

Starting on Easter Sunday!

MCCNY Adds a 3rd Worship Service Every Sunday: 9 a.m., 11 a.m., 7 p.m.

Another Momentous Milestone in Growth for NYC's LGBT Church

Starting on Easter Sunday, and on every Sunday thereafter, Metropolitan Community Church of New York (MCCNY), the church of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people open to all, will celebrate three Sunday Worship Services: at 9 a.m., 11 a.m., and 7 p.m.

From its founding in 1972 until 1990, MCCNY held only one Worship Service each Sunday, at 7 p.m. Then a morning Worship Service was added. But as the congregation has grown in recent years, the morning Worship Service increasingly draws a virtually full house in the 250-seat sanctuary, making the need for an additional morning Worship Service evident.

Mark your calendars and choose the Worship Service that is most convenient for your schedule, starting Easter Sunday: 9 a.m., 11 a.m. or 7 p.m. every Sunday.

Holy Week and Easter Schedule

Wednesday, March 23 rd	7pm.	Footwashing Liturgy with Rev. Franc and Rev. Edgard
Holy Thursday, March 24 th	7pm.	Queer Liberation Seder with Rev. Kristen and Rev. Edgard
Good Friday, March 25 th	7pm.	Stations of the Cross + Rev. Troy Perry, preaching
Holy Saturday, March 26 th	3pm.	Annual Easter Banquet: "To God be the Glory" honoring the life and ministry of Rev. Troy Perry
	7pm.	Easter Vigil: Lighting of the New Fire + Rev. Troy Perry, preaching
Easter Sunday, March 27 th	9am • 11am • 7pm	Liturgy of the Resurrection + Mass Choir + Rev. Troy Perry, preaching



Civil Disobedience on behalf of Civil Rights: MCCNY takes over the NY City Clerk's chapel.

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Easter Sunday, March 27th 9am • 11am • 7pm Liturgy of the Resurrection
+ Mass Choir + Rev. Troy Perry, preaching

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A Very SPECIAL Easter Weekend: Rev. Troy Perry's Last Great Stand in NY Before Retirement as Head of MCC

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

Same-Sex Marriages Solemnized in NY City Clerk's Chapel

Pastor and Equality Advocates March in and Take Over in a Valentine's Day 'Witness for Justice'



In a historic first, same-sex marriages were solemnized in the New York City Clerk's chapel on Valentine's Day. Rev. Pat Bumgardner, Pastor of Metropolitan Community Church of New York (MCCNY), presided.

It was, Rev. Pat told the news media, a "witness for justice." Mayor Bloomberg and City Clerk Victor Robles are refusing to obey State Supreme Court Justice Doris Ling-Cohen's ruling that discrimination against same-sex couples in marriage violates the state constitution.

The Valentine's Day protest was carried out with the panache worthy of LGBT activism's bold history. When Mary Jane Gibney, standing by the chapel entrance, gave the signal – "Queers, move in!" – Rev. Pat and the marriage equality advocates barreled in and took over the chapel. Guards could only sputter, "Stop, you can't do this!" and send out a call for reinforcements.

Rev. Pat instantly peeled off a black cape to reveal her full liturgical vestments (as *Gay City News* reported) and began the marriage rites, using the justice of the peace's lectern in the chapel (photo at right). Later, Rev. Pat solemnized more marriages in the Marriage License Bureau hallway outside the chapel. In all, Rev. Pat married three gay male couples and one lesbian couple.

When the ceremonies were over, some of the happily wedded same-sex couples wept for joy, even heterosexual couples nearby applauded them, and City Clerk Robles was left to mutter about Rev. Pat with scarcely concealed admiration, "She is persistent!" Indeed, persistence in the pursuit of social justice is MCCNY's hallmark.



Photos by Boon Lin Ngo.

Spring
2005

The Query Newsletter

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

Staten Island Advance

Gays seize the day

Tuesday, February 15, 2005

By MELISSA ANELLI – STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

They were going to the chapel, and they were gonna get married, and no one was going to stop them.

Yesterday, 10 days after state Supreme Court Justice Doris Ling-Cohan ruled that New York's ban on same-sex marriage is unconstitutional, and less than a week after the city filed its appeal on the ruling, two gay couples from

Staten Island were among four to be "married" in the city clerk's office.

The Rev. Pat Bumgardner, an outspoken gay-rights activist from the Metropolitan Community Church of New York, performed the unofficial ceremonies. She led Gerard Mawn and Angel Love-Figueroa of Castleton Corners into the clerk's chapel, disregarding staffers standing outside who objected, "You can't do this!"

Rev. Bumgardner said they became the first gay couple ever to be married in that chapel.

But the marriages are not currently legal under state law—the clerk's office rejected the four gay couples' applications for marriage licenses, citing the necessity of waiting for the results of the city's appeal.

