

Church Lady Bingo starring Sybil Bruncheon: Season Three by Mel Bryant



Art by Olan

Church Lady Bingo starring Sybil Bruncheon returns to MCC New York for its third season with opening night on Friday, October 9, 2009 at 7 p.m. Join Sybil, Gefil and the rest of the cast for all of the outrageousness and hilarity that can only be Church Lady Bingo starring Sybil Bruncheon.

Make your reservation now for opening night, Friday, October 9, 2009 by emailing Bradley at bradley@mccny.org or calling the church office at 212-629-7440. The complete list of dates for season three is below.

Friday, October 9, 2009	Friday, January 8, 2010	Friday, April 9, 2010
Friday, November 6, 2009	Friday, February 5, 2010	Friday, May 7, 2010
Friday, December 4, 2009	Friday, March 5, 2010	Friday, June 4, 2010

Admission is \$20 with all of the proceeds going to the good work of MCCNY/Charities so join us for the fun raising and fundraising Church Lady Bingo starring Sybil Bruncheon.

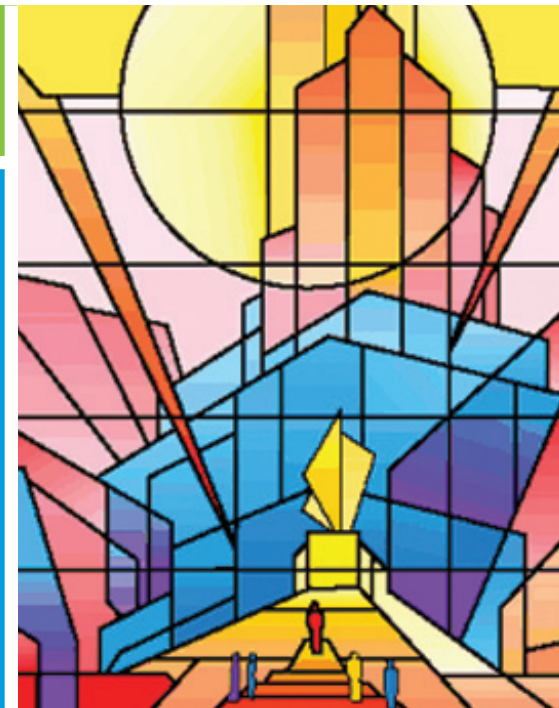
As always, doors open at 6 p.m. and the show starts at 7 so make your reservations now for Church Lady Bingo starring Sybil Bruncheon.

Come Home to MCCNY!

Homecoming Sunday is September 20, 2009.

9 a.m. Traditional Liturgy
11 a.m. Celebration Liturgy
7 p.m. Praise and Worship Liturgy

Gala receptions following all services!



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



The Global Justice Work of Metropolitan Community Churches

The Reverend Pat Bumgardner, Chair of the Moderator's Global Justice Team, and the Reverend Boon Lin Ngeo traveled to Asia once again to continue the global justice work of Metropolitan Community Churches, meeting with community leaders in Beijing, Shang Hai, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur and Pakistan.

This trip marked the first time there had been an MCC presence in Beijing. Beijing does have a Lesbian and Gay Center where both Reverend Pat and Reverend Boon spoke. Reverend Pat shared that while gays and lesbians can be out in China, they cannot expect any sort of social change.

After speaking in Beijing, they traveled to Shang Hai where they met with an existing group of 30 gay Christians, led by a young man named Paul. This group, the Same Grace Fellowship, is now a parish extension of MCC New York. The goal, Reverend Pat shared, is that the Same Grace Fellowship will become its own Metropolitan Community Church and therefore be the founding MCC in China.

From Shang Hai, Reverend Pat and Reverend Boon went to Hong Kong where they met with the "Blessed Minority," a group of Gay Christians, and Reverend Boon preached. While in Hong Kong, Reverend Pat gave a radio interview about MCC New York and the work of the Global Justice team. They also met with a group of open and affirming pastors, including the Reverend Rose Wu, a published author and respected theologian.

