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BRETHREN MENNONITE COUNCIL
FOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL
AND TRANSGENDER INTERESTS

BMC NewsNet
May 2013

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1. Congregations Join SCN

BMC is pleased to welcome two new congregations to the Supportive Communities Network as publicly affirming of lgbt members:



[The Modesto Church of the Brethren](#) in Modesto, California, by unanimous vote, joins SCN as a publicly affirming congregation. Their welcome statement begins with the words, "Believing that God's unbounded love and grace, as taught by Jesus, are offered to all and meant to be shared and celebrated by all..." Consistent with its concern for social justice in its many forms, in 2012 the congregation went live with a solar system that currently provides all of the electricity demands of the church. Welcome Modesto COB!

[The McPherson Church of the Brethren](#) in McPherson, Kansas, has also voted to join SCN as a publicly affirming congregation. This vote is the culmination of a long educational and discernment process initiated by a deeply committed group of church members who were parents with lgbt children, supporters, and lgbt people themselves. McPherson is the 4th Brethren congregation closely associated with a Brethren college to join SCN. The others are La Verne, Manchester, and Stone Church of the Brethren. Welcome McPherson COB!



If you would like to learn how to help your church become a welcoming congregation, please contact Carol Wise at bmc@bmclgbt.org. We can provide resources, support and help connect you with other congregations.

2. Report on Pennsylvania Trip

BMC's executive director, Carol Wise, recently traveled to Pennsylvania where she enjoyed the rich hospitality of the [Germantown Mennonite Church](#) (an SCN congregation), met with local BMCers, preached on Sunday morning, and met with area congregations who were interested in either joining SCN or initiating a welcoming process. Carol also traveled to Akron, Pennsylvania, where she presented "How Welcoming Congregations Grow" at the Akron Mennonite Church. The event, which was sponsored by the [Welcoming Dialogue Group in Lancaster](#) (an SCN community), drew over eighty people representing about fifteen different congregations. It was very encouraging to note the high level of interest as well as the exciting work that is being done by individuals and congregations committed to lgbt justice.

3. Connecting Families East



Sheri Hostetler, pastor of the [First Mennonite Church in San Francisco](#) (an SCN congregation), will be the resource person for the Connecting Families East Weekend, scheduled for May 17-19 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center in Mt. Pleasant, Pennsylvania. Sheri is an engaging and delightful person who will reflect upon the theme, *Loving Our Neighbors as Ourselves*. Connecting Families have been meeting since 1988 and provide a welcoming space for families with LGBTQ members and LGBTQ people to share experiences related to sexual minority issues as they affect our families, friends, ourselves, and our churches. All are invited to this weekend of relaxation, support, and sharing. [Click here](#) to see a brochure and to register for this exciting weekend – you'll be glad that

you did!

4. Kaleidoscope News

A group of students at Eastern Mennonite University completed a video project called "Gay for a Day." The video documents the reactions of people when two same-gender students hold hands in public, and includes reflections of the student participants in the project and a queer EMU alum.

View [part one](#) and [part two](#)!



5. Community News



BMC would like to recognize **Christine Kaufmann, Montana State Senator** from Helena, MT. She is the first openly LGBTQ State Senator of Montana. Before serving as a State Senator, she was a State Representative for three terms. Since the 1980s, she has been active in leadership roles for numerous social justice causes including human rights and environmental, women, and LGBTQ rights. [Watch](#) Christine voice her support for Senate Bill 107, which passed in

April. [Click here](#) to read more about Christine.

Congratulations to BMC's Kaleidoscope Coordinator, Reuben Sancken, who is one of twelve new students to be accepted into the Discipleship Project at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Project offers a full ride scholarship, a \$12,000 annual stipend, and provides opportunities to meet regularly with faculty mentors, engage community leaders, visit vibrant congregations. In addition, as a Project cohort, Reuben will visit an international site during the final year of his degree. Reuben will begin work in his M.Div. program at Christian Theological Seminary in the fall. He does BMC proud!

Congratulations are also in order for Kay Guyer, who will begin as BMC's Kaleidoscope Coordinator in August of this year. Not only is she graduating from Manchester University this month, but she has also been selected to be a Youth Steward at the 10th World Council of Churches Assembly in Busan, Republic of Korea. At the Assembly, Kay will join other young adults from around the world and assist in worship, plenary productions, communications and other support tasks for the event. We celebrate this honor with Kay.

Mennonite Church USA Convention and **Church of the Brethren Annual Conference** are coming up. We will be releasing a full schedule of BMC related events for both these gatherings soon. Look for a special conference NewsNet!

6. It Just Keeps Growing

Rhode Island joins its surrounding states by becoming the 10th state in the US to offer marriage equality. Can you name the others?*

Uruguay, New Zealand and France join the list of countries that practice marriage equality. Can you name the others? **

In addition, same-sex marriage is legally recognized by three Native American tribal jurisdictions: Oregon's Coquille Tribe (2008), Washington State's Suquamish Indian Tribe (2011) and Michigan's Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians (2013).

7. Travel

May 17-19 - Carol to Connecting Families East, Mt. Pleasant, PA

May 18-21 - Reuben to Volunteers Exploring Vocation, Chicago, IL

June 28-July 2 - Carol to Church of the Brethren Annual Conference, Charlotte, NC July 1-6 -

Carol and Reuben to Mennonite Church USA Convention, Phoenix, AZ

If we're going to be in your area, let us know! We'd love to meet with you.

BMC Staff

[Carol Wise](#) - Executive Director, SCN Coordinator

[Reuben Sancken](#) - Kaleidoscope Coordinator, BMC Volunteer

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