Pastor's Easter Message

Rev. Pat Bumgardner

Easter 2005

Dear friends:

In John's 20th chapter from which we will read this Easter Sunday, Mary of Magdala first finds an empty tomb and then runs to tell the other disciples who, John records, fail to understand what rising from the dead means—they lock themselves away in fear. Subsequently, Jesus will pass through those locked doors.

In the story from Acts, the 10th chapter, that is paired with the Easter Gospel, everyone is amazed at the diversity/the range of humanity God blesses with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

"Truly," Peter says, "I see that God doesn't play favorites."
(Acts 10:34)

It is the beginning of what will become, for Peter and other followers of the way, a more universal understanding of the love of God—what rising from the dead really means.

We, at MCCNY, have long professed and sought to practice that understanding and foundational belief. From the vision of building a multi-cultural community of faith to the Food Pantry's philosophy of turning no one away to the open doors of Sylvia's Place (our shelter for homeless Queer and questioning youth), we have really tried to attach our hopes to our faith in the love of God for all the people of God, not to our fears about what such an open-door policy might mean.

The new stained glass windows throughout our building (to be dedicated on Easter Sunday at 11 a.m.) testify to this passion, portraying human beings in rainbow variety heading toward the light.

In many ways, we've done a good job, clinging to the vision/to the hope that on earth peace can reign and we can live together as one family. In fact, we've done such a good job that we must now make choices that will accommodate the growth we've already experienced and the growth that undoubtedly lies before us—we must make choices that keep our doors open in faith, not closed in fear; not blocking anyone from experiencing the depth of blessing we already here have received. And so

... on Easter Sunday, March 27th we will introduce a third Sunday celebration and new worship time.

MCCNY has never been the type of community to be held back by our fears or projections about what change will mean or ask of us as individuals or as a people; we have never been derailed from our vision of inclusive community by what others say is possible or impossible, or by what we have or do not have. We have simply been true to God and God has been true to us.


WE KNOW we can do all things through the One who strengthens us
BECAUSE that's the only thing that's been consistent for us: that universal love—what the Resurrection was all about.

Change always requires some adjustment—these particular changes will require increased commitment on the part of some members of our Pastoral Staff—but I have to agree with St. Paul: those changes, the adjustments and rearrangements they require, will seem as nothing compared to the glory of God that is revealed when the children of God can find their way into the house of God.

MCCNY is that house of God for all the people of God. I can think of no better time to celebrate that Good News than on Easter Sunday. My prayer is simply that you will join in celebrating what the Resurrection means with joy and thanksgiving at...

- 9 a.m. Traditional Service
- 11 a.m. Former 10 a.m. Celebration
+ Dedication of Stained Glass Windows
+ Reception of New Members
- 7 p.m. Praise and Worship

It will be our distinct blessing and privilege to have The Rev. Troy Perry, Founder and Moderator of Metropolitan Community Churches, preaching all day long! To God be the glory!

With love,

Rev. Pat

Staff Transitions

Rev. Dr. Edgard Danielsen-Morales will be installed as MCCNY's full-time Assistant Pastor for Congregational Life in May. Until then, he is transitioning into the Assistant Pastor's position by serving part-time at MCCNY while fulfilling his contractual obligations as a tenured Professor of physical chemistry at the University of Puerto Rico...Until Rev. Edgard is installed into his full-time post, former Assistant Pastor Rev. Kristen Klein-Cechettini will continue to serve part-time at MCCNY as well... Rev. Franc Perry has received a call from MCC Atlanta to serve on staff as their **Traveling Evangelist** starting in April. Rev. Franc will continue to reside in NYC with his spouse, former MCCNY Board member Jeff Bornheimer, and their child Ruby.

A Very SPECIAL Easter Weekend

Rev. Troy Perry's Last Great Stand in NY Before Retirement as Head of MCC

Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry, a leading figure in LGBT Liberation movement history who founded the world-wide predominantly-LGBT Metropolitan Community Churches denomination in 1968 in Los Angeles, retires as the MCC denomination's Moderator this year.

Tribute Luncheon Set for 3 p.m. Holy Saturday at Union Theological Seminary

He will be feted by MCCNY at a once-in-a-lifetime, not-to-be-missed luncheon tribute at Union Theological Seminary on Holy Saturday, March 26th, at 3 p.m. Public officials and LGBT celebrities and community leaders will be present, and special musicians will perform. Tickets are \$50 and may be obtained by calling the church office at 212 629-7440.



He'll Preach at MCCNY on Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday

Rev. Perry will be preaching at MCCNY's Worship Services on Good Friday (7 p.m., with music by Lavender Light Gospel Choir), on Holy Saturday (Easter Vigil liturgy at 7 p.m.), and at the three Easter Sunday Services (9 a.m., 11 a.m., and 7 p.m.). He will preach different, original sermons at the morning and evening Worship Services on Easter. The evening sermon promises to be especially moving as he bids New York adieu for the last time before his retirement as head of MCC.