From Hong Kong, they returned for the fourth year to Kuala Lumpur where they went on a four day retreat with members of our parish extension there, the Good Samaritan MCC New York. This congregation now has its own worship space in a section of Kuala Lumpur known as "Mihorja" which translates "beautiful people." It is Kuala Lumpur's "gay neighborhood" where many members of their LGBTQ community live and own businesses. It is Reverend Pat's hope that this congregation's new space in Mihorja becomes Kuala Lumpur's LGBTQ Community Center.

Following Kuala Lumpur, Reverend Pat traveled to Pakistan where she reconnected with lesbian, gay and transgender groups she had met last year. Reverend Pat shared that in one of the lesbian groups, there were lesbians as young as 12. MCC New York will now serve as the fiscal conduit for the Lesbian Education Project in Pakistan. This project will begin with scholarships to three lesbians in Pakistan so they can access job training in order to live independently.

Members of MCC New York have expressed interest in traveling with Reverend Pat and Reverend Boon as part of the Global Justice team next year. If you would be interested in traveling, please contact Reverend Pat.

Reverend Pat's passion and commitment to the work of Global Justice was evident as she shared her three fold hope for the continued work in Asia. First, it is her prayerful hope



(photos courtesy of Rev. Boon Lin Ngeo)

that Metropolitan Community Churches can sustain the work of the Lesbian Education Project in Pakistan and that lesbians from within the denomination will support this work through a sister to sister relationship. Secondly, she hopes to create a similar project for our trans siblings in Bagria, Pakistan and thirdly, she hopes to hold a retreat and bring all of the groups she and Reverend Boon have worked with together so they can be "out" with each other.

(photos courtesy of Rev. Pat Bumgardner)



The Query Quarterly/Fall 2009

446 West 36th Street | New York, NY 10018 | Phone: (212) 629-7440 | info@mccny.org | www.mccny.org

MCCNY is a member of Metropolitan Community Churches, a global movement of faith with congregations in 28 nations. The Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson, Moderator

MCCNY
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH OF NEW YORK

A Homecoming Message from Rev. Pat Bumgardner:

Homecoming 2009

Dear friends:

Sometimes you don't know what you have until you don't have it. — It was my great privilege and blessing to travel on behalf of Global Justice recently, and to meet with many people who long simply for the opportunity to meet together safely to worship. I have long loved MCC and MCCNY in particular. My travels have deepened my gratitude for what MCC is all about.

We have so much here — a safe space to worship in; the kind of generosity of spirit necessary to share resources, and house and mentor young people; dedicated volunteers and staff who work very, very hard to make sure kids get to see doctors and Sunday attendees are both graciously welcomed and sumptuously fed.

We have top notch Bible Study and religious education classes, with teachers and facilitators who are themselves gifted and studied theologians. We are blessed to offer things that no other church offers — like Finishing School and GenderPeople.

We are all safe here and cared about; well fed in body, mind and spirit — as well as challenged to the cores of our beings with living into the Gospel promise.

There is so much to be grateful for!

Jesus will say in the lesson for Homecoming Sunday taken from St. Mark's Gospel, "My family are those who hear the Word of God and do it."

I think I know what he meant now, in a very personal way. And, thanks to the vision and spiritual generosity of many here at MCCNY, a growing

number of lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgender people, as well as our allies, are coming to know what he meant, too — in places as far removed as Bagria, Pakistan and Shanghai, China.

Jesus will say in another passage that from those with much, much will be required. — Part of what makes MCCNY so special to me is that we feed and care for each other, and for many more of our family members around the globe, not as a requirement, but as our great joy and blessing and privilege. — I don't know how to communicate the astounding growth and change you, MCCNYers, are supporting all over the globe, except to say that because of you and the work you enable, Queer people in parts of the world where freedoms are not easily come by, will at least be able to celebrate the glorious freedom of the children of God; because of you, people who thought their lives would always be lived in the shadows are out, proud, happy and are building active communities of faith. Because you heard the Word of God and put it into practice, we have family around the globe who will celebrate with us on Homecoming Sunday.

