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BMC NewsNet May 2014

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1. Attention Anabaptist LGBTQA Loving People - Save the Date!!!

Circle November 21-23, 2014 on your calendar and start preparations to be in Chicago, Illinois, for an amazing gathering of the Anabaptist LGBTQA community. The event will be held at the Cenacle Retreat and Conference Center in downtown Chicago. It is being planned and sponsored by representatives from BMC, Pink Menno and the Inclusive Pastors. Jen Yoder, whose imaginative mind gave birth to Pink Menno, is chairing the planning committee, and Hannah Klaassen is taking care of local logistics. Please contact Carol Wise at BMC (bmc@bmclgbt.org) with suggestions for workshops, presenters, activities, etc.

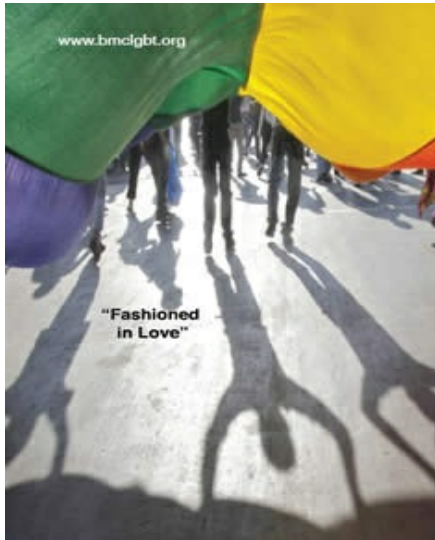
2. Connecting Families

There is still room for you at the [Connecting Families East Retreat](#) weekend, coming up on May 16-18 at the Laurelville Mennonite Church Center in Mt. Pleasant, Pennsylvania. The weekend will feature Ted Swartz and his new play titled, "Learning to Play," a reflection upon a father's and congregation's journey when a son comes out as gay. The weekend offers a safe space for those with family members who are LGBTQ and LGBTQ people to meet for conversation, support and sharing.

3. Trans-Queering the Bible

Our United Methodist colleagues at [Reconciling Ministries Network](#) (RMN) have made available a series of bible study sessions from their national event that feature [Peterson Toscano](#), a self-described "Quirky Queer Quaker performance artist and scholar." Toscano explores the stories of gender non-conforming biblical characters in a way that is both playful and powerful. RMN has also developed a discussion guide to accompany the videos. [Access both here.](#)

4. Fashioned in Love DVD Released!



From BMC and the Welcoming Dialogue Group of Lancaster, PA is the two-disk DVD set "Fashioned in Love: Biblical and Theological Foundations for Inclusion." These DVDs, great for congregations and discussion groups, feature Pastor Megan Ramer's testimony to the congregational life of Chicago Community Mennonite Church and her theological analysis of human sexuality. You may read a transcript of her presentation [here](#).

The "Fashioned in Love" DVD set is available for \$10 plus \$5 shipping and handling from the BMC office. To order a copy, send a \$15 check to Brethren Mennonite Council for LGBT Interests, PO Box 6300, Minneapolis, MN 55406 with "Fashioned in Love DVD" in the memo line. Or, make a \$15 [online donation](#) and request the DVD at bmc@bmclgbt.org.

5. Are you interested in planning a "Dancing at the Wall" regional gathering?

In the midst of momentum towards change in the Mennonite Church, the more invested we become in working for that change, the more frustrated and hurt we can feel when change doesn't happen quickly enough. With many in the Church harnessing the fear and anxiety they experience in response to diverse sexualities and gender identities, it's important to remind ourselves of the joy that accompanies becoming a welcoming, affirming Church.

Justin Yoder and Patrick Ressler are encouraging others to lead regional gatherings to refresh all of us with the joy of worshiping and fellowshiping together—and creating a definitively safe and welcoming place for us to gather and renew our spirits. They want to invite you to help lead a regional hour-long gathering to revitalize your community with the joy and hope of (one of these days) becoming a welcoming and affirming Church to all.



Their hope is that by "Dancing at the Wall" together, the Church can claim the joy and hope of our spirituality—and the blessings that come in creating something new (as many churches and communities have already done).

Anyone interested in more information can contact Patrick Ressler at ressler.patrick@gmail.com.

