

# 2010 Progressive\* Guide to Annual Conference

Items of interest to women and men working in God's name for  
a church of justice, welcome, peace, and equality for all

\* And, yeah, we have problems with the word 'progressive', but we don't have anything better to offer at the moment. So we're coping. :)

## Taking Jesus Seriously

*"if you love me, you will obey what I command"*

(John 14:15, NIV)

People who identify with the progressive movement in the Church are taking Jesus seriously by:

- seeking to learn more about who Jesus was, where he lived, the cultures that shaped him, the faith traditions that formed him, the religious and political systems that structured his society, the context for his words and actions, so as to better understand what he was really saying and doing.
- taking seriously the things Jesus took seriously -- things like prayer; faith; being renewed in the Spirit; living with integrity; justice-making; peacemaking; drawing in those who have been cast to the margins (the poor, the sick, women, children, glbt persons, the grieving, etc.) as well as prophetically inviting those who hold the center to another way of living; prophetically challenging the religious and political power structures that dehumanize and violate the dignity of persons God created and loves; and much, much more.
- taking seriously the radical equality of ALL people before God and within the community and leadership of those who say they take Jesus seriously (the Church).
- being open to Jesus' Spirit leading us into new learning, new growth, new discovery, new faith, new understandings, new beliefs, and new life along the Way.
- acting and working to make the Church and world more peaceful, just, inclusive, loving, alive, and like God's Kin-dom.
- And so much more.

This summer at Annual Conference, we will be hearing a lot about taking Jesus seriously. It is so important that we make our own voices, our own understandings of Jesus the Christ as progressives, heard. So, if you have not taken the time already, please take a few moments and articulate to yourself or to someone else how you take Jesus seriously in your own life and faith. Make a list of what and who you believe Jesus took and takes seriously. And then find some way to share the Jesus YOU know with AC, the church, and the world.

**BRING YOUR RAINBOW SCARF FROM LAST YEAR TO WEAR AT AC THIS YEAR IN SUPPORT OF OUR GLBT SISTERS & BROTHERS!**

## Don't Miss the Food, Friends, and Thoughtful Conversations!

### Voices for an Open Spirit (VOS) Dinner Saturday, 5 p.m.



#### Rooms 319-321 "Across the Divide: A Journey of Faith and Bridge Building."

Peggy Campolo and her husband Tony have been publicly sharing their

differences on the topic of homosexuality and faith for several years now. Peggy will share how their relationship has evolved and even grown over the years in the midst of significant differences. She will share how faith has been a source of strength and commonality as she has sought to relate to people with very different ideas than her own over the years. She has many stories to tell about how bridges have been built across significant divides.

VOS Annual Meeting -- Tuesday, 9 p.m., Rooms 306-307

### Womaen's Caucus Luncheon Sunday, 12 noon



**Rooms 413-414** Don't miss this year's Caucus luncheon! **Nancy Faus-Mullen**, Professor Emerita at Bethany Seminary, will be speaking on "**Jesus Taking Women Seriously**". Our **silent auction** will be full of awesome handcrafts and more for you to bid on! And our **Friend of Caucus Award** will be presented.



### Brethren Mennonite Council for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Concerns (BMC) Luncheon Tuesday, 12 noon

**At The Smithfield United Church of Christ** (three blocks from the Convention Center). In addition to a general update of BMC activities, this year's luncheon will feature individual reflections upon the value of welcoming congregations. Friendly people, a supportive setting, insightful presentations, and a tasty lunch -- all for only \$12! **To make your reservation**, email the BMC office at [bmc@bmclgbt.org](mailto:bmc@bmclgbt.org) or call 612-343-2060 and be sure to indicate whether you would prefer a turkey or vegetarian sandwich. The Luncheon will be followed by an **Open Conversation** (see top of page 3) about the welcoming church movement from 2-3:15 p.m.