MCCNY is a house of prayer for all people — in New York City and Shanghai, China and Lahore and Bagria, Pakistan and Kuala Lumpur, Pakistan — because you heard the Word of God and put it into action. And for that I give thanks this Homecoming Sunday.

I hope you will join me in gratitude and thanksgiving on September 20th at 9am, 11am, 7pm — or all three! — as we celebrate the family that simply living what we believe has made possible.

With love,

Rev. Pat

Letter from the Editor:

At our most recent Finishing School Planning Committee meeting, the conversation turned to what is possible.

It is possible, thanks to Dani and Violet and Sky and LP69, that we can continue to upgrade our social services space.

It is possible, thanks to Joshua, that we can hold an open and honest dialogue about meth and its effect on our community.

It is possible, thanks to Lucky and Frances, that the young people from Sylvia's Place can participate in a very traditional summertime activity by going to camp.

It is possible, thanks to the United Way and the CSA/Hudson Guild and Deacon Jen, that clients of the Sylvia Rivera Food pantry can access fresh fruits and vegetables.

It is possible, thanks to Sybil and the cast and crew of Church Lady Bingo starring

Sybil Bruncheon, that we can raise funds by raising fun.

It is possible, thanks to Reverend Edgard and Tim and Earl, that we can speak out for what is just and right.

It is possible, thanks to Reverend Pat and Reverend Boon and the Global Justice Team, that young women in Pakistan can access education and that LGBTQ Christians around the world can hear the Good News of God's inclusive love.

As we celebrate Homecoming on Sunday, September 20, 2009 come home to MCC New York and experience all that is possible through God.

Enjoy the issue.

Mel Bryant, Editor

News From The Sylvia Rivera Food Pantry

by Mel Bryant, Director

MCC New York and the Sylvia Rivera Food Pantry celebrated Chris Stadmeier's years of service to the pantry on Sunday, June 21, 2009 during the 11 a.m. Celebration Liturgy. Chris resigned from his position as Director on June 26, 2009 to pursue other interests.

Chris began his service to the pantry in 2006 as an AmeriCorp VISTA intern. He then served as the assistant director from August, 2007 until March, 2008 when he was promoted to Director. Under his leadership, the pantry rolled out a Client Choice model for pantries for both the Ryan White/PWA pantry and Thursday morning general pantry, established our relationship with the CSA/Hudson Guild to provide fresh, organic vegetables to our clients every week, enhanced our volunteer program, increased funding through the Snack Bag Campaign and the Renew Reusable Bag Campaign and increased awareness of the pantry's work through his regular contribution to *The Query*.

Thank you, Chris, for your service to the pantry. We miss you.

The CSA/Hudson Guild continues to donate organically grown produce to the pantry each week. Thank you, Deacon Jen, for volunteering to collect the vegetables each week this summer.

The United Way of New York recently presented the Sylvia Rivera Food Pantry with a Certificate of Excellence for using 15% of its HPNAP funding for fresh produce for clients during its 2008-2009 contract year. All too often, fresh produce is something that is not available to food unstable households, but thanks to the CSA/Hudson Guild and the United Way, we are able to provide our clients with fresh produce every week.

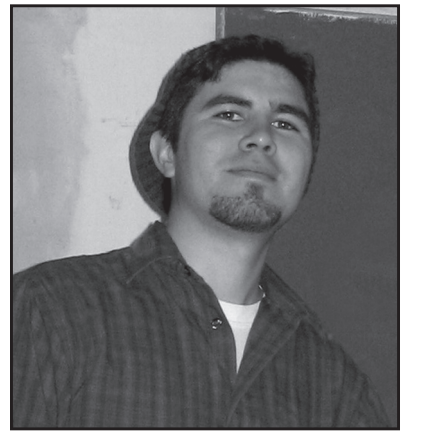
The pantry was blessed to have Sarah Wilson, our former AmeriCorp

(photo by Bradley Curry)



Sarah Wilson hard at work stocking the Ryan White Pantry.

