Hours says) after the Great Flood “the Most High displayed the rainbow, a sign of covenant and peace.”

Rev. Delores Berry is flanked by Rev. Pat Bumgardner and Rev. Edgard Danielsen-Morales. (photo by Board member Gayle Davis)



Crossing the Brooklyn Bridge for Marriage Equality



MCCNY’s social justice ministry came out for the two-thousand-people-strong 2nd annual **Marriage Equality** march across the Brooklyn Bridge on May 22nd. Joe Kennedy, Dale Urban and Dion Brown (*left, photo by Andy Humm*) carried the MCCNY banner. MCCNY was one of more than a dozen organizations co-sponsoring the Marriage Equality march, which received coverage on the leading TV newscasts and in the major daily newspapers. MCCNY’s “God Made Us Queer” banner was seen on NY1 News and Fox5 among others. Rev. Pat Bumgardner (along with officials such as City Council Speaker Gifford Miller, Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum and New Paltz Mayor Jason West) spoke at the rally that concluded the march while Ari Gold and other big names provided entertainment.

MCCNY’s Video Ministry Celebrates 10 Years on Cable

July 4th weekend this year brings a special reason to celebrate. It marks the 10th anniversary of the first telecast of MCCNY’s Sunday Worship Services. They’ve been on the air ever since then. The broadcasts feature videotaped highlights of recent Worship Services, including the sermons by Rev. Pat Bumgardner and guest preachers, and the music by MCCNY’s choir directed by John Fischer. The hour-long broadcasts are available to all of the hundreds of thousands of cable households in Manhattan at **8:30 am on Sundays on Time Warner channel 57 and RCN channel 109.**

Cameraperson (Cheryl) Gerald Tucker (right) and Rev. Michael Hydes are part of the video ministry crew that has made MCCNY’s Worship Services available to hundreds of thousands of households every Sunday morning for the last 10 years.



MCCNY’s Food Pantry Hosts Important Workshop On HIV/AIDS for NYC Faith-Based Non-Profits

On May 11th, MCCNY hosted a workshop attended by 44 people representing many faith-based community organizations in NYC that serve the HIV/AIDS community. Called “Eating Good in the Neighborhood,” the workshop was co-facilitated by **Ali Stafford**, MCCNY’s Food Pantry Director, and Melissa Haithcox, Director for technical assistance at TA Clearinghouse and **Bailey House**. The guest speaker was Jan Zimmerman, MS, RD Program Director at Village Care of New York, who presented an educational forum on the nutritional needs of people living with HIV. MCCNY’s staff prepared food so the workshop participants could eat the dishes the nutritionist discussed.

MCCNY’s Food Pantry, which provides food for 5,000 men, women and children each month, including people living with HIV/AIDS, welcomes volunteers to help with its many assistance programs, ranging from daily lunches to community hot sit-down dinners. (You can sample the Food Pantry’s tasty offerings at the social hour downstairs following each of MCCNY’s three Sunday Worship Services: the 9am traditional Service, the 11am celebration Service, which is the most heavily attended, and the 7pm Praise & Worship Service.)

Volunteer staff of The QUERY Newsletter

Editor Joe Kennedy
Graphic Design & Layout Editor Les LaRue

Unless otherwise noted, Newsletter content is written by the editor. You can read the Newsletter online at www.mccny.org, thanks to Chris Baker.

Metropolitan Community Church of New York
446 W. 36th St., New York, NY 10018
Phone 212 629-7440 www.mccny.org.

On TV in Manhattan: Sundays 8:30 a.m., Time Warner channel 57, RCN ch. 109.

Disillusioned with New Pope’s Ultra-Conservatism? MCCNY’s 9am Sunday Service Is for You

Recent weeks have seen visitors at MCCNY who are looking for a new church. They say they are disillusioned by the anti-LGBT ultra-conservatism shown by **Pope Benedict XVI** (formerly **Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger**) in his first acts. A visitor said the new Pope’s firing of Rev. Thomas Reese as editor of America magazine and promotion of anti-marriage-equality Bishop William Levada to a top position in Rome means “gays are totally unwelcome in his church and always will be, no discussion or dissent allowed – **Thank God I’ve found MCC!**”

