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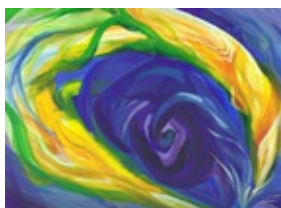


BMC NewsNet September 2013

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1. Inclusive Worship Resource Project Announced

BMC is happy to announce a new participatory writing project, *Along the Arc: Worship and Ritual for Welcoming Communities*. This compilation of prayers, litanies, rituals, blessings, and generational resources will be written by Brethren and Mennonite individuals for use in the broader Supportive Communities Network. Adding an artistic touch, Kay Guyer will paint individual backgrounds for the color booklet. Our greatest hope is that creating this worship resource will fill a great need for inclusive Brethren and Mennonite worship material, strengthen our relationship to one another, and invite congregations and individuals to actively participate in the language and experience of an open church community.



The invitation is out! Are you willing to contribute a piece of your writing? If so, email bmc@bmclgbt.org expressing interest in contributing to *Along the Arc*. Replace this paragraph with your article text. You can also modify the link below to point to your website or place where additional information can be found.

2. Welcome Kay Guyer

BMC is very pleased to welcome Kay Guyer as our new Kaleidoscope Coordinator and full time volunteer. Kay, a recent graduate of Manchester University, brings a varied and very creative set of experiences and talent to her position here. Her artistic flair is already apparent in the design of the BMC banner that was hung at Annual Conference, and in her plans to develop a worship/ritual zeen for SCN communities. Kay has been chosen to be one of a very limited number of youth throughout the globe to serve as a steward for the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches that will meet in Busan, Republic of Korea this fall. It promises to be another rich and inspiring year!

Introducing Kay Guyer, Kaleidoscope Coordinator

I grew up in Woodbury, PA before also finding home in North Manchester, IN, where I studied Peace Studies and Art at Manchester University. Now, I am growing roots in Minneapolis with

BMC! In my first weeks here I am most excited by the possibilities ahead. Among the many possibilities, I am particularly energized to help students apply dynamics of Kingian Nonviolence to the movement for LGBTQ justice on Mennonite and Brethren campuses, compile a creative worship resource, and gain a sense of LGBTQ inclusion in diverse contexts while attending the World Council of Churches Assembly. Already, I sense that working with BMC provides an avenue for my interests in creative nonviolence, art, and working to bring about transformation in the Brethren and Mennonite traditions to merge. I am glad to be on the journey together.

3. Support Your Volunteer

Kay is the 10th full time volunteer for BMC. She joins a proud and very talented group of young adults who have given a year or more of their time to the movement for LGBTQ justice, contributing to the community and welcome within the Mennonite and Brethren denominations. Because neither Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) nor Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) recognizes BMC as a placement site, Kay is serving through [Lutheran Volunteer Corps](#). In addition to placement fees, it costs approximately \$13,000 per year to provide food, housing, health insurance, transportation and a small stipend to support the BMC volunteer.

[Donate here](#) to support the work of the BMC volunteer. Thank you!



4. Covenant Mennonite Fellowship Joins SCN

BMC is very pleased to welcome [Covenant Mennonite Fellowship](#) of Sarasota, Florida, as the newest member of the Supportive Communities Network as a congregation that is publicly affirming of LGBTQ people. Covenant Mennonite is a young, nontraditional and creative congregation that is deeply rooted in its Mennonite tradition and committed to living lives of healing, compassion, peace and justice. The congregation's pastor, Randy Spaulding, came out as a gay man in 2009. He was stripped of his credentials by the Southeast Mennonite Conference, and the congregation was put on notice. After several years of dialogue and discussion with the Conference about the congregation's support of Randy, Covenant Mennonite eventually withdrew its membership from the Southeast Mennonite Conference. They are currently seeking membership in Central District Conference. It is a joy to welcome this justice seeking and genuinely welcoming congregation (now under the pastoral leadership of Jim Miller) to SCN.



5. Denominational Conference Wrap-Up

BMC was present and active at both the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina and the Mennonite Church USA Assembly in Phoenix, Arizona this past summer.