(photo by Nicole Losavio)



Thank you, Chris, for your service to the Sylvia Rivera Food Pantry.

intern, return for the summer. Sarah, who is in graduate school pursuing her Master's Degree in Social Work at Hunter College, was a tremendous help to us as we underwent a transition in leadership. Thank you, Sarah, for all of your hard work and dedication to the work of the Sylvia Rivera Food Pantry.

The Fall and the holidays are busy times for the pantry so if you would like to volunteer or make a donation, please contact us at 212-629-7440 ext 225 or email us at mel@mccny.org.

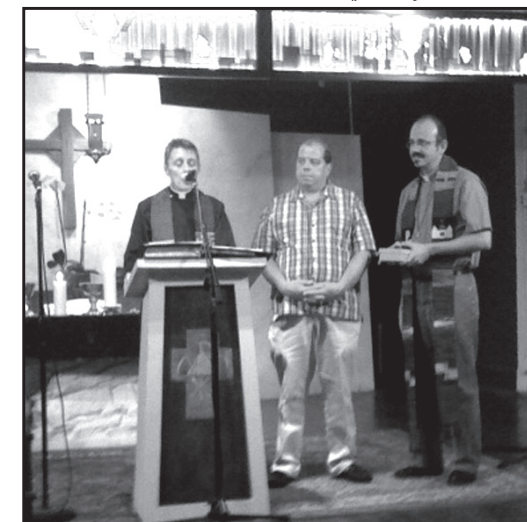
Interesting pantry fact: Did you know that volunteers from the Young Adults Institute (YAI) come in three days a week to make snack bags and stock groceries?

In Service to MCC New York

by Mel Bryant

MCC New York's Hospitality Team recently completed its first three months of service. The team is responsible for the set up and clean up of the social hours that follow each service and for greeting congregants and visitors as they enter the sanctuary for worship. The members of the team are Daniel Schnorbus, Tressie Carter, Ed Ballo, Ed Gonzalez, John Normile, Shawn Wilson, Jen Crosson, Scout Evans, Norma Sharp, Pio Cabada and Monte Clark. If you would be interested in joining the hospitality team, please contact Bradley Curry or Mel Bryant at 212-629-7440.

(photo by Frances Wood)

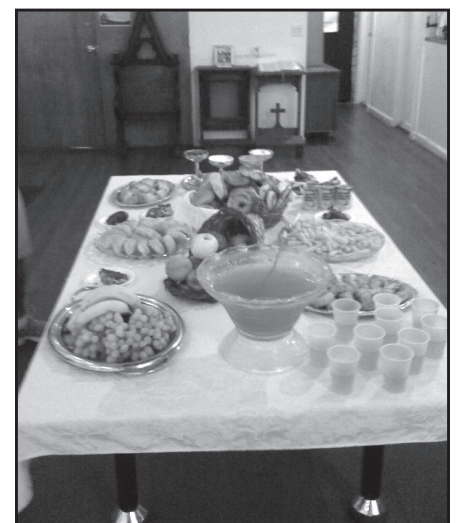


John Garrett was celebrated on Sunday, August 23, 2009 during the 11 a.m. Celebration Liturgy for his 10 years of service to MCC New York as sexton. Reverend Pat praised John for his dedication and faithfulness and presented him with an Elsa Peretti heart from Tiffany's to show the church's appreciation for his service.

Although John cannot worship with us on most Sundays because of his work schedule, he regularly follows the worship service through public access cable where the services are aired every Sunday at 1:30 p.m. on Time Warner channel 57.

For sharing his heart for 10 years, Rev. Pat (left) presented John Garrett (center) with an Elsa Peretti heart as Rev. Edgard (right) looks on.

(photo by Mel Bryant)



A social hour feast prepared by a member of the hospitality team.

