

Affirmation of the Pacific Northwest District's policy regarding LGBTQ+ siblings in ministry

As the board of the Pacific Northwest District Church of the Brethren, we affirm our district's longstanding policy of enthusiastically welcoming, uplifting, and holding as fully equal our LGBTQ+ siblings—including our joyful affirmation and ordination of LGBTQ+ members who answer a call to ministry.

We recognize that, as Paul says in Romans 12, we are a body of many members, rich in diversity and “each... belong[ing] to all the others” (Rom. 12:5). To discriminate, demonize, or exclude an individual along any demographic lines—including but not limited to sexual orientation and gender identity or expression—would not only grievously harm that person in ways counter to Christ's call, it would also diminish our collective Church body. We also heed Paul's reminder that the differences we wield as tools of separation are erased in the light of Christ's universal love: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no longer male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28).

We further recognize that the Church of the Brethren is not of one mind on these issues. The diverse membership of churches and fellowships within the Pacific Northwest District also represents a range of individual and congregational perspectives. Mindful of our denomination's call in the 2008 resolution “Urging Forbearance” that we “commit ourselves to forbearance which recognizes and respects differences of opinion and differing degrees of spiritual insight,” we welcome this diversity and continued discernment on these and other matters.

Within our denomination, Annual Conference has charged district boards “with the authority and responsibility for the credentialing of ministerial leadership for the Church of the Brethren” (“Manual of Organization and Polity,” Ch. 5 p. 2). When an individual is on a path of ministry discernment and a congregation “Invites and/or receives the discerners' exploration of call,” we as a district board will “Oversee the calling and credentialing process” without discrimination of any sort, including discrimination of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression (“Manual of Organization and Polity,” Ch. 5 p. 11).

Affirmed by consensus this 18th day of June, 2024,

Board of the Pacific Northwest District Church of the Brethren

This district board affirmation, along with our collection of materials for discernment around these issues, can be viewed at www.cobpacificnorthwest.org/lgbtq