



[Click to view this email in a browser](#)



BMC NewsNet January/February 2013

- 1. Love's Obedience**
- 2. New SCN Communities Welcomed**
- 3. Denominational Conferences**
- 4. Superstorm Sandy Clean-Up**
- 5. BMC Board Meeting**
- 6. Kaleidoscope News**
- 7. Job Opening – BMC Kaleidoscope Coordinator**
- 8. Other News**
- 9. Thank you!**
- 10. Travel**

1. Love's Obedience

Acting on an idea presented at a Progressive Brethren Gathering, a document entitled *Love's Obedience* was developed to provide a way for pastors, individuals and congregations to bear public witness to LGBT inclusion. In signing on, pastors indicate their embrace of marriage equality and their refusal to deny services to a couple based simply upon gender or sexual orientation. Drawing from the guidance of the Annual Conference Statement, *The Church and Christian Citizenship* that affirms God's love that "must include concern for justice, liberty and peace for all," the statement *Love's Obedience* reads:

In this time in history, our affirmation of God's love for the world calls us to affirm the sacred goodness and equality of people of every sexual orientation and gender identity, and to seek for all people the same good life that any of us wish for ourselves, including the possibility of marriage. For these reasons, we reject the barriers of discrimination and injustice that deny to LGBT people the blessing and support of the church as they seek to covenant with one another in faithful relationship...

In every era, the gospel challenges persons of conscience and faith to take risks for the sake of justice. *Love's Obedience* offers an opportunity to stand on the side of love. Pastors, individuals and congregations are invited to affirm this statement of conscience and intent with their signature. [Click here](#) to read the full document and add your signature.

2. New SCN Communities Welcomed



BMC is very pleased to welcome the [Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship](#) and [Open Table Cooperative](#) as the newest members of the Supportive Communities Network (SCN). The Fellowship engaged in a lengthy process of discernment, arriving by consensus at a statement of welcome that begins with the profoundly simple declaration, "Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship welcomes as beloved children of God all who enter here." Open Table Cooperative was established to "empower progressives within and beyond the Church of the Brethren...to

proactively move the COB forward into Christ's new kin-dom." The community is a strong advocate for all those at the margins of the church, and works to foster an environment where "each person is treated with the attentive, compassionate respect that all human beings deserve. We are delighted to welcome Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship and Open Table Cooperative to



the SCN community!

3. Denominational Conferences

We are please to announce that BMC's application for an exhibit space at the 2013 Church of the Brethren Annual Conference has been approved. This marks the second year that BMC will have a booth at the conference. Last year's booth was a place of joyful gathering and friendship as people and conversations overflowed the booth and spilled into the aisles. We look forward to another positive experience.

BMC's application for booth space at the MCUSA Conference in Phoenix has sadly been denied. However, we were invited to present one of the seminar topics that we submitted, entitled *Bullying in the Church: Strategies to End It*. The seminar will explore bullying behaviors, identify the characteristics of bullies and their targets, and offer specific intervention strategies to open paths toward reconciliation and healing.

4. Superstorm Sandy Clean-Up

[Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship](#), an SCN congregation, invites the broader BMC/SCN community to consider volunteering time to assist with rebuilding and clean-up following Superstorm Sandy. Please contact the BMC office if you are willing to volunteer so that we can work with Mennonite Disaster Services to coordinate dates and a specific project. This would be a wonderful way for our community to share our resources and commitment to a kinder and more humane world.

5. BMC Board Meeting

The BMC board enjoyed the hospitality of [Assembly Mennonite](#) and [Goshen City Church of the Brethren](#) as they met in Goshen, Indiana on January 11-13. A BMC community potluck was held on Friday night and then the board met all day on Saturday and into the evening. Agenda items included conversation about the status of the welcoming movement, financial reports, preparation for summer denominational conferences and various BMC community events. Board member Brenda Dyck ([Calgary Inter-Mennonite](#)) preached at Assembly Mennonite on Sunday morning while Kaleidoscope Coordinator Reuben Sancken worshiped with [Southside Fellowship](#) and formally welcomed them to SCN.

6. Kaleidoscope News

In January, Reuben Sancken visited Goshen College. There he met with Prism, the school's support group for lgbtq identified current students. As a queer alumnus of Goshen, he shared about his experience while attending the school and what his life has been like since graduation. Members of Prism shared about their current experience on campus. Reuben also had the opportunity to meet with the faculty sponsors for Prism and Advocates, the lgbtq and ally advocacy club.

During the same trip, Reuben traveled to Elkhart and met with the committee for Jubilee House (the name of the Elkhart Mennonite Voluntary Service unit) to discuss lgbt inclusion within the unit. To read more about the meeting, check out the [VS house bus tour blog](#) and the [Coming Out Strong blog](#).

7. Job Opening – BMC Kaleidoscope Coordinator



Are you looking for a meaningful experience following graduation? The Kaleidoscope Coordinator is a full-time one or two year volunteer position at BMC that provides support, resources and programming for Mennonite and Brethren lgbtqa youth and young adults, and assists with general office duties. The position offers an opportunity to travel, to learn about how a non-profit runs, to experience the joys of living in Minnesota, and most importantly, to make a difference in individual lives and within the church. This position will be available August 2013. If you are interested or know someone who might be, please contact Carol Wise at bmc@bmclgbt.org. BMC is recognized as a placement site by [Lutheran Volunteer Corps](#) and the [Volunteer Ministries of the United Church of Christ](#). LVC is currently accepting applications for its second round of placements, so if you are interested, please submit your application to LVC as soon as possible.

8. Other News

The LGBTQ Parenting Network at the Sherbourne Health Center in Toronto has just released [*Transforming Family: Trans Parents and their Struggles, Strategies, and Strengths*](#). The report is based upon interviews with trans or gender queer parents and addresses the effects of societal transphobia, as well as the creative ways that trans parents and their children cope with unfriendly environments. The report ends with several recommendations to address needs identified by participants.



Please keep Chris Bohlander and Zemir Magalhaes of Goias, Brazil, in your hearts and prayers as they await a judges' decision regarding the legal adoption of their son, Aparecido, who has been with them for seven years. According to Chris, while lgbt adoption in Brazil is not unprecedented, it is also rare. They believe they will be the first bi-national gay couple to adopt in their state. When asked by the judge why he wanted to live with Chris and Zemir, Aparecido responded, "Because they are my dads." Of course. We send Aparecido, Zemir and Chris

our love and support.

9. Thank you!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to BMC during 2012. We value your support and appreciate your contributions. BMC is non-profit organization and your gifts are tax exempt. [Click here](#) if you would like to make a donation to BMC. We thank you!

10. Travel

February 12-14 - Carol to La Verne, CA – Progressive Brethren Council Meeting

February 17 – Carol preach at La Verne

March 9-10 - Reuben to Madison, WI

April 12-15 – Carol to Philadelphia and Lancaster, PA

April 14 – Carol preach at Germantown Mennonite Church

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

To subscribe or change your email address, send us an [email](#).

To unsubscribe, click the link below.

Donations to BMC can be made [online](#), or by sending a check to PO Box 6300, Minneapolis, MN 55406. Your contributions make a difference. Thank you for your generous support!

If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please reply to this message with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line or simply click on the following link: [Unsubscribe](#)

BMC
P.O. Box 6300
Minneapolis, 55406
US



[Read](#) the VerticalResponse marketing policy.

