

# THE QUERY NEWSLETTER

Metropolitan Community Church  
of New York

Church of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and  
Transgender People Open to All

## SEPTEMBER, 2003

Built in 1887 as a "German Gospel Tabernacle" Church, it was bought by MCCNY in 1993. But now it's not half big enough for MCCNY's growing congregation and expanding social services ministries. You can help **BUILD A BIGGER CHURCH TO SERVE A BIGGER VISION:** Log on to



Photo by Deacon Danny Gonzalez

[www.HelpBuildGayChurch.com](http://www.HelpBuildGayChurch.com)

Raised to date & in the bank: \$140,100

## HOMECOMING SUNDAY – SEPT. 21<sup>ST</sup> MCCNY's Acclaimed Choir Makes Its Triumphant Return from Summer Vacation

Just how acclaimed is MCCNY's choir? Before beginning summer vacation, the choir conducted by **MCCNY Music Director John Fischer** performed uptown before hundreds of people at the **Harlem Gospel Festival**. They did three numbers – and received a thunderous standing ovation after each one! And at another June event they were honored in a performance at the **HSBC Unity Celebration**. Is it any wonder John Fischer and the choir are often described with superlatives like "the best...the greatest"?

- Now you can experience for yourself this famed 40-voice choir as they make their glorious return from summertime with a special Homecoming celebration in song, accompanied by **David Raleigh's Band**.
- And find out for yourself why the dynamic sermons of **Rev. Pat Bumgardner** – combining awesome scholarship

and research with piercing insight and cutting-edge relevancy to our lives today – have won **MCCNY's Pastor** plaudits far and wide, in print and by word of mouth, as one of the most exceptional preachers of the true Gospel of Jesus and one of the leading voices for Queer Liberation in the world today.

- After the Worship Service, enjoy a hot buffet in the church's social hall, thanks to the staff and volunteers of MCCNY's **Sylvia Rivera Food Pantry**, directed by **Rev. Tawnee Walling**.

*It's all happening on*  
**Homecoming Sunday – Sept. 21st,**  
**at 10 a.m. and at 7 p.m.**  
**MCCNY, 446 W. 36th St., NYC**  
**(btwn. 9th & 10th Aves.)**

## PRIDE 2003

Coming hot on the heels of a historic victory in the U.S Supreme Court and same-sex marriages in Canada, the 34th anniversary of the June 1969 Stonewall Uprising was truly **A PRIDE DAY TO REMEMBER**. More pictures of Pride inside.

*PRIDE ON PARADE:* Rev. Pat Bumgardner marches beside MCCNY's float, which featured live music from David Raleigh's Band and members of the church choir under the direction of John Fischer. (Photo by Eulises Roman Jr. You can view this and many other Eulises Roman Jr. pictures of MCCNY on Pride Day at <http://mccnypride2003.irmedia.us.com>).



## The Pastor's Homecoming Letter by Rev. Pat Bumgardner

Dear friends:

This year as we prepare to celebrate Homecoming Sunday, I find myself thinking about all the things we have accomplished in the past year – things like the successful launching of a shelter ministry for homeless youth, Sylvia's Place, and all the children and youth who now live at the Church – and all that lies before us, like our Capital Campaign entitled *Now and Forever: Your Spiritual Center*. – Whether we are talking about providing a safe night's accomodation for a child or raising money to buy or build a new Church, we are basically talking about what it means to be a spiritual home for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and Queer community in New York City.

A home is many things to many people – it's safe space, a place where we can find nourishment and relaxation; it's a place where we can renew our bodies, minds and spirits; a place where we feel loved and wanted. Often, our homes are the places where we put our best foot forward so to speak, and decorate in ways that reflect who we really are and what we value. People know our "taste" in terms of style and what has meaning for us.

