

Dear MCC,

Mennonite Central Committee has long worked to bring justice to people struggling in hunger, poverty, war, or environmental destruction. The MCC website says “MCC shares God’s love and compassion for all in the name of Christ by responding to basic human needs and working for peace and justice.” Our Mennonite church and conference have generously given money or kits as well as raised money at our MCC Fall Festival. We are glad we can all work together to lend a hand to people around the world.

But MCC does not always work toward justice for all. One of MCC’s policies (#152) requires sexual celibacy for all personnel outside of a heterosexual marriage relationship during their time of service. This is, at its heart, an unjust policy. We believe MCC is allowing heterosexism and a fear-based policy to obscure the important work that MCC does. LGBTQIA+ people have been hurt, rejected, and forced out of MCC work due to this policy. This is a great loss not only for LGBTQIA+ people and their loved ones, but also for MCC and the church at large.

In May of 2022, the Mennonite Church USA (MCUSA) Special Delegate Session in Kansas City passed the Resolution for Repentance and Transformation. This resolution calls the church to repent for harms done to LGBTQ+ people and calls for broader inclusion of LGBTQ+ people. We at Portland Mennonite Church are in full support of this resolution. Accordingly, we believe MCC staff and service workers should be able to marry and to be in loving relationships regardless of their sexual or gender identity. As MCUSA is a denomination containing many churches and individuals who support MCC, this resolution represents a significant constituent viewpoint and calls for MCC to change.

We would like MCC to change policy #152. Here at Portland Mennonite Church, we’ve spent many years seeking to understand and repair the decades of harm done to LGBTQ+ people and their loved ones. Our theological perspective and church mission statement call us to follow Jesus while “seeking the peace of the city” (Jer. 29:7). We believe in fully accepting LGBTQ+ folks, allowing them to be fully involved in our church including baptism, membership, marriage, leadership and pastoral ministry. We have come to see that this is essential in order for us to fully follow Christ. Our conscience, theological convictions, and commitment to peace and justice call us to urge MCC to change policy #152 and to give equal status to LGBTQ+ folks and their loved ones.

We would very much like to talk with someone from MCC about our concerns. Please contact any one of these persons from the Menno Pride Committee

LaVonne Blowers	lavonneblowers@yahoo.com
Sylvia Shirk	sylviashirk@yahoo.com
Lois Gearhart	loisgearhart@gmail.com
Vange Gerber	vange.g@gmail.com
Pastor Kristen Swartley	kristen@portlandmennonite.org

Sincerely,

Menno Pride Committee and members of Portland Mennonite Church [Signatures on back]