The QUERY

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Lucky Michaels, William Morán-Berberena,
Frances Wood

Metropolitan Community Church of New York
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Sunday Worship Services at 9am (traditional)
11am (celebration), and 7pm (praise & worship)

On TV in Manhattan: Sundays 1:30pm,
Time Warner channel 57, RCN channel 85

News from MCCNY/Charities by Frances Wood

Charities Welcomes New HYS Social Worker

MCCNY Charities is pleased to introduce James Vining (*at right*), who has joined the MCCNY Charities team as the new Homeless Youth Services social worker. A Brooklyn native, James has experience working with a variety of populations, including the developmentally and physically

disabled, visually impaired teenagers, New York public school students, and LGBT identified youth. He received his MSW in August 2009 from the Hunter College School of Social Work.



Queer Spirit Camp Offers Sylvia's Place Youth "A Week Away"

In late July, homeless youth services director Lucky Michaels and client service assistant Kristen Lovell embarked on a journey with nine Sylvia's place residents to Easton Mountain to enjoy a fun-filled week at Queer Spirit Camp. Residents had the opportunity to engage themselves in various activities such as tubing and hiking trips. Many workshops were presented at QSC to empower youth to become one with themselves and comfortable in their community through peer leadership and motivation. Obcecion Nickerson had this

to say about QSC: "My experience was very memorable. I had so much fun! I even climbed a mountain!"

Director Lucky Michaels led a troop of young people through the trails of Easton Mountain all the way up to the peak Obcecion recalls so vividly. Said Obcecion, "It's something I wouldn't have been able to do anywhere else." Lucky also facilitated three workshops dealing with issues facing our youth, including HIV, activism, and safer sex.

The goal of Easton Mountain is to form a queer family no matter where you come from or how you live.



Kristen Lovell had this to say: "Seeing our young people out of the everyday environment brings something else out of them. It was a week away from the everyday woes of city life. Maybe sometimes all we need is a week away from it all."

Leadership Volunteers Commandeer Charities' Fast-Paced Face Lift

A whirlwind of sanding and painting, cleaning and repairing left the MCCNY social services space several shades brighter and much more welcoming thanks to the work of Leadership



(photo by Frances Wood)

Program 69: a group of aspiring leaders dedicated to changing the face of non-profits for the benefit of the communities they serve.

LP69 members were given one week to identify a non-profit in need; design a sustainable project to improve services at the organization; and to complete the project with the help of community volunteers and donations. The goal, said LP69 members, was to ensure that those entering the space would "know that there is power in their most vulnerable moments, and that they are loved and supported by their community."

Volunteers spent the week refurbishing youth storage cubbies, painting the shelter space a new shade of pink, securing donations of food and supplies from new community partners, and

fixing equipment including the kitchen sink.

The renovations culminated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Sunday, August 23rd (*pictured at left*), which was attended by HYS youth, staff, volunteers and members of the MCCNY congregation. LP69 members shared their personal experiences of working on the project and pledged their dedication to future collaboration with MCCNY Charities.

"We are grateful to LP69 for identifying the need here and working hard to see that the social services space is more inviting for the community we serve," said Charities Executive Director William Morán-Berberena. "We value working with LP69 through this partnership in the future."

(photo by William Morán-Berberena)



community makes him uniquely suited to planning for the growth and development of the pantry program.

"We are really excited about the future of the Sylvia Rivera Food Pantry as we continue to improve and to increase our service to the communities we serve," said Mel. "Besides improved nutrition options for our clients, we plan to add new and varied services to our existing food programs. I'm really grateful to everyone who has helped make the transition so smooth."

Familiar Face Brings New Insight to The Sylvia Rivera Food Pantry

MCCNY Charities is proud to announce that Mel Bryant has been named the new director of the Sylvia Rivera Food Pantry.

A familiar face who brings a wealth of new insight and experience to the position, Mel has already begun to enact improvements to the pantry program since taking on the position in July, with a focus on securing new sources of funding, improving program efficiency and expanding community outreach.