To accommodate growing attendance, **MCCNY now holds three Worship Services every Sunday: 9am (traditional Service), 11am (celebration Service, which is the most heavily attended), and 7pm (Praise and Worship Service).**

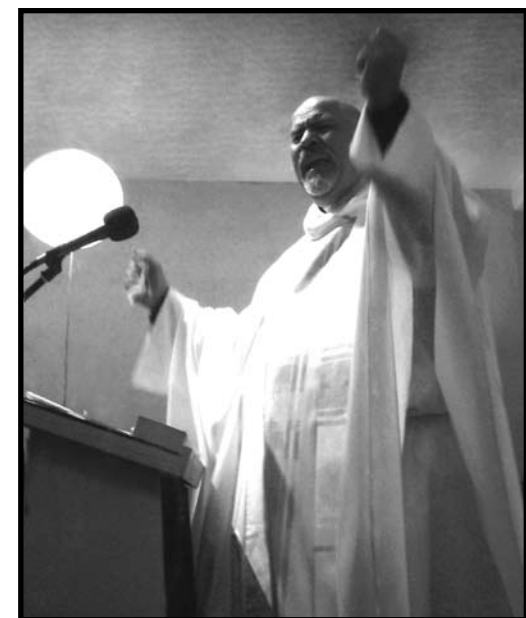
Some of the recent visitors, specifically seeking an alternative to the Roman Catholic Church because of the new Pope’s anti-LGBT ultra-conservatism, have observed that *they find MCCNY’s 9am traditional Service especially appealing*, combining as it does beautiful aspects of the Mass with MCC’s enlightened theology and preaching of the real, loving and inclusive Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Mother’s Day Hymns Hail the Mother of Jesus

After the 9am traditional Service on Mother’s Day (May 8th), visitors complimented MCCNY’s musicians for beautiful performances of that morning’s selections including Latin hymns paying tribute, appropriately for Mother’s Day, to Mary, mother of Jesus. Music Director **John Fischer** sang the “Ave Maria,” and MCCNY’s women’s quartet (**Carolyn Eufrazio, Denise Rosner, Bev and Alma Bostick-Heath**) did a lovely rendition of “O Sanctissima.”

“One of the world’s most homophobic religious leaders has been elevated to the papacy”

On April 19th, Rev. Troy Perry (pictured), Founder and Moderator of the world-wide predominantly-LGBT Metropolitan Community Churches denomination, issued this statement after the announcement that Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger had become Pope Benedict XVI. Leading news media, including the Religious News Service (RNS) with millions of subscribers, transmitted Rev. Troy’s words around the nation and the globe:



In 1987, Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson and I met Cardinal Ratzinger at the Bilateral Dialogue held during Pope John Paul II’s visit to Columbia, South Carolina. At that time, we were filled with hope that the relatively new Pope John Paul II would usher in a new era of openness for God’s gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender children. That did not happen.

In recent days, we held out hope that the selection of a new Pope would now bring great openness and acceptance to the Roman Catholic Church. With today’s

election, that did not happen. In fact, over the past three decades, Cardinal Ratzinger has served as the author of many of the Roman Catholic Church’s policies that embody overt hostility to LGBT people and preclude women from full participation in the life of the Church.

We share a deep sadness that one of the world’s most homophobic religious leaders has been elevated to the papacy, and regret that his policies will continue to devalue the rich spiritual gifts of LGBT people and women of faith.

My faith teaches that all people can change, so my prayers today are that the eyes of Cardinal Ratzinger—now Pope Benedict XVI—will be opened to the unique giftedness and blessing that LGBT people can be to the Church. And my prayers are with my brothers and sisters in the Roman Catholic Church, and those whose lives will be harmed by church policies that treat LGBT people with less than unconditional acceptance and dignity.