In Charlotte, BMC hosted a booth in the exhibit hall that served as a relaxed collecting space for conference participants. In addition to the booth, BMC also sponsored a session on welcoming congregations and hosted a rich worship service that celebrated the addition of 10 new COB congregations to SCN in the past year. Click [here](#) to read Carol's reflections upon Annual Conference.

Phoenix was in the midst of a horrendous heat wave while the Mennonite Assembly was meeting. BMC joined with [Pink Menno](#) in organizing a conference within a conference, offering a hospitality room, worship service, and well attended workshops that dealt with a variety of topics that included: Coming Out, Sexual Ethics, Immigration and LGBT Rights,

Welcoming Congregations, Intersections of Oppression, Queering the Bible, and Gender 101. Pink gear was as popular as ever, as were the beautiful daily hymn sings organized by Pink Menno. A special photography project titled Strangers No More featured portraits of LGBTQ Mennonites. A highlight of the conference was a very respectful and powerful public witness during a business session, where BMC board chair, Katie Hochstedler, read a [prepared statement](#) that articulated the commitments, concerns and dreams of the welcoming movement.

6. Progressive Brethren Gathering Registration

The next Progressive Brethren Gathering will be held on November 15-17, 2013 at the Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren in Fort Wayne, Indiana. We are pleased to announce that Sharon Groves, Religion and Faith Director for the [Human Rights Campaign](#), will be our main presenter on the theme, Holy Longing: This is My Body. Additional information and registration materials are available at the [Progressive Brethren Online](#) website. Replace this paragraph with your article text. You can also modify the link below to point to your website or place where additional information can be found.

7. Community News

Congratulations to Michelle Burkholder, who was recently called by an overwhelming vote, to be the associate pastor at Hyattsville Mennonite Church, an SCN congregation. Michelle is a graduate of Eastern Mennonite University and United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. She and her wife, Becky Haas, were recently married by Hyattsville pastor Cindy Lapp, and have been active at Hyattsville for approximately four years.

Congratulations to BMC accountant and former board member Ron Brunk, who will marry his partner of more than 19 years, Charles Parker, on September 14 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Marriage equality became a reality in Minnesota on August 1, 2013. BMC wishes Ron and Charles continued love and happiness.

Support of Love's Obedience, a document that emerged from the Progressive Brethren Gathering in support of pastors who officiate at same sex marriages, is gaining momentum. Click [here](#) to add your name to the growing list. Thank you!

8. Odds and Ends

[Indiana Equality Action](#) is seeking full-time Faith Organizers to work against HJR-6, a proposed "Marriage Discrimination Amendment" to Indiana's constitution. Organizers will work to mobilize members of faith communities to prevent the passage of this anti-LGBT bill. Experience in organizing work with faith communities and clergy is required. Positions are available immediately. Salary is commensurate with experience. To apply, send a cover letter and resume to Kyle Megrath at hoosierfreedomjobs@gmail.com.

Law Supporting Same-Sex Marriage Passes the United Kingdom: In July, legislation to allow same-sex marriage in England and Wales was passed by the Parliament of the United Kingdom. In order to provide time for government departments to make necessary changes, the law is not expected to come into full force until 2014. The law provides the right for same-sex couples to marry, couples in civil partnerships to convert to marriage, and married men or women to change their sex without ending their marriage. The United Kingdom is now in the ranks of Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, and Uruguay which have also legalized same-sex marriage.

9. Travel

September 2-5 Carol to COB National Older Adult Conference in North Carolina

October 16-17 Carol to Kansas City, MO for Prairie to Pacific Roundtable meeting

October 18-20 BMC Board meets in Kansas City, MO

October 22-November 10 Kay to Busan, Republic of Korea for the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches

October 31-November 3 Carol and Amy Short to Washington DC and Germantown for

BMC Oral History Project work

November 15-17 Carol and Kay to Progressive Brethren Gathering in Fort Wayne, Indiana

November 17-18 Carol at meeting of COB SCN pastors and board chairs in Fort Wayne, IN;
Kay visiting local colleges

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

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

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