For a long time at MCCNY, we put our mission before all else. We made do with what we had, so that the bulk of our time, energy and talent could go into the Gospel imperatives of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and sheltering the homeless. None of us have any regrets about that faithfulness, I am sure. Our focus has been our blessing. – And now, I believe, it is time to not only maintain our ministerial imperatives, but also

spend a little time, energy and talent on this place that is home to so many of us in so many ways. I believe doing that will help feed and sustain us for the long haul in terms of our ministries, and also enable us to attract more support for our Capital Campaign.

And so, I'm asking each and every member and friend of MCCNY to join our **LIFELINE** campaign, by pledging a dollar a day between Homecoming Sunday and Christmas. Find a jar or a box and each day, put aside just one dollar to refurbish this miracle on 36th Street! If each member of MCCNY honors this commitment, we will each be able to give \$95 above and beyond our regular Sunday offering on Christmas day, and raise \$38,490 to re-do the entrance way, stairwell and sanctuary of MCCNY's current home.

Maybe a dollar a day is very little to ask, and you will want to give for someone who is unable to participate, and maybe you are unemployed but would like someone to "sholarship" you, so that you, too, can be part of sprucing up this place so many find a home at. Maybe you will want to dedicate your dollar a day to the memory of a friend or loved one. Whatever way of participating has meaning for you, I'm praying that everyone will find a way to be part of this campaign to refurbish the place that has fed and sustained us in so many ways for so very long – our spiritual home.

May God bless us all.

With love,



Rev. Pat

## Lesbian Magazine Hails MCCNY'S Pastor

When **GO**, New York's premiere lesbian magazine, profiled "Women We Love" in its June Pride issue, the very first lesbian shero saluted was "**Reverend Pat Bumgardner**." The article by **Nicole Carow** mentions Rev. Pat's upbringing on the farms of northeastern Indiana and describes attempts by some to suggest to her at a young age that her "calling to serve God" meant she should become a Roman Catholic nun. "By accident or by divine comedy," **GO** relates, she became with the help of influential friends the only woman to attend and graduate from the prestigious **Catholic Theological Union** seminary in Chicago. Denied ordination in the Church of Rome because she is a woman,

she moved to New York ("the city opened my eyes"), came out as a lesbian, joined the **Metropolitan Community Churches** denomination and was **ordained in 1986**. **GO** quotes Rev. Pat as summarizing, "I always knew I had been called to priesthood but it [the Roman Catholic Church] had been the wrong venue."

The article enumerates some of her actions as Pastor at MCCNY: "Bumgardner has helped establish the Food Pantry Ministry, which serves over 4,000 men, women and children [each month]. She also founded the MCC Youth Shelter, which is open every night of the week."

**GO** concludes its profile: "Reverend Bumgardner is now 50 years of age and credits her youthful appearance to 'clean living.' She met her partner of 17 years, Mary Jane, at church."

## Calpernia Addams, The 'Soldier's Girl,' Speaks at MCCNY



In its Pride issue on June 27th, the **NY Blade** reported: "The Metropolitan Community Church of New York had a packed house at both the 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. services on June 22 when **Calpernia Addams**, writer, entertainer, and transgender girlfriend of murdered U.S. Army private first class **Barry Winchell** spoke about her experiences. Addams' story of falling in love with the 101st Airborne soldier was depicted in a Showtime made for TV movie, 'Soldier's Girl.'" Hats off to the *Blade* for excellent reporting.

MCCNY's Assistant Pastor **Rev. Kristen Klein-Cechettini** made the arrangements for Calpernia Addams to be guest preacher at the church's annual celebration of Stonewall Sunday – the Sunday before Pride –

when the whole MCCNY community joins with its **GenderPeople** ministry in recalling and honoring the transgender activists who were such a vital part of the Stonewall Uprising in June 1969 and the ongoing LGBT liberation movement that Stonewall brought alive. Speakers in past years have included a number of Stonewall veterans, including the late **Sylvia Rivera**, who was a member of MCCNY, was baptized at this church and ran the Food Pantry ministry here (that now bears her name) until her death in February 2002. (Saint Sylvia's ashes are in the urn that is placed in front of the sanctuary during Worship Services).

