

NewsNet May 2010 - In Solidarity

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1. Activities at Brethren Annual Conference (July 3-7, Pittsburgh)

If you attend a Brethren congregation, please pass on these announcements:

BMC Luncheon: Tuesday July 6th, 12-1:30

At [Smithfield UCC](#), a welcoming congregation three blocks from the Convention Center. Hear a general update on BMC activities, as well as individual reflections upon the value of welcoming congregations. Reserve your spot and sandwich (indicate turkey or vegetarian) for \$12 by contacting the BMC office (bmc@bmcigbt.org / 612-343-2060).

BMC Community Meeting: Tuesday July 6th, 1:30-3

Also at [Smithfield UCC](#), following the luncheon. A chance to talk about the welcoming movement - you are invited to bring any questions along with the wisdom of your own experiences to an open and relaxed conversation convened by Carol Wise.



Wear Rainbow Scarves

Join Womaen's Caucus again this year by creating a visible lgbt-supportive presence. Pick up a FREE rainbow scarf from the Womaen's Caucus booth, or join the crochet corps and help make them ([instructions and details](#)).

BMC Mobile Booth

As BMC was denied a booth this year before we even asked, we will once again be rolling out the mobile booth, spreading welcome wherever we go. Volunteers are needed to staff the booth. Please contact Carrie Fry-Miller (carriebeth.fm@gmail.com) for details and to volunteer. Replace this paragraph with your article text. You can also modify the link below to point to your website or place where additional information can be found.

2. Strategy Summit Update



BMC was able to help finance a rich gathering of representatives from four pro-lgbt Mennonite groups: BMC, Pink Menno, MennoNeighbors and Open Letter Pastors, who met to discern strategies to move inclusion forward in the Mennonite Church. The group of twenty individuals was hosted by Chicago Community Mennonite Church for the weekend. It was a lively and engaging



conversation that addressed topics related to empowering church members, addressing denominational leadership, changing policy, developing relationships beyond barriers of race, ethnicity and theology, and preparing for the Pittsburgh assembly in 2011. Exciting things are happening! Please keep posted as details and specific assignments are developed and shared. Also, if you have ideas about how to make the Mennonite Church a more inclusive and just place, please share them at bmc@bmcigbt.org. Thank you!

3. In Solidarity

The recent anti-immigrant legislation passed in Arizona is a reflection of the hostile attitudes and actions directed towards Latino people in Arizona and beyond. BMC stands in solidarity with Latino people as a continuation of the struggle for human dignity and worth that is at the center of our work. Click [here](#) to see BMC's one-page response, including recommended actions all of us can take from the Executive Director of Iglesia Menonita Hispana, Yvonne Diaz.

4. Kirsten Freed to Stay Another Year



BMC is very pleased to announce that Kirsten Freed has elected to spend another year as the BMC volunteer! Kirsten, who hails from London, Ontario, has been serving through the Lutheran Volunteer Corps program since last August. In her role as the Kaleidoscope Coordinator, Kirsten has produced Accompaniment, a youth leader's handbook, and developed a workshop that more deeply explores the material. She has also revised the Safe Zone Training, visited four Mennonite or Brethren colleges, and met with MC Canada denominational leaders. In the coming year Kirsten will continue to develop resources, travel to colleges, work with young adult leadership, offer trainings, and also upgrade the BMC website. It is wonderful to have such a gifted individual at BMC for another year!

5. Hospitality Assembly Mennonite Style

Congratulations to Assembly Mennonite in Goshen, Indiana, for being mentioned in June/July edition of The Advocate as one of "150 Reasons to have Pride in 2010." Under the heading, "Because We've Got Friends in Unexpected Places," Assembly is highlighted for hosting a potluck dinner and conversation with young lgbt activists on the 2010 Soulforce Q Equality Ride. Way to make us proud, Assembly!

6. Rainbow scarves



Have you always wanted to learn how to crochet? This is a perfect beginner project! Brethren will be wearing rainbow scarves as a witness for lgbtq affirmation at **TWO** events this summer. Are you Mennonite? Start a project for Calgary 2010 or make pink things for Pittsburgh 2011! [Directions and details](#) can be found on the Womaen's Caucus website.

National Youth Conference

The La Veme Church of the Brethren Youth attending NYC invite those who knit or crochet to make rainbow scarves for youth attending NYC, July 17-22, 2010 in Ft. Collins, CO. Please mail rainbow scarves for National Youth Conference to: Maurice Shenk, 1601 West Swallow Rd., Unit 6-D, Ft. Collins CO 80526.

Annual Conference

Church of the Brethren Womaen's Caucus is leading the rainbow scarves project at Annual Conference again this summer. Rainbow scarves for Annual Conference can be sent to: Sharon Nearhoof May, 2064 Ridge Road, Tyrone PA 16686.

7. Denominational Sexuality Statements Database

The Religious Institute has created a database featuring up-to-date information about the official positions of major US religious denominations on sexuality-related issues. The database includes statements from 28 denominations covering official positions on more than 20 issues, including marriage, gender identity, abortion, sexuality education and sexual abuse. Each entry consists of the full text (or excerpt) of a denomination's position on a particular issue, as well as a link to the original source.

www.religioustheology.org/denominational-statements

8. Marriage in Portugal

This week Portugal becomes the 8th country to legalize same-sex marriage. Can you name the other 7?

While the right to marry is far from being the only issue of importance for LGBTQ equality, marriage opens the door to hundreds of economic benefits and legal protections that are otherwise denied to same-sex couples.

9. Take Action

BMC operates outside of official denominational structures, which continue to be closed to us. This allows a certain amount of freedom, but also creates many barriers. BMC does not have access to normal channels of communication to congregations and leaders. The average person in the pew often does not have access to information about who BMC is, or what we do. Be a BMC Ambassador by:

- + sharing this email or other BMC articles and resources
- + witnessing about your own experiences related to BMC
- + advocating for the importance of becoming an affirming congregation

10. Your Contributions Needed!

BMC is moving towards the end of its fiscal year and we need your help! Please consider making a donation so that we can continue to be a presence at denominational events, offer workshops and presentations, work with youth and young adults, resource congregations, support people who are coming out, work with pastors, plan conferences and events, connect ecumenically, advocate for justice and be a presence of hope, healing and resistance within the Mennonite and Brethren denominations. Click [here](#) to donate, or send a check to: BMC, Box 6300, Minneapolis, MN 55406. Thank you for your support!!

11. Travel

July 3-7: Carol at Brethren Annual Conference in Pittsburgh

July 22-25: Carol and Kirsten in Chicago with Christian Peacemaker Teams

September: Carol and Kirsten in Washington DC for board meeting

BMC Staff

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

[Kirsten Freed](#) - Kaleidoscope Coordinator, BMC Volunteer

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Donations to BMC can be made online www.bmclgbt.org/donations.shtml, or by sending a check to PO Box 6300, Minneapolis, MN 55406. Your contributions make a difference. Thank you for your generous support!

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