



List of Do's and Don'ts for a Congregational Welcoming Process:

Do:

- Make sure the pastor(s) of the church are onboard before beginning the process.
- Appoint a confident and dedicated committee to lead the process, and ensure that all committee members are supportive of becoming a welcoming congregation.
- Pay attention to the pastoral needs of the queer people in your congregation. Consider appointing a person or team whose sole responsibility is unapologetic care for lgbtqia+ people before, during and after the process.
- Include educational information, such as terminology sheets, for congregants.
- Provide time for storytelling from LGBTQ members of the church and/or community, but only if they volunteer to share. Stories from the LGBTQ people are readily accessible online, including BMC's Oral Histories.
- Put in the theological/biblical work, and share it with the congregation.
- Include queer people in the process, in the ways that they feel comfortable being involved.
- Make space for everyone to share their feelings, but protect LGBTQ members from this step, so that they do not need to be present when dissenting opinions are shared.
- Remember: Not all necessary conversations need to be congregation-wide conversations.
- Be clear about the process in which the decision will be made, and follow the church's bylaws.
- Make a plan ahead of time for anyone who may potentially gaslight people or sabotage the process.
- Create a welcome statement that names LGBTQ people and is clear that welcome means full participation on all levels in the church (membership, marriage, ministry, ordination, etc.).
- Offer a celebration service after the congregation has voted to become welcoming.
- Join BMC's Supportive Communities Network.
- Reach out to BMC for support along the way as needed!



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

Don't:

- Be the sole initiator; a group of people should bring the proposition to church leadership.
- Silence hostile voices, but also don't allow them to dominate.
- Allow crossfire dialogue.
- Deviate from the congregational bylaws.
- Draw the process out too long.
- Push queer members to come out, lead the process or participate in ways with which they are uncomfortable.
- Make pastors defend themselves.
- Call the process/discussion an issue or a problem.
- Allow for sabotage/discord.
- Use anonymous feedback.