Calpernia Addams is a superb public speaker – though she began by apologizing for her "Southern accent" and acknowledging "Y'all's Pastor is a tough act to follow!" – and a scholar of the Bible and the English language. She was by turns quite humorous (her keen appreciation of the King James Version, among other things, brought peals of laughter) and profoundly moving, never more so than when she recalled the murder of Pfc. Winchell. Her dear Barry was brutally beaten to death with a baseball bat as he slept in his barracks at Ft. Campbell, KY by a queer-bashing soldier just because he loved her. Many in the congregation wept uncontrollably as she said that she trusted that because Barry was asleep when the savage attack began, he didn't suffer.

But ultimately, Calpernia's story was one of finding the great courage, self-assurance and faith to be who she really is – and then using her amazing talents to bring that message of liberation and empowerment to the world. Her extraordinary courage and the leadership she now shows as a transgender activist deeply impressed the congregation.

As the **Advocate** national newsmagazine (7/22/03) noted in a full-page article after Calpernia spoke at MCCNY, she has now published her autobiography, **Mark 947**. Those who heard Calpernia in MCCNY's pulpit will recall why – though it might seem an odd choice – Mark 9:47 is her favorite Biblical verse. (It has something to do with her very zany sense of humor, but the Newsletter certainly isn't going to give away the secret... You shoulda been here when she spoke!)

## Sylvia's Place Shelter Gets \$70,000 Grant

Thanks to the tireless efforts of **Rev. Tawnee Walling**, Development Director of Metropolitan Community Charities of New York, and the volunteers who assisted her, MCCNY's **Sylvia's Place Shelter for homeless LGBTQ youths** has received a \$70,000 grant from New York State. Combined with generous gifts already received from members and friends of the congregation, that should be enough to assure that the shelter can continue to pay for its basic operations,

including adult staffing, for another year. However, additional grants and contributions will help upgrade living conditions for the approximately six youths whom the facility houses each night (wouldn't air conditioning be nice when it gets hot again next summer?) and the shelter will always need miscellaneous and sundry items from donors, especially socks, underwear, deodorant, body lotion, videos and games. To contribute, contact the shelter's director, **Ordinand Michael Hydes**, on his cell phone (201 486-7895).

At its every-other-year General Conference this summer, the MCC denomination awarded MCCNY a congratulatory plaque for its sponsorship of the **Sylvia's Place Shelter**. It is hoped that this shelter will be an example for other MCC churches in serving LGBTQ youth – just as MCC's Sunshine Cathedral in Ft. Lauderdale FL, under the leadership of their Pastor, Rev. Grant Ford, recently made national headlines for opening the first federally-funded day care center for LGBT senior citizens. Metropolitan Community Churches across the country continue to find new ways to serve the needs of the LGBT community – and make sure that government grants for "faith-based" organizations don't all end up in the hands of right-wing hatemongers and bigots.

## 3 Candidates Receive Final Approval For Ordination

MCCNY is privileged to a **Teaching Church** – one of only about 14 in the worldwide, predominantly-LGBT Metropolitan Community Churches denomination. That means that candidates for the ordained ministry in MCC, during or after their formal schooling in seminary for a Master of Divinity degree, also serve on staff at this church. Here they learn the skills required for real-world pastoring under the tutelage of Rev. Pat. They practice those skills, including preaching from the pulpit, with this congregation. As they perform many tasks of service and of leadership, they become beloved members of the MCCNY family. They must also attend denominational seminars and workshops for future clergy. When this arduous process of several years is completed, the candidates must be approved for ordination by the Pastor and the Board of MCCNY and then – the big test – by the MCC denomination's Board of Ordained Ministries.

This summer three candidates from MCCNY received that final approval at MCC's General Conference; thus, they are no longer known as "Candidates" – now they are "Ordinands." The congregation warmly congratulated **Ordinands JEN MILLER HOFFMAN, MICHAEL HYDES and FRANC PERRY**.

