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BMC NewsNet  
June 2013

## Conference/Convention Special Edition

### Church of the Brethren Annual Conference Charlotte, NC

**SATURDAY - TUESDAY, June 29 - July 2**

#### **BMC Booth (Exhibit Hall)**

We're back for another fun year! "In Our Midst" is the theme of the BMC booth, which will focus upon the congregations and communities that are part of the Supportive Communities Network (SCN) as publicly affirming of lgbtq people. SCN is expanding rapidly and is an exciting area of growth, strength, and gracious hospitality. We will have a "double wide" booth again this year, and invite people to stop by to relax, chat, peruse resources, and just hang out for awhile in a welcoming and warm space. Please contact [Carol Wise](#) if you are available to help staff the booth.



#### **TUESDAY, JULY 2**

#### **SCN Offering - How Welcoming Congregations Grow (12:30 - 1:30, Room 207 B-C)**

The affirmation of lgbt people is one of the defining social and religious issues of our times. Momentum is rapidly shifting as more lgbt people come out, as young adults challenge attitudes of discrimination, and as welcoming congregations find their theological voice. What is happening within the welcoming movement? What does it mean to be a welcoming congregation? Why is this an important step for a congregation to take? What are the risks and opportunities? This workshop, presented by Carol Wise from BMC, will explore the dynamics of lgbt inclusion as well as offer an opportunity to bring your questions and experience to the conversation.

#### **BMC/SCN Worship - A Celebration of Change! (4:15 - 5:30, Room 209 A/B Convention Center)**

Come join your progressive companions for a time of worship and celebration guaranteed to bring a sense of meaning, joy, and connectedness after the long days of Annual Conference. We'll rejoice at the ten new congregations who have joined SCN in the past year, sing some good songs, revel in some insightful reflections, and delight in the goodness of our community.

### **Mennonite Church USA Convention Phoenix, AZ:**

An array of activities will be held at the Pink Menno Room, located in the Renaissance Hotel close to the Convention Center. A complete description of seminars and times will be posted on the BMC and Pink Menno websites as schedules become finalized:

## **Inclusive Worship Service - Tuesday @ 7:30**

Coordinated by the Open Letter Pastors, this worship service will celebrate the spirit and energy of the welcoming movement. The worship service will be held at the Renaissance Hotel. Come early to get a seat!

## **Seminars**

All seminars will be held in the Pink Menno room at the Renaissance Hotel. All are welcome and encouraged to participate. In addition to the websites, a complete listing of times and content will be posted at the Pink Menno room.



**Sexual Ethics Beyond the Rules** (Sheri Hostetler, First Mennonite Church in San Francisco)

**Using Our Collective Voice** (Open Letter Pastors)

**Queering the Bible** (Chris Parks, EMU)

**Gender 101** (Reuben Sancken, BMC Kaleidoscope Coordinator)

**Organizing in Mennonite Colleges** (Pink College Panel)

**Beyond Pink: Intersections of Oppression** (Tim Nafzinger and Chris Parks)

**Immigration and LGBT Rights** (presenter TBA)

**Coming Out Strong** (Panel moderated by Katie Hochstedler)

**How Welcoming Congregations Grow** (Carol Wise, BMC)

## **Pink Hymn Sings**

The infamous Pink Hymn Sings are back with more songbooks than ever! Under the musical direction of Patrick Ressler, Pink Mennos and friends are invited to gather at the Convention Center at various times throughout the conference to sing favorite hymns as a witness to healing and welcome.

## **Pink Menno Room**

The Pink Menno Room will be open throughout conference as a safe place to gather and relax. The space will include resource and various display tables. In addition, **Pink Gear**, including this year's conference tee-shirt, will be available for sale.



## **Strangers No More Project**

The Strangers No More Project will travel to a variety of Mennonite communities photographing anyone who identifies as non straight and/or non cisgender. To learn more about this powerful project, [click here](#).

## **Eugene Mennonite Church joins SCN**

We are pleased to announce that [Eugene Mennonite Church](#) in Oregon is the newest member of the Supportive Communities Network (SCN) as a congregation that publicly affirms the full inclusion of LGBT people. The congregation has a rich peace and social justice history combined with a strong sense of community, service, authenticity, and a "healthy skepticism of power." These values have helped lead them to their decision to join SCN. We are delighted to welcome Eugene Mennonite to SCN!





### **Outspoken – Featured Sermon by Randy Newswanger**

*Hiya! Hiya! Come On In!* is the title of Randy Newswanger's sermon that he preached last month at Community Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. [Click here](#) to read what Randy has to say about what it really means to be a welcoming community.

### **Community News**

**Congratulations to Evan Weins**, who was named honorary youth marshal for the Winnipeg Gay Pride Parade. Evan's efforts to start a Gay Straight Alliance at his high school in Steinbach, Manitoba, were met with a fierce resistance by local religious leaders. Evan stood firm, even in the face of slurs that were shouted at him by other students. To other lgbt students Evan states, "I've gone through a lot of hard times, but I've grown as a person. I want them to know that it's not a bad thing to be yourself, and you don't have to be ashamed to walk down the hallway and say, 'Hey, this is who I am.'"



**Assembly Mennonite Church** in Goshen, Indiana, will host *Toward Equality: A Christian Service of Celebration*, an ecumenical service celebrating the growing movement toward lgbt equality, particularly as evidenced by the fact that the US Supreme Court is ruling on the constitutionality of same sex marriage. The service will be held on June 17 at 8:00 pm. All are welcome.

### **Travel**

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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