On May 1st, Rev. Perry will be one of 40 LGBT social justice activists of historic stature honored in Philadelphia at "Equality Forum," billed as one of the biggest LGBT gatherings ever. In July, he will retire at the MCC General Conference in Canada. His successor as denominational Moderator (subject to General Conference ratification) will be Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson.



Rev. Troy Perry, then and now: In the early 1970s (photo above right) his charismatic personality resulted in phenomenal growth at MCC Los Angeles and launched the world's first predominantly-LGBT denomination. Last year (photo left), he blessed MCCNY's Jeff Bornheimer and Ruby. Happily, Jeff's effort to become Ruby's adoptive parent took a major step forward in Court on this February 14th.

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

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Answering the Call: A Malaysian Hero

Boon Lin Ngeo of Malaysia has begun the road toward ordination as a clergyman in the world-wide predominantly-LGBT Metropolitan Community Churches denomination. He is beginning seminary at the Episcopal Divinity School in Boston and is a Formation student for the ordained ministry at MCCNY, which is a Teaching Church in the MCC denomination. Boon is the author of a ground-breaking book in Malaysia (entitled God Loves Gays) and hopes some day soon to open the first MCC church in his native Malaysia, an extremely courageous move in a country ruled by a repressive authoritarian government that brands all LGBT people as criminals.



Boon Lin Ngeo: Brave and strong morally and physically.

Bringing God's Love to the Places It Is Needed:

Generosity Helps NYC Youths in Homeless Shelter—

Every night of the year, no fewer than six homeless LGBTQ youths find shelter at the Sylvia's Place Shelter at MCCNY, a unique and life-saving resource for the LGBT community and its most vulnerable members—youths who have been rejected and thrown out by their families of origin because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. At Christmas, the generosity of the congregation made it possible to provide the shelter with the youths' most requested items including a PLAY STATION. The congregation's generosity also provided specific toys for 168 children of clients at MCCNY's Sylvia Rivera Food Pantry—a toy for every child for whom a request was received by the Food Pantry.

The Youth Shelter and Food Pantry are grateful to the many people in the LGBT community who raise money for their good work. Fundraising events recently were held at Pieces on Christopher Street and at the View on Eighth Avenue, where Empress Trai La Trash and the Imperial Court hosted and entertained.

You can contribute by sending a check to MCCNY, 446 W. 36th Street, NY, NY 10018, attn: Youth Shelter and/or Food Pantry.

—And Tsunami Victims in Asia

In the week after the horrific Dec. 26th tsunami disaster in Asia, the congregation responded with prayers and gave generously to a special collection to help the tsunami's victims. More than \$2,200 was collected and promptly forwarded to the organization Doctors Without Borders (Medecins Sans Frontieres).

MCCNYers felt a special bond with people in the hardest-hit country, Indonesia, because a Christian minister in that country had informed MCCNY via email on Dec. 7th that he was gratefully using the sermons and information available on MCCNY's Website to "share the good news" of God's love for LGBT people in Indonesia where that truth is too infrequently told.

Dorothy John died at the age of 93 on February 23, 2005. She was MCCNY's oldest member and one of the most faithful volunteers at the church's Food Pantry, where she helped feed the hungry every week for the last 20 years. Her funeral was held at the church on March 6th.



Truck-Driving 'Red-Shoed Rev.' Rides to Yuletide Rescue

Rev. Kristen and Sophia Get the Stained Glass Windows to the Church on Time in an Amazing 2,600-Mile Dash

Maribelle Vasquez & Sophia Pazos: Sophia (at right) helped transport the new windows. Her spouse Maribelle received a 2004 PRIDE award at the annual award ceremony of the Puerto Rican Initiative to Develop Empowerment (PRIDE) and the Latino Gay Men of New York on Nov. 19th. The award honored Maribelle's leadership role at MCCNY and in its Arcoiris [Rainbow] Latino de Cristo ministry.



If it were a fictional story, a fairy tale of make-believe, it couldn't have been more dramatic. But it was really happening:

MCCNY's congregation was waiting—expectantly; dare we say even a bit impatiently—for the promised arrival of the new stained glass windows during the Christmas season. But at the last moment word came from Ft. Lauderdale, where designer Jackson Hall and his team had created the windows, that the truck driver who was to bring the precious cargo to NYC could not do it because of a loved one's health emergency. Then, incredibly, a back-up driver who had been hired suffered the same fate. The situation looked grim.