# PRIDE 2003: A DAY TO REMEMBER



THE VIEW FROM THE REVIEWING STAND: The official Heritage of Pride (HOP) photographer at the reviewing stand snapped these 2 pictures and posted them on the Internet. (left photo) MCCNY's "God Made Us Queer" banner leads dozens of MCCNY marchers waving flags and signs. (right photo) MCCNY's float – designed by Board Member **Steven Rodick** and the church's volunteer advertising director **Howard Herrera** – booming out the live Gospel music of the MCCNY choir directed by **John Fischer** and **David Raleigh's Band**. (Photos courtesy of **Photogra.com** You can view or order copies of these or several other reviewing stand pictures of the MCCNY contingent at <http://HOP2003.photogra.com>)



THEY JUST CAN'T GET ENOUGH: The throngs lining the Pride parade route all the way down Fifth Avenue and through the Village clamored for MCCNY's various varieties of "God Made Me..." stickers (choices included: Queer, Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Queer & Asian, Queer & Black; and "Get Married at MCCNY"). Volunteers like these on both sides of the street struggled to keep up with the demand.



PRAYER, THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA: Before and after the Pride Parade, worshippers filled MCCNY's sanctuary for Sunday Worship Services. Rev. Pat Bumgardner's Pride Day sermon is always a highlight of the year. Not only does the Pastor debunk notions that the Bible speaks ill of what we now call LGBT people; she proves conclusively that LGBT

people are right there in the Bible, a crucial part of God's plan for the salvation of the world from the start. "Before people try to bash us with the Bible, they ought to try reading it," she said as she quoted Scriptures about the same-sex love of David and Jonathan, the undying same-sex love of Ruth and Naomi (expressed so eloquently it is often quoted by unwitting heterosexuals at their marriage ceremonies), the transgender warrior Deborah, the "eunuchs," etc., etc.





*THE QUEER CHURCH ON THE QUEEN OF AVENUES: MCCNY's contingent marches down Fifth Avenue. A TV commentator covering another parade once called Fifth Avenue "the Queen of the Avenues." Never was the title more apt than on this Pride Day 2003, the 34th anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising. The LGBT community was especially regal and festive, celebrating recent victories and gathering strength for the continuing struggle to end queer-bashing violence, discrimination and all injustice. The upbeat Gospel music blasting from MCCNY's float made clear: WE KNOW FOR SURE THAT ULTIMATE VICTORY IS OURS!*  
 (Pride Day photos by **Beth Kling** and by **Eulises Roman Jr.**)



## 31 VOLUNTEERS RAISE \$3,400 FOR CHURCH AT PIER DANCE

**Deacon Brenton Buchanan** assembled 31 volunteers from the church to staff an MCCNY beverage booth at the Heritage of Pride (HOP) dance on Pier 54. While others from the church were still marching, the volunteers assembled before 4 p.m. and kept the booth staffed until the closing LGBT Pride Day fireworks display over the Hudson at 10:30 p.m. Besides the \$1,500 that HOP donated to the church for staffing the booth, the eager volunteers received \$1,900 in tips which they also donated – for a whopping record grand total of \$3,400. The booth sported plenty of MCCNY's "God Made Me..." stickers (and so did some of the dancers at the dance).



This is the **Honor Roll** of 31 volunteers who raised \$3,400 for the church: Deacon Brenton Buchanan, Timothy Walls, Frank DiMarco, Deacon Jorge Blondett, Scott Kemp, Bob Hollinger, Matt Boland, Cheryl Bassett, Cheryl Tucker, Colleen Sovory, Sarah Bess Lewis, Basil Rodericks, Anthony Phillips, Philip Pares, Daniel Miranda, James Elmore, Lloyd Lee, Michael Pavese, David Altermatt, Greg Vabre, Philippe VonBurg, Deacon Bali White, Chaka DeLeon, Arnold Mungioli, Damon Bishop, Emory Edwards, Julio Quintero, Mark Gilrain, Rev. Fred Lerro, Joseph Coello, Dr. Alex Weymann.

