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BMC NewsNet

March 2012

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New Outspoken! [Click here](#) to read new BMC board member Sarah Klaassen's sermon "The Beloved One(s)"

1. Donations needed!

We need your help! It has been a busy year for BMC. The number of supportive congregations is growing, campus groups are becoming more active, requests for materials are escalating and more and more people are coming out as allies and friends. In short, we are growing! With new opportunities for growth, we are in greater need of donations to support the cost of travel, resources and events. Please consider making a contribution to BMC, especially if you have never given before. [Click here](#) to make a tax deductible contribution, or send a check to BMC, Box 6300, Minneapolis, MN 55406. Thank you so much for your support!

2. Board Meeting

The BMC board welcomed three new members, elected officers, and tended to organizational business at its February meeting in Lombard, Illinois. The York Center Church of the Brethren served as the gracious host for the meeting. New to the board are Sarah Klaassen (Columbia, MO), Mia Miller (North Manchester, IN) and Todd Steele (Fort Wayne, IN), replacing outgoing board members Ralph McFadden and Glenn Kauffman. BMC is very grateful to Ralph and Glenn for their leadership and service on the board.

New officers are: Katie Hochstedler, President; Mia Miller, Vice President; Todd Steele, Treasure; and Susan Boyer, Secretary.

The board spent considerable time discussing safety and program concerns for the upcoming Church of the Brethren Annual Conference, where BMC will have a booth and insight session. A thorough description of BMC's safety plan and activities for the Conference will be posted in the near future.

3. Progressive Brethren Council Meeting

For four years BMC, Womaen's Caucus, and Voices for an Open Spirit have worked together to sponsor an annual Progressive Brethren Gathering. With the formation of Feast of Love, it was decided that it would be wise to form a Progressive Council comprised of two representatives from each of the four groups that would work together to share information, support one another, avoid needless duplication, and work together on selected projects. The Council met for its first meeting on February 22-23 in La Verne, California. The group reviewed progress made on agenda items from the 2011 Progressive Gathering, shared what is happening within our various organizations, discussed plans for Annual Conference and the next Progressive Gathering, and agreed to meet quarterly for phone conferences. It was a rich and valuable meeting.

4. Pastoral Openings at SCN Congregations

Two SCN (Supportive Communities Network) congregations are seeking qualified candidates (including lgbt candidates) to fill pastoral positions:

[The Mennonite Congregation of Boston](#), celebrating its 50 anniversary this year, is seeking a part time pastor who will lead worship, provide pastoral care, facilitate the expression of leadership skills within the congregation, and provide encouragement for growth and peace and justice concerns. Interested individuals are invited to email mcob.psc@gmail.com for additional information.



[Assembly Mennonite](#) in Goshen, Indiana, is seeking a pastor (.65 FTE) to serve with two other pastors in a team ministry. A strong interest in collaborative ministry, pastoral care, worship, peace and justice and community building is essential. Interested candidates may contact the chair of the search committee at: maryyoderholsopple@gmail.com.

5. Save the Date!

The 2012 Progressive Brethren Gathering will be held October 26-28 at the La Verne Church of the Brethren in La Verne, California. This promises to continue the tradition of fine speakers, spirited conversation, good food and excellent fellowship. Be sure to save the date on your calendar!

6. Connecting Families

Connecting Families East and Connecting Families West will soon be meeting! Connecting Families retreats offer a safe space for families with lgbt members to gather for support, conversation, education, renewal and fun. There may still be space available. [Click here](#) to go to our homepage. The brochures of these events, including information about registration can be downloaded from the "Coming Events" section.

Connecting Families West will take place on March 30th-April 1st at Camp Myrtlewood in Myrtle Point, OR.

Connecting Families East will take place on April 20th-22nd at Pearlstone Conference and Retreat Center in Reisterstown, MD.



7. Kaleidoscope News

The LGBTQ student groups on the Mennonite and Church of the Brethren campuses are actively engaging their schools. Many are leading “Safe Zone” training and discussing transgender topics. Students from Juniata College’s All Ways of Loving (AWoL) and Trans* Parachute United (T*PU) groups led a transgender discussion event where over forty people attended. Conrad Grebel’s QuAQ (Queer, Allied, and Questioning) recently had a transgender speaker. Bluffton University’s Safe Spaces group will be leading a workshop using theater to look at LGBTQ safety. Exciting work is happening on Mennonite and Brethren campuses!

8. Reuben Returning another Year

Reuben Sancken reapplied for the position of Kaleidoscope Coordinator and was approved for another year of service through Lutheran Volunteer Corps. We are delighted that Reuben has decided to give another year of service to BMC. He is currently working on developing a mentor project for college groups, connecting college student leaders through Facebook, and exploring ways to make Mennonite Volunteer Service houses more LGBTQ friendly.

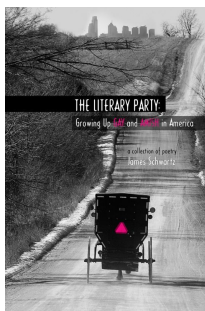
9. Lutheran Volunteer Corps Mid-Year Retreat Training

Reuben, Carol, and Emily Hamilton, a Lutheran Volunteer Corps volunteer working for Lutherans Concerned North America, led a day-long workshop at Rock River Retreat Center in Webster City, IA for Lutheran Volunteer Corps volunteers of the Twin Cities, MN and Omaha, NE. The workshop focused upon the dynamics of heterosexual, cisgender privilege and very practical ways of addressing awkward situations of transphobia or homophobia. We were encouraged by the enthusiasm and active engagement of those attending the workshop!

If you are interested in having this workshop presented at your congregation, school, or work setting, please contact Carol at the BMC office, 612.343.2060 or email bmc@bmclgbt.org.

10. EMU Student Joins Soulforce

Christian Parks, a student at Eastern Mennonite University who is also active in the Pink Menno movement, will join the Soulforce Equality Ride for 2012. The Equality Ride tours North America visiting schools that openly discriminate against LGBTQ students and allies in order to encourage dialogue and support change. Follow this [link](#) to make a donation to support Chris and Soulforce’s ministry. Congratulations Chris!



11. New Book about Gay Amish Experience

Poet James Swartz has come out with *The Literary Party: Growing Up Gay and Amish in America*. It is a book of poetry and short stories related to his experience growing up in a Michigan Amish community. It is available for kindle and paper back from Amazon.com.

12. Marriage Equality Moving

Washington and Maryland are the newest states to enact marriage equality in the past two months. In signing the bill, Washington governor Jan Gregoire said, “As governor for more than seven years, this is one of my proudest moments, and most surely today is a proud day in the history of the

Legislature and the State of Washington. It is a day historians will mark as a milestone for equal rights. A day when we did what was right, we did what was just, and we did what was fair.”

Internationally, Denmark has become the 11th country offering full marriage equality. Their laws will go into effect in June 2012. Can you name the other 10 countries with marriage equality?* (answer at bottom of page)

13. Travel

March 30-April 1: Carol to Connecting Families West in Bridge, Oregon

April 13-14: Carol to Richmond, IN for Bethany's Presidential Forum

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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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!

*Canada, South Africa, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Iceland, Argentina

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