Mel joined the Charities in March 2008 as the assistant director of the Sylvia Rivera Food Pantry. A longtime MCCNY deacon, Mel additionally serves as the volunteer director of Rev. Pat's Finishing School.

- 6 - Mel's extensive background within the MCCNY and Charities

MCC New Yorkers Speak Out for Social Justice by Mel Bryant

The Reverend Edgard Francisco Danielsen-Morales, Assistant Pastor for Congregational Life, joined other religious and community leaders when he represented MCC New York at the "Interfaith Coalition for HIV/AIDS: A Call to Action in 2009" rally on Wednesday, July 8, 2009 on the steps of City Hall (*pictured below*).

In his remarks, Reverend Edgard said:

"When we remember the stories of our loved ones who have died of AIDS, we become hopeful, and the desire for justice ignites inside of us.

HIV/AIDS is not something that only community organizations talk about or the government talks about. We have to stick together...work together, because this crosses racial, ethnic, economic and religious boundaries."

The rally was the kick off for a five day forum to unite spiritual and community organizations in the ongoing fight against HIV/AIDS. The theme of the forum was "Stepping Up in Faith for HIV and AIDS."

(photo courtesy of NYC Faith in Action for HIV & AIDS Coalition)



(photo by Chuck Dickman)



In response to two separate attacks on trans women in Queens, community organizers held an anti-violence rally on Sunday, July 26, 2009 on the steps of the Jackson Heights post office. Deacon Mel Bryant spoke on behalf of MCC New York (*pictured at right*).

"I don't understand hate. I don't understand violence. I certainly don't understand what can be in the hearts of anyone who would willfully, purposely bring pain and suffering to any of their siblings in Christ.

On Wednesday, July 8, 2009, Tim Hare and the Reverend Earl Ball spoke at the Pennsylvania State Capitol Rotunda as marriage equality legislation was being introduced in that state's legislature (*pictured at right*). Tim and Earl are members of the 11 a.m. congregation and travel from their home in Easton, Pennsylvania every Sunday to worship. They have been in love for more than 32 years.

From the steps of the capitol, Earl said:

"We need what heterosexual couples have:

We need the automatic right to make medical decisions for one another. We need access to health insurance through our employers. We need to be able to bequeath our shared home and assets to the survivor without the crippling taxes that all heterosexual couples are exempt from. We need sick and bereavement leave. We need the right to file a wrongful death claim. We need the ability to claim the survivor's Social Security when one of us is gone.

The list goes on and on and on – it would stretch out this door and down the steps and into the street and how far across Harrisburg!

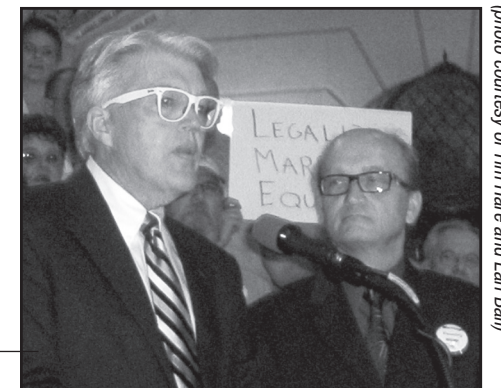
Yes, marriage is a personal commitment but marriage is also a civil bond between a loving couple and their government.

Civil Marriage is the only guarantee of a vast array of protections and benefits. Most of those protections cannot be replicated in any other way regardless of how much money Tim and I have spent on attorney's fees assembling documents to try to protect us. Civil marriage is a civil right, a human right, and our birthright as Americans and Pennsylvanians. Prejudice and discrimination against us are the true enemies to the Commonwealth – not a loving marriage.

Outside the bronze doors of this magnificent rotunda, carved boldly into marble walls are the visionary words of Benjamin Franklin, "Where liberty dwells, there is my country."

Today liberty dwells in this rotunda.

We pray that someday soon, liberty for us to marry in Pennsylvania will dwell throughout the Commonwealth - where American liberty began in 1776."



