

# Femailings



Womaen's Caucus of the Church of the Brethren

One Woman, All Women

## ***Annual Conference Highlights***

- Join us in celebrating Women in Ministry at Annual Conference
- We will recognize a Mother of Caucus at the Womaen's Caucus luncheon Monday, July 1, 12:00 noon
- Stop by our booth and weave on the looms or play Words with Womaen
- Please bring your rainbow scarf from last year with you this year!
- Bring, make or send Rainbow Handcrafts
- WC Auction will be held during the luncheon

Womaen's Caucus  
Steering Committee  
Daisy Schmidt, Convener  
Mary Kay Ogden  
Sara Davis

## **Annual Conference**

We are excited about the upcoming Church of the Brethren Annual Conference to be held June 29 – July 3 in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Look for the Progressive Guide to Annual Conference coming soon.

We will be celebrating Women in Ministry at our booth and during our luncheon on Monday, July 1, at noon. You may still purchase tickets or get more information at: [www.brethren.org/ac/](http://www.brethren.org/ac/)

*Luncheon:* Bonnie Kline-Smeltzer, Belita Mitchell and Erin Matteson will join us for a panel discussion, we will present our annual Mother of Caucus award, and we will also host our silent auction. This is our only fundraising event for the year. If you would like to donate items, we will gladly receive them at our booth in the exhibit hall. If you are unable to attend conference this year, please mail your item to:

Daisy Schmidt  
901 W. Wabash Ave.  
Lafayette, IN 47905

*Booth:* We will be weaving stoles, playing Words with Womaen, making rainbow handcrafts and listening to the stories of women's lives.

We would love to include your ribbon and yarn remnants in our weavings. Please feel free to bring them to the booth as early as possible, or you may mail them to Daisy if you are unable to attend in person or run out of room in your suitcase.

*Come visit us at the booth!*

## **Website Update**

The website is getting a spruce up! Thanks to Jonathan Bay our new public relations person.

No longer will [www.womaenscaucus.org](http://www.womaenscaucus.org) or [www.progressivebrethren.org](http://www.progressivebrethren.org) be behind the times.

We're fixing it up and giving you all the up to date information you could want. Our vision is a sleek looking website that is user friendly and has everything right at your finger tips.

Our skeleton site is currently up and will have just the bare bones. We'll fill it in as the weeks go by. The goal is to have a working and beautiful site by Annual Conference.

## IN REMEMBRANCE

### Caucus Remembers Mary Blocher Smeltzer

---

My name is Mary Kay Ogden. I have been inspired and influenced by Mary Blocher Smeltzer for over fifty years.

As a twelve year old in Elgin, Illinois, I learned to know Mary and her family as members of the Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren and to be impressed with Mary as a social activist. She invited my father (and I accompanied him) to a meeting about low income housing. It was quickly apparent that this wife, mother, and teacher made time to work on behalf of the poor and marginalized.

As a high school student, I served on the church youth cabinet, and it was Mary who took on the responsibility for advising that high school youth group and often leading the Sunday School class. Her forthright questions, during the civil rights movement, such as “Do you know or have any black friends?” caused us to think and get right to the heart of issues.

As a sophomore at La Verne College, I was awarded the Janet Smeltzer scholarship. Not only was it a help financially, it was a testament to the foresight Ralph and Mary had in honoring the life of their young daughter, by providing assistance to young women seeking a college education, when their own daughter’s life had been cut short so tragically.

It is the establishment of Womaen’s Caucus that earned Mary the respect, and admiration of women and men across the denomination. Not that she was interested in being admired. She was interested in fairness, justice, and equality for every human being, regardless.

In 1971, A group of thirteen women, including Dorothy Davis, Patricia Smeltzer, and Marty Smeltzer West wrote the following and sent it as an invitation and rationale to participate across the denomination in a women’s caucus saying: “A women’s caucus can be a transformational force within the life of each woman, in the experiences of the Church of the Brethren, and in the fabric of society.” This was followed up by an all-day meeting at the St. Petersburg, Florida Annual Conference in 1971. Interest in women’s issues continued to grow as the General Board adopted the “Equality for Women” paper in March of 1972. In May of 1972 Mary Cline Detrick and Mary Blocher Smeltzer took on the assignment as coordinators of the movement toward a caucus. At the Fresno, California Annual Conference in 1973, a group of 50 people voted to formally establish a Women’s Caucus. It continues today as a voice for equity. I currently serve with Daisy Schmidt and Sara Davis on the Womaen’s Caucus Steering Committee. \*

Mary was frank, honest, and outspoken, but never mean spirited or vindictive. You never had to guess what Mary was thinking, because she told you very clearly. It was refreshing to spend time with her because she was so transparent. Just thinking about Mary makes me smile, and reminds me to continue working for justice and equity.

