



BMC NewsNet

April/May 2012

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1. BMC Events at COB Annual Conference (July 7-11)

Worship Service of Celebration – Sunday, July 8 (4:30 music, 4:45 worship)



We did it! The [Centenary United Methodist Church](#) has graciously offered their sanctuary to BMC for a worship service to celebrate the welcoming movement and the presence of a BMC booth in the exhibit hall. All are welcome at this joyful and uplifting service honoring the persistence, courage, and hope of the struggle for hospitality and grace within the church.

BMC Dinner – Sunday July 8 (6:00 pm)

A light dinner at Centenary UMC will follow the worship service. Cost is \$10. Please RSVPS to bmc@bmclgbt.org so that we know how many we can expect.

BMC Booth – Exhibit Hall – All Week!

Please stop by the BMC booth for resources, conversation, or just to hang out in a friendly environment. If you would like to help staff the booth, please contact Carol Wise at bmc@bmclgbt.org and we'll get you on the schedule. Thank you!

Insight Session - Welcome Matters: The Experience of SCN Congregations – Tuesday, July 10

Pastors and individuals from SCN Congregations will share about their congregations' embrace of hospitality and reflect upon the many ways that their congregations have been enhanced and strengthened by the presence of openly LGBT people.

SCN Conversations - TBA

This will be an opportunity for supportive individuals to come together to talk, relax, share resources, experiences, and discuss various opportunities for a progressive witness within the church.

Service Project

BMC is working with *The Bridge*, a ministry of Centenary UMC that provides sanctuary for homeless and at-risk people in St. Louis, to offer service during Annual Conference. *The Bridge* serves over

3000 meals weekly and provides a safe place for people to relax, make phone calls, use the internet and find support. Please contact BMC at bmc@bmclgbt.org if you are interested in offering a few hours of service. Details are still being developed.

2. Connecting Families

Connecting Families West and Connecting Families East both met during the month of April and both reported wonderful weekends. This was the first retreat for Connecting Families West. Approximately twenty people met over a rainy weekend at Camp Myrtlewood in Oregon to share stories, relax and laugh together. Connecting Families East met at the Pearlstone Conference Center near Baltimore, where they spent enjoyable time singing under the capable leadership of Randy Spaulding.

Connecting Families offers weekend experiences for LGBT people and their families and supporters to come together for support, education, relaxation and sharing.

3. BMC Community News

Jason Frey, a Mennonite student at Princeton Seminary, invited **Amy Yoder McLaughlin** (pastor) and **John Linscheid** from Germantown Mennonite Church, and **Randy Spaulding**, formerly of Covenant Mennonite in Sarasota, to speak at his school for their BGLASS week (BGLASS is the seminary's queer/allied group). The trio addressed the topic, "Why Queer and Queer Allies Need Each Other." [Click here](#) to read their astute comments.



Congratulations to **Rodney Harder** of New York, whose artwork will be included in an exhibit opening in Glasgow, Scotland this month. The group exhibit is part of the Glasgow International Festival of Visual Arts.



Congratulations to **Brenda Dyck**, who will be retiring at the end of May. Brenda, who has been in ministry for seventeen years, has been the pastor of Calgary Inter-Mennonite Church in Alberta, an SCN congregation that has the distinction of being expelled from three conferences because of its welcoming posture. Brenda is also a valued and beloved member of the BMC Board, a position that she will continue in retirement. We wish her well in this new stage in her life adventure.

Congratulations and much joy to **Elizabeth Bache and Jonathan Bay** upon their recent wedding! The couple currently lives in La Canada Flintridge, California.

BMC extends our sympathies to the family of **Gwen Peachey** of Lititz, Pennsylvania, who died on April 23 after being ill for six months. Gwen was featured on BMC's *Coming Out Strong* DVD as a proud parent of a lesbian daughter. She played an important role in Connecting Families and was beloved for her vibrant spirit, good humor and gracious manner. We will miss her.



If you have news that you would like to share, please send us an email at bmc@bmclgbt.org.

4. No Surprise Here

Yet another research project has found that homophobia is more pronounced in individuals with an unacknowledged attraction to the same sex. A team of researchers from the University of Rochester, University of Essex (England) and University of California in Santa Barbara also noted that this is particularly true of individuals who grew up with authoritarian parents who forbade such desires. Netta Weinstein, the study's lead author states, "Individuals who identify as straight but in psychological tests show a strong attraction to the same sex may be threatened by gays and lesbians because homosexuals remind them of similar tendencies within themselves." Kind of helps to make sense of things in the COB and Mennonite Church, eh? [Click here](#) to read the research project.

5. Coming Out with Positive Support from Parents has Health Benefits

A new study from Boston University School of Public Health has found that 2/3 of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual adults in a Massachusetts sample received positive support from their parents when they came out. These people had lower occurrences of mental health and substance abuse problems than lgb people who were not supported by their parents.

Some findings of the study were that gay and bisexual men who did not have support from parental figures were six to seven times more likely than those supported by parents to develop serious depression and alcohol abuse. In contrast, unsupported lesbian and bisexual women were five times more likely of having serious depression and 11 times more likely to use illegal drugs. These figures resemble the trends found in other studies like the 2009 study by The Family Acceptance Project of San Francisco of lgbt young adults. In that study they also found that positive support from family resulted in less occurrences of depression, reduced chances of getting involved in risky behaviors, and significantly less chance of youth attempting to take their own life. These studies reinforce the significance of parent or guardian positive support for lgbt children. The support has lasting effects on an lgbt person's future health and happiness. [Click here](#) to read about the recent study.

6. State of Gay and Transgender Communities of Color

The Center for American Progress has released a new report detailing the difficult economic, educational and health challenges for gay and transgender people of color, who bear of brunt of the disparities experienced by both the gay communities and communities of color. Compared to their peers, gay and transgender people of color face higher rates of unemployment, lower pay, higher rates of poverty, higher rates of youth homelessness and a greater likelihood of being uninsured. To read the full report, including policy recommendations, [click here](#).

7. United Methodist Love Your Neighbor Campaign



A coalition of six groups, the Common Witness Coalition, has joined to "work for a more inclusive church for lgbt people – always in a broader context that strives for justice around issues of race, gender, global partnerships, peace, stewardship of creation and economic justice." The groups include Affirmation United Methodist, Black Methodists for Church Renewal, Methodist Federation for Social Action, National Federation of Asian American Methodists, Native American International Caucus of the UMC and Reconciling Ministries Network. Please hold them in your thoughts and prayers as they bear witness to love and inclusion at the United Methodist General Conference 2012 meeting, currently being held in Tampa, Florida. To learn more, go to www.gc12.org.

8. Travel

July 7-11: Carol and Reuben to COB Annual Conference in St. Louis, Missouri

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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