(photo courtesy of Tim Hare and Earl Ball)

"What I do understand is that we are who we are by the grace and design of God and that God's inclusive and eternal love is available to all of us. So on behalf of MCC New York and the Reverend Pat Bumgardner, to our trans siblings, I say, thank you. Thank you for living your lives openly and honestly. Thank you for living your lives being true to who you are. May God continue to bless us all."

neighbors defend neighbors by Rev. Miller Hoffman

Leslie Feinberg turned 60 so a group of us from Binghamton MCCNY drove to ArtRage in Syracuse to "celebrate a life of love and struggle." It was easy to see the love from those who had traveled from as far as NYC and even other states to be with Leslie: people spoke with passion and affection and talked about how a room grew noticeably warmer when Leslie entered it. And it was easy to see Leslie's love for us: every one of the photographs on the wall, taken by Leslie and installed for the event by Minnie Bruce Pratt and friends, documented and reflected the lives of people Leslie has, for decades, fought beside and fought for. Immigrants, workers, queer, genderqueer, disabled. Leslie's love for each subject showed in the camera's embrace.

One series seemed to particularly illustrate the life and work of Leslie Feinberg. Titled "neighbors defend neighbors," it showed people carrying signs and picketing as allies. Leslie's community is similarly a people who come together in solidarity and a people who come together to work.

Leslie is very sick and the undiagnosed illness has taken a visible toll on his body. But through the internet and digital archiving, Leslie continues to find ways to remain in the struggle and, like e. e. cummings, to find a yes. As one speaker noted, no matter how much of his body fails, Leslie's heart remains strong. Happy birthday, Leslie Feinberg, and many returns. The world is a better place because of your life.

Deconstructing Meth with Joshua Love

Joshua Love, Director of Metropolitan Community Churches' Global HIV/AIDS Ministry and MCC's Drug and Addiction Ministry, facilitated "Deconstructing Meth: An Experiential Workshop to Open Honest Dialogue About Meth" at MCC New York on Saturday, August 29, 2009 and Sunday, August 30, 2009.

The workshops, funded in part by the Elton John AIDS Foundation, are Metropolitan Community Church's response to the growing use of crystal meth among the LGBTQ community.

Love, a national expert on sexual health and HIV prevention, says of the workshop, "Deconstructing Meth is an opportunity for growth, inquiry, and sharing in a safe and supportive environment." He adds, "This is not a meth recovery program, but we will explore avenues for accessing treatment services in

New York, and participants will be encouraged to pool their own knowledge of local resources."

He goes on to say, "Crystal meth knows no boundaries. Its impact cuts across all lines of human difference: age, race, gender, sexual identity, nationality, social circumstance, and economic condition. Much like the global spread of HIV infection, meth affects all people, whether they realize it or not."

Between the two days, more than 20 MCC New Yorkers participated in the workshops that are also being offered in Washington, DC, Minneapolis, Toronto, the San Francisco Bay Area, Denver, and Los Angeles.

As part of his time in New York, Joshua, who is completing his Master of Divinity at Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, MA, co-celebrated Holy Communion at the 11 a.m. Celebration Liturgy.

(photo by Lucky Michaels)



Joshua Love consecrating Holy Communion during the 11 a.m. Celebration Liturgy on Sunday, August 30, 2009.



Remembering Mark Damiani January 31, 1956 - July 1, 2009

MCC New York was very saddened by the sudden and unexpected passing of Mark Damiani on July 1, 2009. Mark and his life partner, John Miskell were active members of the congregation and our condolences go out to John.

In a note to John, Joe Kennedy wrote this about Mark:

"I will always remember so fondly the many years that Mark and you marched (in the MCCNY contingent) in the inclusive St. Patrick's Parade in Queens. Mark was so happy and so playful and very much the joy of our contingent at those parades! And I know that those parades were just a few of the many demonstrations for social justice and world peace that Mark and you faithfully participated in over the years."