Some of the fund-raising volunteers at the MCCNY beverage booth. (Photos courtesy of **GreatPartyPics.com**. You can view these and many other pictures of Pride Day in NYC at [www.GreatPartyPics.com](http://www.GreatPartyPics.com) )

## Rev. Dr. Robin Hawley Gorsline Is Pastor of MCC Richmond

After preaching a fine farewell sermon here on the 4th of July weekend, **Rev. Dr. Robin Hawley Gorsline** (MCCNY's Director of Religious Education for the past two years) and his spouse, **Dr. Jonathan Lebolt**, were commissioned by the Pastor and congregation during Worship Services the following Sunday to go forth (two by two, as specified in Mark 6:7) to their next calling. Rev. Robin is now Pastor of **MCC Richmond, VA**. Earlier this summer, Rev. Robin was the keynote speaker at the annual conference of Rete Evangelica Fede Omosessulita [Protestant Network on Faith and Homosexuality] in **Italy**, where his presentation was entitled, "Theologizing Queerly: Some Sexual/Spiritual Contexts." The Newsletter looks forward to providing updates on Rev. Robin and Jonathan's progress in Richmond, as we do from time to time on all the clergy who once trained or served at MCCNY and have now moved on to other callings; reader feedback indicates that these occasional "WHERE ARE THEY NOW" features are a popular item. Speaking of which:

- **Rev. Pressley Sutherland**, Pastor of MCC North London, and his congregation were recently featured in the U.K. gay men's magazine *Attitude*. His spouse **David Bedella** is a major star on the London stage. *The New York Times* Broadway critic Ben Brantley, reporting from London on July 17<sup>th</sup> about "the four-alarm fire of a show at the National Theater," says "the show's second act takes place in hell, presided over by David Bedella's song-and-dance Satan."
- **Rev. Kerri Messner** has relocated to London and is on staff at **MCC North London**.
- **Rev. Patrick Cheng** is advancing towards his Ph.D. in systematic theology at Union Theological Seminary while tutoring one of the seminary's introductory courses in systematic theology taught by Prof. James Cone. Rev. Patrick's review of Bob Goss's book, *Queering Christ*, will be published in the *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*.
- **Rev. Julio Flores**, Assistant Pastor of **MCC New Haven**, has instituted a Spanish language Service for that church's growing Latino/a membership and as an outreach to Hartford's large Spanish-speaking population.
- **Rev. John Magisano** has been named to the Board of "Interfaith Impact," an interfaith coalition on social justice issues, and to the LGBT Advisory Council of the NY State Office of Alcoholism & Substance Abuse Services.
- **Rev. Dr. Pablo Navarro** resigned as Pastor of **ICM Cristo Sanador in San Juan, PR**, [ICM is "MCC" in Spanish: Iglesia de la Comunidad Metropolitana] to pursue new work including teaching and possibly planting new ICM churches. Earlier, Rev. Pablo gave thanks that the denomination's prayers for an end to the bombing on Vieques were answered. "We now thank you and pray for the day that as a world we can all live in peace," Rev. Pablo said.
- In other news from ICM Cristo Sanador, the San Juan church recently sent a warm letter to MCCNY, thanking

long sent to them. They now feel strong enough, in their 8th year, to ask that the money be sent instead to a brand new church of our predominantly LGBT denomination in **Brazil**. MCC **Rev. Elder Armando Sanchez** presided at the first **ICM National Convention** in Brazil [ICM is "MCC" in Portuguese: Igreja de Comunidade Metropolitana] where 300 people showed up to launch ICM in the country that has more nominal Roman Catholics than any other. MCCNY's bedrock commitment to diversity can only benefit from close ties to our sibling congregations in Puerto Rico and, now, Brazil.