April 9, 2005
To the Editor:
 Gay City News reported reactions to the passing of Pope John Paul II and thoughts about his possible successor from several members of Dignity (“Gay Catholics Reflect on John Paul II,” Apr. 7-13).
 There are, however, at least two other groups of gay baptized Roman Catholics whose perspectives on these events should not go unreported. One sizable group, who are rightly outraged and disgusted by the papacy’s ignorant and erroneous gay-hating bigotry, have simply walked away from organized religion and no longer attend any church. A second group—often after spending many years or decades in the first group—have come to the realization that our religion is Christianity, not a particular denomination.
 We have found a spiritual home at Metropolitan Community Church, a denomination founded specifically to serve all gay Christians, including Catholics, whose original denominations tell nothing but evil lies about us. In MCC we do not depend upon the whims of a pope or cardinal for the use of worship space in “their” churches because we, empowered and liberated, own our own churches. We have our own world-class theologians and our own preachers with charisma to proclaim what God’s Word really says about us—and it’s all good! MCC is a faith community where one doesn’t have to be an exiled dissident to practice the true, loving, inclusive Gospel of Jesus Christ.
 There are many baptized Catholics in MCC’s congregations – including the Pastor of MCC New York, Rev. Pat Bumgardner, who graduated from a Roman Catholic seminary. Gay Christians are assured of a church where we can pray, receive God’s love and hear the truth—and, as the Bible says, no one and nothing can take that away from us.
Joe Kennedy
 Manhattan

A letter in Gay City News (Apr. 14-20) invited all LGBT Christians, especially those baptized in the Roman Catholic Church, to make their spiritual home now at Metropolitan Community Church

Pastor's Social Justice Activism Continues Making News

Rev. Pat Bumgardner was interviewed recently (*at right, photo by Bill Bahlman*) by Andy Humm and Ann Northrup on the influential "Gay USA" TV news program about her plans to attend the historic **World Pride** gathering in Jerusalem along with Rev. Troy Perry, and about her ongoing role as an outspoken proponent of same-sex marriage (*as seen again in the NY BLADE of March 18th below*). Rev. Pat was also prominently quoted in the premiere issue of the new gay magazine *Scene* (*at right*).



RELIGION Worth a Prayer?

Finding Faith in the Gay Community

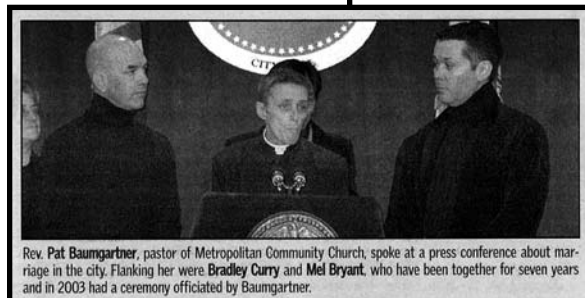
BY LOIS ELFMAN
Many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people have swallowed hook, line and sinker all the prejudice that has been heaped upon them from religious circles," says Rev. Pat Bumgardner, pastor at the Metropolitan Community Church of New York. "Some people are deathly afraid that God hates them or that they were a mistake of creation somehow."

"We really preach a message that God made us who we are," she continues. "We are queer not by accident and certainly not by fault, but by design. Sexuality, no matter its propensity or direction, is a gift of God. It's meant to be used in a way that brings joy and a sense of connection and wholeness to life."

Rev. Pat Bumgardner, MCCNY's Pastor, received the NYC Imperial Court's highest award, the *Diamond Award*, from outgoing Empress Trai La Trash at the annual *Night of a Thousand Gowns* extravaganza.

(photo by Deacon Danny Gonzalez)

Pastor Presented with Highest Award At Night of a Thousand Gowns



Rev. Pat Bumgardner, pastor of Metropolitan Community Church, spoke at a press conference about marriage in the city. Flanking her were Bradley Curry and Mel Bryant, who have been together for seven years and in 2003 had a ceremony officiated by Baumgartner.



MCCNY's Church Choir Features Many Professional Musicians and Entertainers

In recent years, the *Query* Newsletter has spotlighted more than half a dozen members of the church choir who are professional musicians and entertainers in the secular world—and that doesn't begin to scratch the surface.

In this issue we note that **Sam DuBel** (*fourth from left, back row, in sailor hat, in photo above by Deacon Danny Gonzalez*) has been featured in **HX** magazine for his role in a one-man play.

