



## NewsNet - October 2010

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### 1. Showing Pink for Pittsburgh



The kick off for the Pink Menno Pittsburgh 2011 Campaign is beginning!! Pink Menno brought an exciting and visible message of inclusion and welcome to the 2009 Mennonite Church USA Assembly in Columbus. They are now gearing up for another witness in Pittsburgh, but need support. In order to ensure a strong and effective presence, Pink Menno is seeking to raise \$16,000 in the next two months. Funds will be used for travel, a part time staff person, resources and the formation of a Pink Menno Nonviolent Communication group.

BMC is thrilled by the leadership and energy that Pink Menno represents and encourages the support and commitment of the BMC community to this important work. To learn more about the Pink Menno Campaign, go to [www.pinkmenno.org](http://www.pinkmenno.org). Tax deductible contributions can be made on-line at [www.pinkmenno.org](http://www.pinkmenno.org) or checks made out to BMC/Pink Menno and sent to Box 6300, Minneapolis, MN 55406. Pink Menno thanks you for your support!!



### 2. BMC Ontario Winter Retreat

February 11-13 - save the date for this annual mid-winter getaway. Details to follow, or contact [BMCOntario@yahoo.com](mailto:BMCOntario@yahoo.com).

### 3. Speaking Out for LGBT Youth

Life has long been difficult for lgbt youth, but this reality has often been hidden or ignored by those outside of the lgbta community. Thus, it is encouraging to witness the response to the recent media focus upon

bullying and suicide among lgbt youth. BMC particularly appreciates the insights and comments of Katie Hochstedler and Tim Nafziger upon this topic.

Katie Hochstedler - *It Gets Better, But in the Meantime, Let's Make it Better* on [Coming Out Strong](#).

Tim Nafziger - *Queerness, Mennonites and Bullying: Beyond Spirit Day and Wearing Purple* on [Young Anabaptist Radicals](#). It is also posted in nearly identical form in [The Mennonite Weekly Review](#), and [The Mennonite](#).

#### **4. Progressive Brethren Gathering**

There is still time to register for the Progressive Brethren Gathering that will be held November 12-14 at the Manchester Church of the Brethren in North Manchester, Indiana. The theme, *Forward Together: Conversations Toward an Enlivened Community*, will guide the weekend. In addition to creative worship, insightful workshops, engaging conversations and powerful presentations, there will also be time for good food, a Mutual Kumquat concert, square dancing, and great fun. To learn more about the event and register on-line, go to [www.progressivebrethren.org](http://www.progressivebrethren.org). See you there!

#### **5. COB District Hearings**

Hearings related to the Special Response Process are continuing across the denomination. This is an opportunity, especially for allies, to make your voice heard. BMC encourages those who are able to participate in the hearings. In addition to the resources prepared by the Special Response Resource Committee, BMC offers some specific recommendations regarding process and some practical tools and things to consider as you participate in the hearings. To access these resources, go to [www.bmclgbt.org](http://www.bmclgbt.org) and click on *Doing Process Well: Recommendations for Brethren Congregations* and *Recommendations for Safe, Sacred and Meaningful Conversations*. One of the great gifts of the BMC community has been our ability to be church for one another, especially when our denomination has failed us. Because these hearings have the potential to inflict great harm, please continue this BMC tradition by taking great care and reaching out to anyone who seems to be struggling or harmed by this experience.

#### **6. Welcoming Church Trainings**

BMC is the sponsoring group for two Welcoming Church Trainings that will be held in the next couple of months. These day and a half long workshops help build skills and gain knowledge that is helpful for congregational leaders, pastors and interested individuals lead their congregations to be places of lgbt welcome and justice. They are both fun and informative – give it a try! Training dates and sites are as follows:

November 19-20, 2010  
Peace Mennonite Church in Lawrence, Kansas

December 10-11, 2010  
Broad Street Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Virginia

For more information and to register, go to the [BMC website](#) and click on Welcoming Church Trainings under Coming Events.

#### **7. Transgender Day of Remembrance - November 20**

This day is set aside to remember people who have been killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice. It also serves as an opportunity for transgender communities and allies to raise awareness about the threat of violence faced by gender variant people and the persistence of prejudice experienced by the transgender community. Find an event and more information at <http://www.transgenderdor.org>.

## 8. Biannual School Climate Survey

GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network) released their 2009 [National School Climate Survey](#). The survey of middle and high school students found that nearly 9 out of 10 lgbt students experienced harassment at school in the past year and nearly two-thirds felt unsafe because of their sexual orientation. Nearly a third of lgbt students had skipped at least one day of school in the previous month because of safety concerns.

A previous NewsNet reported the release of Egale Canada's 2009 [Climate Survey on Homophobia in Canadian Schools](#).

## 9. American Places of Worship and Anti-lgbt Attitudes

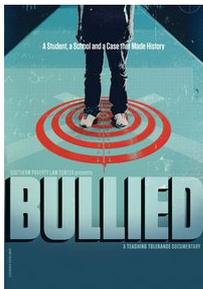
A recent [poll](#) conducted by Public Religion Research Institute highlights the impact of religious messages, stating "43% of Americans say the messages coming from places of worship are negative," and "two-thirds see connections between messages coming from America's places of worship and higher rates of suicide among gay and lesbian youth". If local congregations and denominations are disturbed by these perceptions, they need to speak up. Silence maintains and supports the status quo.

## 10. Check These Films Out!



*Fish out of Water* (2010)

This is a funky feature documentary that uses animation and academic interviews to dissect seven Bible verses used to condemn homosexuality. The director, Ky Dickens, highlights the oft-quoted Bible passages followed by revelatory commentary on them by celebrated scholars to make her point that the Bible is misinterpreted and misquoted regarding same-sex relationships. The animated elements of this film, complete with a cartoon narrator, makes *Fish out of Water* a fresh attempt to tackle an old issue. The hour long DVD may be ordered at [www.fishoutofwaterfilm.com](http://www.fishoutofwaterfilm.com). BMC also has a copy that we are happy to lend.



*Bullied: A Student, a School and a Case that Made History* (2010)

The Southern Poverty Law Center has released this inspiring story of a young gay man who took a stand against the bullying he experienced in school. The film is designed to help school administrators, teachers and counselors create a safer school environment for all students. It is also intended to help all students understand the terrible toll bullying can take on its victims, and to encourage students to stand up for their classmates who are being harassed. *Bullied* has been endorsed by the National Education Association. The 40 minute DVD comes with a two-part viewer's guide - additional materials are also available online. [www.tolerance.org/bullied](http://www.tolerance.org/bullied). A copy of the

DVD can be borrowed from BMC.

## 11. Nudging in November

It's up to all of us - we're making great strides towards a more welcoming and just church and society because people are taking action. Here are some suggestions of things you can do:

Read or watch at least one of the articles, surveys or movies noted above, and talk about them to at least two other people, especially people who could use a "nudge."

Check if your local school has an anti-bullying policy that includes both sexual orientation and gender identity. If they do, express your support. If not, make an appointment to talk to the appropriate school or school board official to talk about why this is an important safety issue.

## 12. Travel

Nov 12-14: Carol in North Manchester IN for the Progressive Brethren Summit and Kirsten in Goshen IN  
Nov 19-20: Carol at Welcoming Church Training in Lawrence, Kansas  
Dec 2-4: Carol in Washington, DC for work with Human Rights Campaign  
Dec 10-11: Carol at Welcoming Church Training in Harrisonburg, Virginia

*If we're going to be in your area, let us know! We'd love to meet with you.*

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BMC Staff

[Carol Wise](#) - Executive Director, SCN Coordinator

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