## New York Well-Represented At MCC'S General Conference

A thousand people representing the more than 300 congregations in our worldwide predominantly-LGBT Metropolitan Community Churches denomination gathered in Dallas, TX in July for the denomination's every-other-year General Conference. MCCNY's voting Clergy Delegates were Rev. Pat Bumgardner, Rev. Kristen Klein-Cechettini and Rev. Tawnee Walling. MCCNY's voting Lay Delegates were Board Members Susie Chin, Gayle Davis and Rita Saylor, former Board Member Norma Sharp, and Deacon Buddy Seaton (an auxiliary NYPD officer who also worked on the General Conference security detail). Other members of this church at General Conference included the Pastor's spouse Mary Jane Gibney, Deacon Carolyn Parker (chair of MCCNY's Christians of African Descent ministry) and Rosemarie Napoli, outstanding choir member and much-loved all-around volunteer.

## Summertime Songsters



**Rick Libert and Andy Buck**, a popular duo at folk music clubs in the city, leading the congregation in song. While the morning choir took its summer break, the congregation was not left "orphaned," music-wise. Music Director **John Fischer** remained at his post as congregational song leader, and other congregants with musical careers beyond the church walls pitched in with stirring contributions, including **Ayana Lowe**, whose jazz band frequently performs at clubs around town, and the chart-conquering duo known as Shimmerplanet, John Fischer and **Carolyn Eufrazio**.

# "...LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE BEFORE OTHERS, SO THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS..." — Matthew 5:16

(Photo at Left) **Rich Torres and Sophia Pazos** of MCCNY's *Arcoris (Rainbow) Latino/a* ministry heading up the LGBT contingent at the Puerto Rican Day Parade. Sophia proudly waves a rainbow LGBT Pride flag.

(Photo at Right) MCCNY choir member **Claude Ashby** (in the middle of the picture) receives an Award for Generosity from the American Veterans for Equal Rights New York at their annual Pride Month awards ceremony. AVERNY president Denny Meyer (at right in picture) makes the presentation.

(Photos by **Doug Meszler** for *Gay City News*. Reprinted courtesy of *Gay City News*.)



With more than 400 official members and still more adherents, all of them dedicated to carrying out the Biblical imperative cited above, it's only natural that MCCNY's congregants are often at the forefront when social justice and LGBT rights are at issue. But, often as not, in such situations their connection to the church may not be evident to the casual onlooker nor remarked upon by the media. **Deacon Danny Gonzalez**, for instance, was shown up close and plain as day with his spouse in an **ABC News** report on the campaign for same-sex marriage equality this summer. But there was no mention of Metropolitan Community Church. Likewise, it caught *The Query's* queer eye when two successive issues of *Gay City News* (June 13-19 and June 20-26) during Pride Month showcased pictures of people we recognized from church.

One of those pictured, **Rich Torres**, coordinator of **MCCNY's Arcoris Latino/a de Cristo (ALC)** ministry, told the Newsletter that half of the much-publicized LGBT contingent at the Puerto Rican parade were members and friends of MCCNY's ALC. He lamented that onlookers didn't know that and that media coverage didn't point it out. Rich opined that LGBT people of faith play a far more prominent part in the **LGBT activist movement** than they are credited for.

A quick random scan through the Newsletter's archives seems to bear out Rich's contention that MCCNY's **social justice ministry** has often contributed a significant percentage of the participants at important public events. A few examples:

- On March 22, 1995, Rev. Pat and scores of MCCNY congregants were among the nearly 200 who picketed an appearance in Manhattan by NY State Attorney General **Dennis Vacco** (R) whose discriminatory acts included denying domestic partnership benefits to LGBT employees in his office (alerted to his intolerant policies by such protests, the voters gave him the boot).
- On April 15th, 1999, Rev. Pat, Rev. Pressley and a sizeable group of congregants who took off from work carried the MCCNY banner in a march by thousands across the Brooklyn Bridge, organized by Rev. Al Sharpton, "to protest racism and brutality in the New York Police Department, especially the

murder of **Amadou Diallo**," the Newsletter reported at the time. The MCCNY delegation constituted at least half of those behind the "lesbian and gay" banner in the march.

