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Happy Holidays!

Brethren Mennonite Council
for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual
and Transgender Interests

**BMC NewsNet
December 2012**

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1. New SCN Congregation



BMC welcomes Living Stream Church of the Brethren as the newest member of the Supportive Communities Network (SCN). Living Stream is the first online congregation in the Church of the Brethren and streamed its first worship service earlier this month. Audrey deCoursey, founding pastor of the congregation, sees this experience as “a kind of laboratory for exploring worship with new media, where we learn together what draws us to each other,

what soothes our spirits, what uplifts us from our alienation, and what challenges us to grow.” The congregation begins as a welcoming congregation, affirming “the image of God in all persons – of every age, gender identity and expression, race, ability, ethnicity, nationality, class and sexual orientation – and celebrates each person’s call to serve the world and the church.” The congregation worships on Sunday evenings and invites your participation. To join them, or to view recorded services, go to www.livingstreamcob.org.

2. A Tipping Point: Some Reflections on the Recent US Elections

In social change movements there is often a moment known as the tipping point. This is the stage where enough momentum or critical mass has been generated that change becomes nearly inevitable. Many see the recent US elections as a tipping point for lgbt equality in the US as voters approved marriage equality in three states (Washington, Maryland and Maine) and defeated a hostile constitutional amendment barring same sex marriage in Minnesota... How these changes will impact the Church of the Brethren and the Mennonite Church remains to be seen. Leadership that is attentive to social shifts must be increasingly aware that our denominations cannot continue along the same paths upon which we have been merrily traveling...

[Click here](#) to read the full text.

3. BMC Ontario Winter Retreat

The annual BMC Ontario Winter Retreat will take place Friday February 8th - Sunday February 10th 2013 - Mark your calendars! All are welcomed, and fun is guaranteed. More details to follow.

4. 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 LGBTQ 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 (www.lutheranvolunteercorps.org) and the Volunteer Ministries of the United Church of Christ (www.ucc.org/volunteer). LVC is currently accepting applications for its first round of placements, so if you are interested, please submit your application to LVC as soon as possible.



5. Booth Updates

BMC has received notice that its application for an exhibit booth at the next Church of the Brethren Annual Conference has been approved. This marks the second year for a booth.

In October, BMC applied for booth space for this summer's Mennonite Church USA Assembly. To date, we have not yet heard whether our request has been granted.

6. Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) Update

Faced with intense pressure, on June 1, 2012, the General Secretary of the Church of the Brethren withdrew the invitation for BMC to be a BVS placement site, reneging upon a signed covenant. We are pleased to report that, after a long delay, representatives from the BMC board and the Mission and Ministry Board of the Church of the Brethren, will be meeting in February for face to face conversation. Please keep us all in your thoughts and prayers.

7. Germantown Mennonite Follow-up

We reported last month that in a surprise move, the Eastern District Conference in Pennsylvania voted to end the liaison relationship that it had maintained for ten years with Germantown Mennonite Church following the congregation's expulsion as full members from EDC because of their welcome of LGBT people. In response, the Mennonite SCN pastors have met via a conference call and made several decisions, including the drafting of a letter encouraging denominational leadership to take action. In addition, Carol Wise will travel to Germantown in April to preach and share with the congregation. We will provide updates as they become available.



8. Lutheran Volunteer Corps December Workshop

Reuben and Brit Barkholtz, a Lutheran Volunteer working for [Reconciling Works](#), led a half-day workshop in Minneapolis for Lutheran Volunteer Corps volunteers of the Twin Cities. The workshop focused on addressing heterosexual and cisgender privilege and how to be an ally. Reuben was impressed by the active participation and sensitivity of the attendees.

9. Community News



Former BMC board member, artist and teacher Rodney Harder, has joined in a unique partnership with quilter Twila Peachy to create some stunning quilts. [Click here](#) to read *Threads That Bind*, the story of a deep and interesting friendship that has spanned more than 10 years and produced some spectacular art. Twila is now 92, and she and Rodney continue to make quilts together.

Congratulations to Lori Unger and Dora Grace upon their recent wedding in Toronto. We wish them much happiness and love together.

10. Travel

January 11-13: BMC Board in Indiana

January 14-16: Carol in Dallas for a Welcoming Church Program

Leaders Meeting February 3-4: BMC Executive Committee in

Elgin, IL to meet with COB Mission and Ministry Board February

12-17: Carol in La Verne, CA for Progressive Brethren Council

meeting and to preach. *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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