But instead of Rudolph the reindeer, to the rescue in this real-life adventure came MCCNY's Rev. Kristen Klein-Cechettini and congregant Sophia Pazos, a respected LGBT community leader and activist. On the spot they dropped everything in their

lives and drove to Ft. Lauderdale, loaded the stained glass windows in a truck, and dashed back to New York—an amazing race of 2,600 miles round-trip.

Readers of recent issues of *The Query* Newsletter know that Rev. Kristen could hardly be more beloved and popular in the congregation. But this feat inspired new accolades, including a song sung by Bradley Curry about the legendary deeds of one "Kristen, the Red-Shoed Reverend."

Typifying her humility, Rev. Kristen's only comment about the heroics when approached by the Newsletter was to say, "Make sure you give Sophia equal credit."



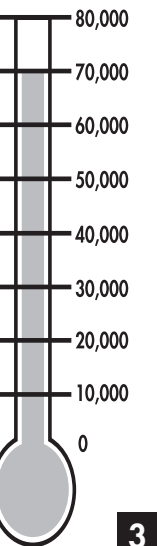
Seeing the light: Looking at the newly-installed brightly colorful stained glass windows from inside the sanctuary in January. (photos by Lynn Scott).

Now the Push Is On to Raise the Last \$10,000 to Pay for Them; 'New Windows Are the Start, Not the End of Building Upgrades'

In barely over a year, MCCNY has raised most of the money needed to pay for the creation and installation of the new stained glass windows that have been installed on the front of the church building facing West 36th Street. The big push is on now to raise the remaining \$10,000 so this project will be 100% paid for and complete. Contributions can be mailed to: MCCNY, 446 West 36th Street, NY, NY 10018, attn: new windows. Please be generous.

The dedication of the new windows marks the culmination of the most visible building beautification project in MCCNY's history. But, as a Board member recently remarked to the congregation, it is only "the beginning, not the end" of significant building upgrades – with even bigger and more ambitious projects coming soon as MCCNY strives ever harder and more successfully to fulfill its goal of being "the Spiritual Home of the LGBT community in the New York metropolitan area."

\$80,000: Cost of stained glass windows
\$70,000: Contributed to date
Please donate now to close the \$10,000 gap



Christmas



Rev. Edgard Danielsén-Morales, Rev. Pat Bumgardner, Rev. Franc Perry



David Raleigh's medley of Christmas carols



Christmas Eve congregation



Christmas Photos by Deacon Danny Gonzalez

KWANZAA

Board member Gayle Davis in the pulpit.



Rev. Edgard celebrates the Sacrament of Holy Communion.



Deaconess Moshay Moses, facilitator of MCCNY's GenderPeople ministry, sings "Bless This House."



Deacon Michelle Cherry-Slack: putting the Kwanzaa principles into action.

Kwanzaa Photos by William Moran

NEW MEMBERS



Welcomed into formal membership during Worship by Rev. Pat recently are (left to right) Christopher Bramfitt & Scott Cawood, Jean Schnell, and Dan Vaca.



Congregants at coffee hour in the social hall after the Worship Service.



Nick Sinckler joined the MCCNY choir and treated the congregation to a solo at Worship Services recently.

Soloist's Debut

Martin Luther King Day

Rev. Candy Holmes was the guest preacher at MCCNY's Worship Services on Martin Luther King Sunday. She is the former Music Director at MCC/DC and is currently on staff at Christ the Liberator MCC in North Brunswick, NJ. (MCCNY this year also hosted the 8th annual LGBT Interfaith Celebration of Rev. Dr. King's Birthday on Jan. 20. Bishop Zachery Jones of Unity Fellowship Church was the keynote speaker. Rev. Gail Jones of Renewed Life Ministries and MCCNY's Pastor Rev. Pat Bumgardner addressed the event, and Rev. Franc Perry sang.)



WORLD AIDS DAY

The AIDS crisis is not over. On Dec. 1st, Rev. Franc Perry's Midweek Worship Service at MCCNY [Wednesdays at 7 p.m.] hosted a preview of the play "Four Angels Released" performed by the Liberation Players, a group affiliated with Christ the Liberator MCC in North Brunswick, NJ. The play consists of 15 one-act scenes, each addressing a different aspect of the AIDS crisis (for instance, the sinful bigotry of some religious leaders who oppose the life-saving use of condoms). It was written by Rev. Durrell Watkins, Pastor of MCC North Brunswick. On Feb. 6, "Four Angels Released" had its theatrical premiere at the Wings Theater in the Archives building on Christopher Street.

The AIDS crisis is not over. On Dec. 1st, Rev. Franc Perry's Midweek Worship Service at

MCC Women's Conference

Rev. Kristen Klein-Cechettini (far left) and Rev. Pat Bumgardner (next to her) were among the participants from our local Region at the MCC Women in Ministry Conference last month in Sarasota, FL. Not pictured but also present were MCCNYers Ali Stafford and Linda Marsh.

