



**Fort Collins
Mennonite
Fellowship**

A congregation of
Mennonite Church USA

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To: Hyattsville Mennonite Church
Cc: Donna Mast, Conference Minister, Allegheny Mennonite Conference
Ervin Stutzman, Executive Director, Mennonite Church USA

Dear Members of Hyattsville Mennonite Church,

We at Fort Collins Mennonite Fellowship in Fort Collins, CO, are behind you one hundred percent! We stand in solidarity with your acceptance of gays and lesbians as members and clergy, and congratulate you on recognizing and confirming the gifts of Michelle Burkholder to be a minister of Christ's gospel.

The times they are a changin' ... but not always fast enough for our liking. Your willingness to be an "accidental trailblazer" by ordaining a lesbian assistant minister is to be commended. We honor, respect, and applaud Michelle's response to God's call to be a minister, regardless of the potential repercussions from the larger church.

We stand with you as a church that welcomes all who choose to follow the teachings of Jesus by being inclusive, compassionate, and socially just.

But as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "I have a dream ..." and our dream is that all individuals, regardless of sexual orientation, will one day be accepted into all congregations and be ordained as clergy of the Mennonite Church. We believe wholeheartedly that the love and acceptance of Christ knows no boundaries and we commend you as you live out the words of Ephesians 2:13-16:

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

As you go forward with your congregational life, know that there are many in the wider Mennonite Church remembering and praying for you. Let us know if there is anything we can do.

In Jesus Name,

The Fort Collins Mennonite Fellowship