Choir member **Rick Hamilton** (*photo right*) will be going on the road again in August to play Cliff in the Kalliope Stage's production of "Cabaret" in Ohio. Last month he concluded a run there in "A Little Night Music" that left audiences and critics applauding. The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* said, "This show ranks as a miracle." The *Akron Beacon Journal* added, "The singing is fabulous." The *Sun Press* raved, "Frederick Hamilton brought fuel to the fire as Fredrik, laying bare his heart and making effective use of his body as he walked the line between love and lust," while *Scene* declared, "Frederick Hamilton (who could pass for **Val Kilmer's** second cousin) is charmingly libidinous." Bravo, MCCNY choir! Look for more profiles of our stage-starring musicians in future Newsletters.



MCCNY Music Director John Fischer sometimes arranges for unannounced special guest musicians to perform at Worship Services. Not long ago congregants at the 7pm Praise & Worship Service were treated to the well-known duo of **Jason and DiMarco** (*seen, at left, at MCC Colorado Springs last month; photo courtesy of Soulforce*).



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Stained Glass Windows Formally Dedicated

MCCNY marked the successful conclusion of its 15-month campaign to install and pay for new stained glass windows on the front of the church building facing West 36th Street with the formal dedication of the windows at the 11am Worship Service on Easter Sunday (*at right, photo by Deacon Danny Gonzalez*). Windows designer/creator Jackson Hall of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida was on hand for the celebration. Thanks were voiced to all who contributed to the \$80,000 fund-raising campaign for the new windows.



Lavender Light Gospel Choir Sings at Good Friday Service



MCCNY's 2-hour **Good Friday Service** (with LGBT-inclusified Stations of the Cross) drew a full house in the 250-seat sanctuary and began with a special performance by the acclaimed **Lavender Light Gospel Choir** (*photo left by Deacon Danny Gonzalez*). **Rev. Troy Perry's** sermon focused on the faithful few who were at the Cross with Jesus to the end, including his mother Mary ("the First Disciple," Rev. Troy called her) and the Beloved Disciple. Then noted jazz singer **Ayana Lowe** (*right*) did a moving solo of the hymn "Take My Mother Home."



New Church Deacons Take Office

Lay Deacons perform an important function as part of the Pastoral Staff at MCCNY. After months of intensive training and testing ("Let them first be tested, then if they prove themselves, let them be Deacons," says I Timothy 3:10), Deacons at MCCNY are installed for renewable terms of three years. Beginning their service on Easter Sunday were Deacons **Mel Bryant, Bradley Curry, Michael Delia, Michael Gilbertson, Les LaRue, Lucky Michaels, Phillip Peres and Maribelle Vazquez**. They join currently serving Deacons **Danny Gonzalez-Feliciano, Noah Seaton, Sandy Hernandez, Brenton Buchanan, Jorge Blondett, Montel Cherry-Slack, Carolyn Parker, Len Richardson, Norma Sharp, Michelle Cherry-Slack, Bali White and Moshay Moses**. Among other duties, Deacons at MCCNY are available to pray privately with people who request it, and they serve as liturgists and Communion servers at Worship Services. They attend monthly Pastoral Staff meetings conducted by the Assistant Pastor for Congregational Life.

Palm Sunday Silent Auction Raises \$2,500

Board member **Arnold Mungoli** (*on right in picture*) organized the Silent Auction—the 3rd one he's run—where supporters of MCCNY's good works bid on a number of enticing items. (*photo by Valerie King*)



Church Growth on the Agenda



Rev. Dr. Cindi Love (*photo left*), the new Executive Director of the world-wide predominantly-LGBT Metropolitan Community Churches denomination, traveled from MCC denominational headquarters in Los Angeles to meet with MCCNY's Board of Directors and Capital Campaign Committee on May 12th. She presented significant proposals to promote church growth at MCCNY and throughout the denomination, and the Board is continuing serious discussions with Dr. Love to make growth a reality.

Sunday School Teacher Tim Carter Wins Emmy Award

Longtime congregant **Tim Carter** is one of the children's Sunday School teachers at MCCNY. The congregation broke into applause when Rev. Pat Bumgardner announced that he recently won an **Emmy Award**—his second!—for his work on children's TV programming at the PBS show "**Sesame Street**." Tim and his partner Andre live in Brooklyn. Tim is also known to be a talented athlete, reportedly starring on a predominantly-heterosexual volleyball team and winning the MVP (most valuable player) award on the MCCNY men's softball team (*for feats such as the jumping catch, in photo at right, to tag a runner out at home plate*).



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