

*Perhaps like us, you were one of the persons who came home from Annual Conference this past summer with a feeling of sadness not only about decisions and maneuvers related to gender and sexuality, but also the tone of the Conference. If so, we are directing this letter to you...*

Sisters and Brothers of the Church of the Brethren,

The Church of the Brethren we have known and loved is not the church that was on display this past summer at Annual Conference. The Church of the Brethren we have known and loved seeks the mind of Christ, respects expressions of conscience, extends hospitality, refuses to do violence to those who are vulnerable, seeks peace among us.

All of these values lead us as well to extend a spirit of acceptance and inclusion toward all who would join company with us as we follow Jesus. For our congregations, this "all" has and will continue to include lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgender persons. And this, we have to tell you, has been a blessing for our congregations! What a wealth of giftedness, commitment, faithfulness, and compassion exists among our LGBT sisters and brothers in relationship to us. We are grateful and we are clear that this is what it means to be the church; this is what it means to be Brethren.

Are you ready to join us? To identify with the radical inclusive love of Jesus? To practice the healing and transforming power of hospitality?

The Supportive Communities Network of the Church of the Brethren includes 24 congregations and other groups. We have been around for more than 15 years. We believe that being open, not closed, is what will save the church. We want the Brethren to be their best and truest selves. We invite you to join us.

Visit the SCN page on the Brethren Mennonite Council web site ([www.bmcglt.org](http://www.bmcglt.org)) to sign on to this letter, or to find resources there to encourage your congregation or group to move toward public openness.

Grace and peace,

**SCN Pastors**

Kurt Borgmann, Manchester Church of the Brethren

Susan Boyer, La Verne Church of the Brethren

Anita Smith Buckwalter, Lansing Church of the Brethren

Roger Eberly, Emerging Welcomers at Turkey Creek Church of the Brethren

Debbie Eisenbise, Skyridge Church of the Brethren

Brian Flory, Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren

Joel Kline, Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren

Kres Lipscomb, Springfield Church of the Brethren

Bonnie Kline Smeltzer, University Baptist and Brethren Church

Christy Waltersdorff, York Center Church of the Brethren

Rusty Curling, Dundalk Church of the Brethren  
Kerby Lauderdale, Peace Church of the Brethren  
John R. Long, Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren  
Janice Kulp Long, Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren  
Melissa Bennett, Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren  
Karen Eberly, Manchester Church of the Brethren  
Jim Chinworth, Manchester Church of the Brethren  
Janet Ober, LaVerne Church of the Brethren  
Tom Hostetler, LaVerne Church of the Brethren  
Jay Steele, Open Circle Church of the Brethren  
Sara Haldeman-Scarr, San Diego First Church of the Brethren

### **Signers**

Vicky Aeschbacher, San Diego First Church of the Brethren  
Ben Bear, Nokesville Church of the Brethren  
Shirley J. Boyer, LaVerne Church of the Brethren  
Margie Dougherty, Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren  
Nancy Eikenberry, Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren  
Steve Eikenberry, Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren  
Doug Eller, Peace Church of the Brethren  
Jan Eller, Peace Church of the Brethren  
Patrick Fiegenbaum, Peace Church of the Brethren  
Kathy Fry-Miller, Manchester Church of the Brethren  
Paul Fry-Miller, Manchester Church of the Brethren  
Ann Hartsough, Manchester Church of the Brethren  
John Hartsough, Manchester Church of the Brethren  
Larry Klingler, Olivet Church of the Brethren  
Allen Krall, Springfield First Church of the Brethren  
Tina Rieman, First Mennonite Church of San Francisco  
Martin R. Rock, BMC Founder, Washington, DC  
Janel Sprunger, Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren  
Matt Sprunger, Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren  
Bill Weybright, Goshen City Church of the Brethren  
Susan Weybright, Goshen City Church of the Brethren  
Eileen Wilson, Peace Church of the Brethren  
Marcia Wright, Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren  
Phillip Wright, Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren

E-mail [scnletter@bmclgbt.org](mailto:scnletter@bmclgbt.org) to add your name and congregation to the list.