



# A Letter from Our Pastor

Dear Friends and Family of Metropolitan Community Church of New York,

I hope this letter finds you well, and preparing for a season filled with hope and promise.

2023 has been both a challenging year and one in which we overcame many challenges. In the face of a national political climate threatening LGBTQ life on many levels, we stood firm with a ministry of love and acceptance, defiant in welcoming all, offering much needed basic services to newcomers and long-time patrons alike, and proclaiming boldly that we are who we are by the grace and design of a loving Creator.

Amazingly, though resources were often stretched thin, we managed to enhance and expand our virtual ministries with the addition of a new YouTube channel, expand our podcast, and create interactive features for Sunday worshippers. Our 9am and 11am Sunday celebrations were enhanced with the addition of after-church gatherings like the Movieola film series, Sunday conversations and workshops, and partnerships like that with the Q Clinic offering free flu shots.

A definite highlight was the 3-day Queer Holiday Market, a craft and art fair bringing in over 300 people through the doors of MCCNY, many for the first time, and raising much needed funds for our charitable services. Latin Explosion and shows at the Stonewall Inn featuring LaLa, the *Flamboyant Friends* Musical Reunion, and trivia and disco dance party events at Union Theological Seminary also helped sustain these vital ministries. Our commitment to help those in need of food and safe space never wavered, despite record demand and historically low support levels from city and state agencies.

MCCNY marched in both the NYC Pride March and Queer Liberation March, once again giving voice and presence to our conviction that all of God's children deserve to be treated with love, respect, and dignity. After over half a century as a church for all, we continue steadfast in spreading a message of God's inclusive love, a message the world needs as desperately now as when we first began. Times of uncertainty and the waxing and waning of social acceptance have not deterred us. God has been faithful and so have we as a community founded in a vision of salvation for all, community for all, and social justice for all. This year, our goal for Stuff the Stocking, our annual year end fund raiser, is \$55,000, an amount critical to our ability to close the year meeting all the needs our services demand and move forward.

For information on how to donate, please see the bottom of page 2.

I thank you for being a part of our church community and wish you and yours a very blessed holiday season.

With love and gratitude,

Rev. Elder Pat Bumgardner, Senior Pastor

## The Query Quarterly / Winter 2023

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**MCCNY**   
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH OF NEW YORK

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

# Letter from the Editor

Dear Friends,

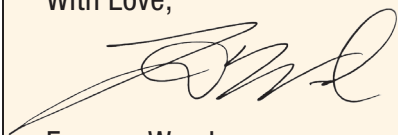
In thinking about what to say in this letter, I turned to past Christmas editions of *The Query*. I was reminded of two things: first, we have had a progression of terribly difficult years, both as a world and as queer people and, second, that this time of year prompts my search for hope in the midst of retrogression and devastation.

I sometimes think of hope as naïve, but I want, instead, to see it as something unboundedly creative. It springs from our acknowledgement that being alive at all is so bizarre that even those seemingly impossible things, like the commonwealth, are still worth imagining and working toward. We keep asserting that we exist and keep discovering new ways in which we might live together authentically, even as we confront selfishness in the world and in ourselves.

There's an image in my favorite Christmas carol that comforts me: "O, the rising of the sun/and the running of the deer." It seems to me to place the listener—all listeners—directly in the midst of creation, both part of it and its witness. How confounding. How exciting.

I still don't know what the future holds, nor do I know exactly what my wishes are for it, but when I am most hopeful, I see the future beckoning to us, welcoming our best and most generous instincts despite our present realities. What wild imaginings might we bring to it this Christmas?