- On July 23, 2000, according to The New York Times, "...Rev. Pat Bumgardner, the pastor of Metropolitan Community Church, ...led the memorial service" attended by 300 for transgender hate-crime murder victim **Amanda Milan**. "Members of her church's transgender spiritual group, Gender People, organized the memorial with members of about twenty other gay, lesbian and transgender groups. The ceremony was followed by a march to the site of Ms. Milan's death..." said The Times.
- On April 5, 2001, Rev. Pat, then-Candidate (now Rev.) Kerri Messner, Sylvia Rivera and many other congregants participated in a rush-hour rally in **Times Square** to protest the eviction of a drop-in center there for homeless youths, many of them LGBT and many of them people of color. Major media including WABC-TV Ch. 7 covered Rev. Pat's speech. (Her remarks there led to the Sylvia's Place Shelter at MCCNY.)
- On August 15, 2001, MCCNY again provided at least one-third of the scores who demonstrated outside the **Egyptian Consulate** on the East Side against the arrest of the "Cairo 52" gay men at a riverboat nightclub and in support of freedom for LGBT people in the Middle East.
- MCCNY's clergy and congregants, led by Sylvia Rivera and the GenderPeople ministry, played an important part in the hearings and demonstrations at City Hall leading to passage of the **Transgender Rights Law** on April 24, 2002.
- Rev. Pat, Rev. Kristen, Rev. Tawnee and numerous congregants carrying the church's banner were a visible presence at large demonstrations for **Peace** and against war in Iraq.

The greeting letter available at the MCCNY Welcome Center in the social hall makes no secret of the social justice ministry: *"Whether you desire nothing more than to hear the Word of God and receive Communion beside your LGBT siblings each Sunday, whether you want to sing in the choir in front of the congregation or operate a video camera for cable TV at the rear during Worship, whether you want to feed the hungry, visit the sick and help the homeless, whether you seek a small quiet group for queer-friendly Bible study and prayer or a large noisy group with whom to stand up publicly against violence and injustice [emphasis added], you've come to the right place at MCCNY. Welcome home."*



**AN MCCNY RETREAT** at the idyllic Incarnation Center in Ivoryton, CT.: Rev. Kristen conducted two retreats there in recent months, each attended by the maximum capacity of 40 congregants. (Photo by Deacon Buddy Seaton).

## VOLUNTEER STAFF of The Query Newsletter

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*Unless otherwise noted, Newsletter articles are written by the editor*

**LATE-BREAKING NEWS:** The congregation applauded Luisa Soriano, Lucky Michaels and Tanino Minneci for keeping the Food Pantry and Shelter operating and serving their clients under trying conditions during the Blackout of 2003. The Aug. 24th Holy Union of MCCNY members Mel Bryant, 38, & Bradley Curry, 39, was big news in *The New York Times*, which said: "The Rev. Pat Bumgardner, a minister of the Metropolitan Community Churches, a Protestant denomination, will perform the commitment ceremony."

## UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS:

**9/11 Commemorative Service:** Thursday, Sept. 11, at 7 p.m., marking the second anniversary. Rev. Pat Bumgardner presiding.

**Mid-week Worship:** 7 p.m. every Wednesday in the sanctuary. Ordinand Franc Perry presiding.

**GenderPeople:** Meetings at 12:30 p.m. every Sunday, hosted by Moshay Moses.

**Arcoiris [Rainbow] Latino/a de Cristo:** Circulo de Oracion [Circle of Prayer] the first Sunday of each month at 12 noon in the sanctuary.

**Christians of African Descent:** Meetings monthly . Contact Deacon Carolyn Parker.

**Asian Pacific Islanders:** Meetings the fourth Sunday of each month at 12 noon. Contact Board member Susie Chin.

## HOME COMING SUNDAY

September 21<sup>ST</sup>  
at 10 a.m. and at 7 p.m.