6 . Specific Resources Needed for Along the Arc

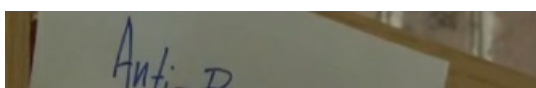
Thank you to those who have already submitted writing to Along the Arc: Worship and Ritual for Welcoming Communities. We are excited about how the resource is taking shape. In order to give the project a powerful scope, we still need Brethren and Mennonite writers for some specific contributions:

- A prayer, litany or service on coming out
- A prayer, litany or reading for queer youth
- A ritual acknowledging reconciliation after brokenness
- A reading in celebration of lgbtq people

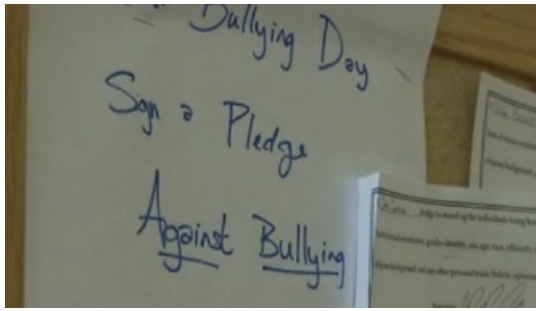
Email bmc@bmclgbt.org if you are interested in making a contribution.

7. Kaleidoscope Schools Update

Bridgewater College



Leaders of Bridgewater College Allies, Jea Bonham and Hannah Batdorf, made strides to reduce bullying on campus by inviting students



and professors to sign a pledge. [Over 200 people signed the statement](#) which read, "I pledge to stand up for individuals being harassed on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, sex, age, race, ethnicity, nationality, religious background, and any other personal traits/beliefs/opinions." Organizer Jea Bonham says, "You can't just have somebody being belligerent with somebody else and affecting their mental health and maybe even physical health." Based on the success of this initiative, hopes

exist to extend the pledge to the community in the future.

Goshen College

Goshen College is pursuing Hispanic Serving Institution status, a designation which will welcome more Hispanic students to the College and potentially increase resources for intercultural development. In order to dispel false stereotypes about intolerance between the Hispanic and lgbtq community, GC Open Letter has developed a series of graphics titled [Fully Diverse, Fully Equal](#). In addition to the graphic pictured below, the Fully Diverse, Fully Equal series is an [open album on Facebook](#).

Why do you support Goshen College becoming a Hispanic Serving Institution AND welcoming LGBTQ people as faculty and staff?



Samuel Aponte, current Goshen College student

"As a student attending Goshen College, I was astounded at how diverse the campus was. Sadly, however, I was most astonished at how the campus defined diversity. I always thought diversity meant having various forms of people, which meant not only backgrounds, but beliefs. The school has shown me, through its denial of hiring LGBTQ people, that this is not so at Goshen College. How can diversity truly take place when not every step is being taken towards it? By skipping such steps, the diversity which we are seeking becomes nothing more than a gathering of different people organized by the color of their skin. Therefore, in order for diversity to truly exist, we must take such steps regardless of how difficult it may be. By allowing LGBTQ professionals to work within this school setting, greater diversity can be achieved."

Lizzy Diaz, Goshen College alumna

"As a Latina, I am a strong advocate for the rights of my Latino community. As an advocate of the Latino community, it only makes sense for me to also be an advocate for the LGBTQ community. It would be hypocritical for me to strive for the equality of one group but deny support to another. Coming from a marginalized group of people, I know the pain that comes with being excluded—I don't want ANYONE to have to feel that way. I understand that there are individuals that feel religiously inclined to not support a fair hiring policy, but the hiring of individuals should not have anything to do with a person's color, ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation, or gender identity. I know so many LGBTQ individuals that would be more than capable to teach and be role models for our students. It is not simply enough to thirst and hunger for righteousness, we are called to act it out! What is right and what is just is for all to feel accepted at the welcome table."



gcopenletter.org



facebook.com/gcopenlettersigners

In other news at Goshen, hellfire preaching was met with a student-organized hymn sing on April 24th. Leader of Goshen College Advocates, Bobby Switzer, said "We are a strongly religious school. The students are very spiritual, and we like to sing... Love is stronger than hate. That was our message." Coverage of the story, including footage of the hymn sing and an interview with preacher Chris LePelley of Open Air Holiness Ministries may be found [here](#).



8. Community News

Congratulations to Amy Yoder McGloughlin and the Germantown Mennonite Church. Amy, who has been serving as the pastor at Germantown, will be officially ordained by the congregation on Sunday, May 18th.

Congratulations to Anne Breckbill, who will graduate with a Master of Social Work from St. Catherine's College this month. Anne has served as a past President of BMC and has been a long time advocate for BMC.

Congratulations to Jen Yoder, who has just been hired as the new Communications & Engagement Director for [Christian Peacemaker Teams](#) (CPT). Way to go, Jen!

BMC Staff

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

[Kay Guyer](#) - Kaleidoscope Coordinator, BMC Volunteer

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