With Love,



Frances Wood

## HELP MCCNY STUFF THE STOCKING!

Donate to the Stuff the Stocking campaign by sending a check or money order to:

**MCCNY/446 West 36th Street/New York, NY 10018**

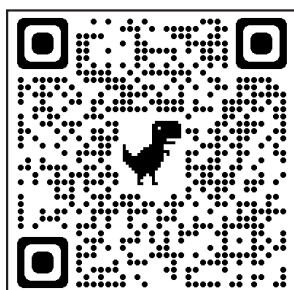
You can also give online by visiting [www.easytithes.com/mccny](http://www.easytithes.com/mccny) (or scanning the code below) and selecting *Stuff the Stocking* in the drop-down menu,

or through Venmo by using

**@MCCNYcharities**

or PayPal by using

**@MCCNYcharities**



## The QUERY

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### Metropolitan Community Church of New York

446 W. 36th St., New York, NY 10018

(332) 400-7488 • [www.mccny.org](http://www.mccny.org)

Sunday Worship Services at 9 a.m. (traditional)  
11 a.m. (celebration)

On TV in Manhattan: Sundays 1:30 p.m.,  
Time Warner channel 57, RCN channel 85



# Building Community at the QUEER HOLIDAY ART MARKET

by Lyndsey McAdams and Sam Davis

The MCCNY Queer Holiday Market was both a fantastic time and great success! The market included 30 incredible vendors who showed off their awesome products—art, ceramics, food, clothing, zines, and more—in MCCNY’s gallery, offices, and even in the sanctuary. Throughout the weekend, the event brought in over 300 new visitors to the church. With a \$5 suggested donation to enter the market, this event raised significant funds for Sylvia’s Place! Nearly everyone that came up and down our stairs remarked on how beautiful the MCCNY space is with hopes to return again for more events in the future. The vendors also shared how much joy, peace, and community the MCCNY space brought them and many offered to return again for future markets. We are looking forward to continuing to expand our community through events like this and are excited to host a one-day market on Saturday, February 10th to celebrate trans and queer love before Valentine’s Day! Be sure to follow along on Instagram @mccnyqueerartmarket for updates and information about other MCCNY, local LGBTQ+ events, and more.

If you’d like to be involved or know anyone who would like to join in on the fun as a vendor or volunteer, please reach out to Lyndsey McAdams at [lyndseym.mcadams@gmail.com](mailto:lyndseym.mcadams@gmail.com). Thank you for supporting our local vendors and our church! You are very appreciated!





# FACES of MCCNY

**1** The Rev. Dr. Jim Merritt, Staff Clergy at MCCNY and Director of Eastern European Affairs for the Global Justice Institute covered MCCNY operations for two Sundays and the week in between, October 8-15th, so Bishop Pat could have a few days off. Thanks to both Rev. Jim and his husband, Al Leach!

**2** Bishop Pat joins Imperial Court members Domingo Diaz, Coco, and Danny González at Latin Explosion on November 11th at Industry Bar. Thank you to everyone who made this fundraiser for Sylvia's Place possible!

**3** Rev Pat and Luther at Latin Explosion.

**4** Celebrating the Blessing of Animals on Sunday, October 8th!

**5** MCCNYers Isabella (butterfly), Fran (taco), and Noel (Buddy the Elf) celebrate Halloween!

**6** Congratulations to MCCNY's James T. Lane, who returned to Broadway's *Chicago* in the role of Amos Hart, and Sylvester McCracken who recently completed the run of *Elvis: A Musical Revolution* at North Shore Music Theater! (Photos by Michaelah Reynolds for *Playbill* and David Costa)

**7** Many thanks to Gotham Cheer for volunteering to serve at MCCNY's gala Thanksgiving meal!

**8** Warm thanks to Music Director Udi Gershuni for your artistry and leadership since October! (pictured at left rehearsing for the 11am service with choir members Sylvester McCracken, Samantha Shoffner, Philip Pares, and 9am Song Leader Heidi Siegel).

**9** Joe Kennedy and Sammy welcomed friends to gather around the 51st annual Christmas tree at Joe's apartment on 88th Street! (pictured with: Jody Barnofsky, Frank DiMarco, Len Richardson; Frances Wood & Les LaRue)









# Flamboyant Friends:

A Musical Reunion to benefit The Sylvia Rivera Food Pantry

## Freedom to Exist, Freedom to Express, Freedom to be Flamboyant

by Richie Torres

After celebrating Obama's Executive Order in favor of Marriage Equality followed by the 2016 election, there was a vacuum of hope and optimism in and for government amid our larger LGBTQ+ community. America was willing to sacrifice the pursuit of a happiness for some for a hostile power grab to inevitably challenge, if not roll back, the rights of many.

