

## Discernment of a welcome statement for CMC

(vote anticipated March 26, 2017)



### **Context: Where did this come from?**

**Strategic Plan: "Engaging Our Future"**

#### **Priority #1 – Hospitality and Welcoming**

*We will embrace diversity and improve our practices related to welcoming and actively including and inviting others into our physical space and spiritual community.*

#### **One of 3 action groups working on priority #1:**

LGBT inclusion group appointed by church board proposed discernment activities and a welcome statement (below).  
*Implementation team: Phil Waite, Becky Horst, Seth Yoder, Marilyn Graber.* More information on CMC website.

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### **Purpose: Why are we doing this?**

We are seeking God's calling for our congregation in this time and this place. How will we extend God's love and grace to LGBT Christians? The goal is not to create a position statement, but to nurture loving and hospitable practices in our congregation.

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### **Discernment activities for all:**

#### **I. Engaging the Bible – Sunday mornings 11-11:45 a.m. in church sanctuary**

**Feb. 5 – "The Bible, Our Bodies and Our Convictions"**

**Feb. 12 – "Sexuality in the Bible"**

**Feb. 19 – "Moral Choices and Challenges in the Church"**

Presentations by Loren Johns, professor at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) and member of Eighth Street Mennonite Church. Based on the book *Human Sexuality in Biblical Perspective*, by Central District Conference, Cascadia Press (*soon to be available in Spanish*). Now in our church library. Cost to purchase via Amazon: \$12.95. All three presentations will be live-streamed and also viewable on the CMC website until the end of March.

#### **II. Story-telling & teaching sessions – Wed. 6:45-7:30 p.m. in Koinonia Rooms**

**Jan. 25 – "Difficult Decisions in CMC's Past: Divorce and Remarriage; Women in Leadership" – Marilyn Graber & others**

**Feb. 1 – "Story-telling from CMC Family Members of LGBT Christians" – Naomi and John Lederach, Phyllis and Bill Miller**

**Feb. 8 – "Biological Basis of Sexuality" – Keith Graber Miller, Goshen College professor**

**Feb. 15 – "Perspectives of CMC Youth and Young Adults"**

**Feb. 22 – "Marriage: An Ever-changing Social Construct" – Phil Waite**

All sessions will include brief table discussion time, with invitation for more extended discussion after 7:30 dismissal. All presentations will be audio-recorded and made available for listening on the CMC website and on CDs the following Sunday.

#### **III. Discussion forum – Sunday March 12, 4 p.m. – Fellowship Hall**

Opportunity to reflect on teaching sessions, ask questions, and directly address the proposed welcome statement. Spanish and ASL interpretation will be provided.

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#### **Proposed welcome statement:**

*We believe that all individuals are created in God's image, and all people, regardless of age, gender, race, citizenship status, abilities, or sexual orientation, are welcome as full participants in the life of our congregation.*

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**Please join your fellow CMCers as we learn and discern together.**