\*Betty Jo Buckingham, A History of Womaen’s Caucus



# Caucus Steering Committee Welcomes New Members

Steering Committee is happy to introduce you to our newest members. Sara Davis has been our Treasurer since June of 2012, while Jonathan Bay is reworking our online presence. We are excited to have both of them!

**Sara Davis** received a degree at the University of Chicago in Behavioral Sciences and a Master in Business Administration at Columbia University. She has a background in accounting and a long career at the intersection of accounting and computer technology in the financial industry. She currently works at Western Asset Management in portfolio operations where her focus is technology, trade flow, investment data and account surveillance.



Sara is currently on the Board of Camp La Verne, she teaches Pre-K Sunday School, and she participates in the sanctuary flower arrangement and Sunday Children's story rotations at the La Verne Church of the Brethren in La Verne, California.

Sara, now divorced, has four children. Daughter Kathryn Bache and her husband Chris Lotz are just now moving from Singapore to Sydney,

Australia. Daughter and son-in-law Elizabeth and Jonathan Bay live in Edinburgh, Scotland, while Elizabeth studies for a Master's degree in Sustainable Materials at Heriot-Watt University. Son Chris Bache is a Sophomore at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Penn. Son Alexander Bache, still at home, is a Junior in high school.

Sara enjoys sewing, pulling weeds in her garden, time with friends and family, and good puzzles.

**Jonathan Bay** holds a BA in English from UC Davis and will be attending the University of Edinburgh to obtain his Masters in Creative Writing in the fall. He is currently a member of the Young Adult Steering Committee for the Church of the Brethren and on the Membership Ministry Team at Augustine United Church, in Edinburgh. He lives in Edinburgh, Scotland with his wife, Elizabeth, as she obtains her Masters. He is a member of the La Verne Church of the Brethren and is fairly new to Caucus but is excited about working towards an inclusive future. He is mainly concerned with LGBT equality.



## Womaen's Caucus Needs Your Financial Support to Continue

With your continued support Womaen's Caucus can do so much to help further our mission of decreasing prejudice within the Church. We are proud to have helped to sponsor the **2014 Clergy Women's Retreat**. The retreat will be lead by Melissa Wiginton of Austin Theological Seminary. It is **with your help that we can continue** to sponsor events such as these that promote women, and other marginalized people.

Complete the form below or donate online through our website at [www.womaenscaucus.org](http://www.womaenscaucus.org)

Make checks out to: Womaen's Caucus

Cut & mail to: Womaen's Caucus 818 SW 3rd Ave. #1299 Portland, OR 97204

Name: _____	<b>Contribution</b>	<b>Membership</b>
Address: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100	<input type="checkbox"/> I am already a member.
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> Membership—\$25/yr
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50	<input type="checkbox"/> Student Member—\$15/yr
Email: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<b>Femailings</b>
Phone: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Already Receiving
District/Home Church (if applicable)		<input type="checkbox"/> Send by Mail
_____		<input type="checkbox"/> Send by Email



Womaen's Caucus of the Church of the Brethren  
One Woman, All Women

## 2013 Progressive Brethren Gathering

November 15–17, 2013

Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren  
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Featured Guest: Sharon Groves, Director, Religion  
and Faith Program at the Human Rights Campaign.

Register at: <http://progressivebrethren.eventbrite.com>

818 SW 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. #1299  
Portland, OR 97204

We're on the web:

[www.womaenscaucus.org](http://www.womaenscaucus.org)

## Rainbow Handcrafts

In late 2008, members of the Church of the Brethren began knitting and crocheting rainbow yarn scarves and handcrafts in support of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (lgbt) people in the Church and world. Since the 2009 Annual Conference in San Diego, we have given away over 1000 rainbow handcrafts and the project has taken root and grown far beyond what we ever dreamed it might.

This powerful witness of love, support, and conscience has been embraced by people of all ages and made a fundamental difference in how many people, especially lgbt Christians and those who love them,

experience Conference and the Church. It has also raised questions about why we wear rainbow scarves and whether they are divisive or counter to Annual Conference statements and decisions.

We wear rainbow scarves:

- ◆ To support and create safe spaces for LGBT persons in the church
- ◆ To save lives
- ◆ As an act of Christian unity, not divisiveness
- ◆ As a witness and confession
- ◆ For reasons as individual as we are!



If you would like to contribute handcrafts and are unable to deliver them yourself to conference, please mail them to:

**Daisy Schmidt**  
**901 W. Wabash Ave.**  
**Lafayette, IN 47905**

and she will make sure they arrive at the Womaen's Caucus booth.