*Flamboyant Friends* is the manifestation of this chain of events. It is actually a peaceful protest in the guise of a campy, fun cabaret show to benefit causes that matter: feeding the hungry and providing shelter for our youth.

I wrangled some talented friends who agreed we needed to do something. We did...6 years later we reunited in November to assert our voices as a diverse, benevolent, well-meaning, and accepting community. Thanks to all cast members past and present who made *Flamboyant Friends* a fabulous artistic and financial success!



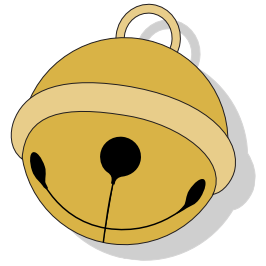
Starting left: Ryan Sloan, Richie Torres, Tonie Boykin, Gillian Goodman, Domingo Diaz, Francine Morin, Ayana Lowe, Kyle Supley.  
(Not pictured) The Flamboyant Band: Drew Tirella, Simon Fishburn, Dan Manjovi, Trevor O' Loughlin.





# A Disco to December

by Sam Davis



On Thursday, December 7th, in James Chapel at Union Theological Seminary, MCCNY's very own Jorge Alvis DJ'ed a live disco set for *A Disco To December*, an event organized by Sam Davis in collaboration with UTS Pub Caucus to bring awareness to the history and material needs of Sylvia's Place by providing space for learning about the LGBTQ+ history of the underground club scene of the 1970s and 80s in NYC. Attendees ate snacks and drank while dancing to the fun and funky tunes by DJ Jorge. During the event, Sam facilitated a community storytelling session with Jorge and Bob, where they shared stories about how and where Jorge started DJing, the racialized and gendered dynamics of going out to the clubs post-Stonewall, and answered insightful questions posed by attendees during the Q&A portion of the community storytelling session. After the storytelling, attendees wished Jorge a very happy birthday with a card and guava empanadas, and we all danced and laughed late into the night together!

If you want to watch a video of the community storytelling session, please email Sam at [dykearchivist@gmail.com](mailto:dykearchivist@gmail.com) for the private link. Also, if you are interested in sharing your stories as part of a similar event and/or have ideas for future events to benefit the vital LGBTQ+ ministries and histories of MCCNY, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Sam via email or phone at (336) 516-5283.



TOP: Sam, Bob, and Jorge talk to a group of Union Theological Seminary students and alumni at *A Disco to December* during a community storytelling session centering on Jorge's past experiences as a DJ in NYC.

CENTER: Jorge is queueing up the next song behind his computer for everyone to dance to. Many event attendees remarked on how much they enjoyed the music and wanted to hear more!

BOTTOM: Jorge holds a birthday card signed by all event attendees while Sam hands him guava empanadas with a "Happy Birthday" candle lit in the center, and everyone sings.

# HOLIDAYS at MCCNY!

## Christmas Eve:

Sunday, December 24th at 7pm (no 9am or 11am service)  
Candlelight Service ♦ Gala Holiday Party!  
*The Rev. Elder Pat Bumgardner, preaching*

## Christmas Day:

Sunday, December 25th at 11am  
Service of Lessons and Carols ♦ Holiday Brunch!  
*The Rev. Dr. Brett Degoldi, preaching*

## Kwanzaa:

Sunday, December 31st at 11am (no 9am service)  
Lighting of the Kwanzaa Candles ♦ Gala Reception!  
*Deacon Len Richardson, preaching*

## Epiphany:

Sunday, January 7th (regular 9am/11am schedule)  
Celebration of MCCNY's 52nd Anniversary!  
*The Rev. Elder Pat Bumgardner, preaching*

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