Joe went on to say:

"Of course, everyone at parades (especially little ones like that) likes to get their picture in *The Query*, so it was also memorable and typical of Mark's thoughtfulness of others that year after year, he would generously offer to take the picture so that everyone else would get their publicity props in *The Query* while he remained unseen."

Reverend Pat also remembered Mark's playfulness. At the celebration of his life she shared this:

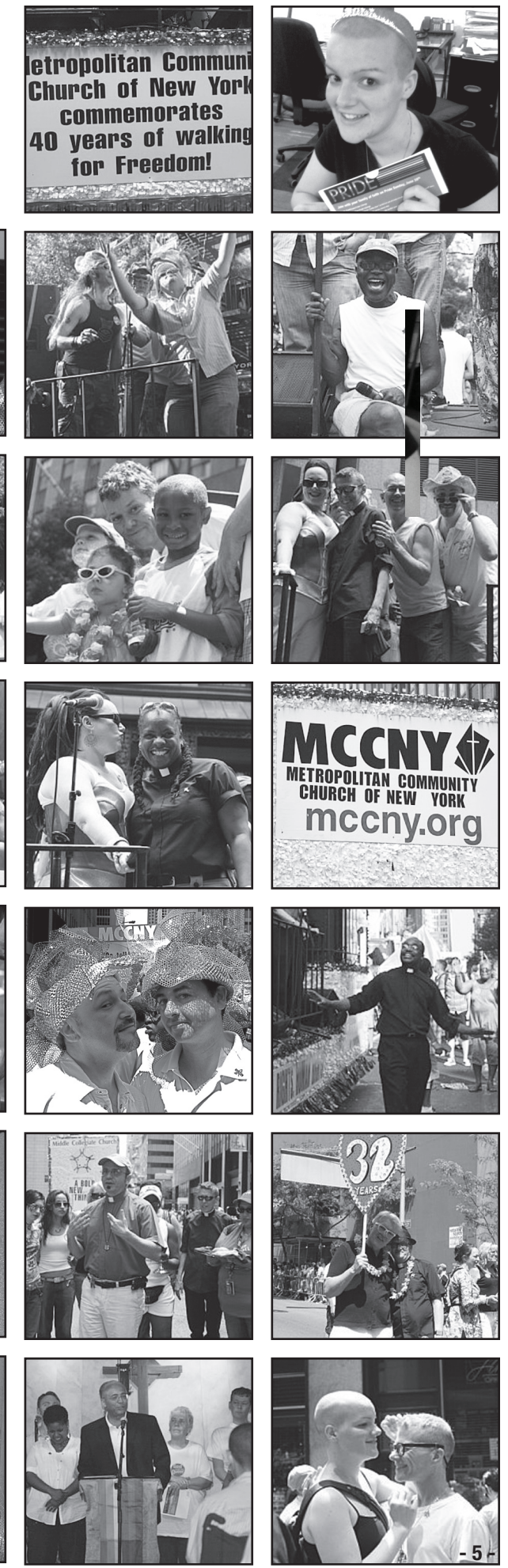
"...there was also another, very playful side to him - I'm sure you saw it. When I first met him, he wouldn't tell me his last name...he wanted me to guess! So he'd give me all these clues: it sounds like a mob name or go to the church at this location and look for a statue of a saint - we share a name. It took me forever - but it was fun, child-like, in the best sense the word.

"In St. Matthew's 18th chapter, Jesus will say, "Unless you become like a child - you will never enter the Reign of Heaven." I think some of it was Jesus' way of saying it's not how high we climb or the degree of worldly recognition we achieve but rather...the meaning of life...eternally...is about how far we can bend and how able we are to see ourselves in the lives and dreams of others - and help those dreams come true.

"Mark was a playful, loving, endearing man...who helped other people's dreams and wishes come true. And so, as we commend his Spirit one last time, I really hope you'll take a part of him with you - and keep his gifts alive among us."

- 4 - He is missed.

PRIDE



(Photos by Montel Cherry, Yolanda Holmes & Sam duBel)