## Ballot Watch

We encourage you to elect the following progressive-friendly candidates:

- ✓ **Moderator-Elect:** Kathy Goering Reid
- ✓ **Program & Arrangements Committee:** Eric Bishop
- ✓ **Mission & Ministry Board:** Roger Schrock
- ✓ **Bethany Theological Seminary Trustee - Clergy:** Christy Waltersdorff
- ✓ **Bethany Theological Seminary Trustee - Laity:** Betty Ann Ellis Cherry
- ✓ **On Earth Peace Assembly Board:** Gail Erisman Valeta

## SUGGESTED EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

The following are sponsored by BMC, VOS, Caucus, our partner organizations. or touch on topics that progressives may think important and of interest.

### OTHER BREAKFASTS/DINNERS

- **Clergy Women's Breakfast.** Sunday, 7 a.m., Rooms 319-320. Dana Cassell on "The Baffling Church: Reflections and ponderings of a young adult theologian's journey of life, faith, and call to ministry."
- **Messenger Dinner** -- Sunday, 5 p.m., Rooms 319-321. Richard Mahoney on "Militant Pacifism."
- **On Earth Peace Breakfast** -- Tuesday, 7 a.m., Rooms 319-320. Sasha Simpson on "Building Peace: New Responses to the Biblical Call."

### PROGRESSIVE-FRIENDLY STUDIES

- **Spiritual Formation** -- Tuesday, 7:30 a.m., Room 329. Through a variety of scriptures, practices and media we will prayerfully seek the mind of Christ. Leaders: Dale and Christy Dowdy.
- **Taking Jesus Seriously: A Bible Study in Three Parts.** Sunday, 9-10 p.m, Room 325. On Earth Peace has invited three persons (Roger Eberly, Craig Alan Myers, and Dan Ulrich) to share biblical perspectives on Taking Jesus Seriously. Roger offers one progressive perspective.

### INSIGHT SESSIONS BY TOPIC

#### Women

- **Human Trafficking and Slavery: What We Can Do?** Sunday 9-10 p.m, Room 332. Anna Speicher presents on human trafficking and slavery in the US and world and how we can be part of the solution.
- **Under the Story-Telling Tree: Called by the Spirit and the Body.** Monday, 9-10 p.m., Room 326. Ruthan Knechel Johansen facilitates. Many cultures identify a

special tree or place where people gather to share things that can only be negotiated through the exchange of stories. Gather under a Brethren tree to share how the Spirit and the Body have encouraged or discouraged women and men to consider holy vocations.

#### Children & Child Abuse

- **Let the Children Come: Safe Spaces for Our Children.** Monday, 9-10 p.m., Room 334. Through a creative reading of scripture, discussion of best practices, and sharing of resources, participants will come away with tools and strategies to make their communities safe places for children. (0.1 CEU)
- **When Children Hurt: How Do We Help With Grief, Trauma, and the Upsets of Childhood?** Monday, 12:30-1:30 p.m., Room 325. Adults often don't realize that childhood includes times of sadness, fear, and anger. Participants will learn techniques that help children cope with difficult feelings and return to a loving, carefree, and joyous state.

#### Multiculturalism & Inclusion

- **Reaching Out to Other Cultures.** Tuesday, 12:30 -1:30 p.m., Room 326. Join a multi-ethnic panel to share a conversation about church and culture. How do we find common ground?

#### Environment

- **It IS Easy Being Green!** Sunday, 9-10 p.m, Room 324. How can we be environmentally friendly and responsible consumers, and what does Scripture teach us?

#### Technology and Faith

- **When Brethren Tweet: Technology, Theology, and Community.** Monday, 9-10 p.m., Room 325. Participants will reflect critically on how technology affects our understanding of community.
- **CoB 2.0.** Tuesday, 9-10 p.m., Room 325. Learn about free and low-cost Web 2.0 tools your church can use to help build community and welcome new members.

#### Sexuality & Controversial Issues

- **Open Conversation on Welcoming Churches** -- Tuesday, 2:00-3:15 p.m., at The Smithfield United Church of Christ. Are there questions that you have about the welcoming church movement? Do you wonder what resources are available but don't know where to find them? Are you interested in hearing what others are doing to help their congregations be a more lgbt welcoming place? You are invited to bring any questions that you might have, along with the wisdom of your own experiences, to an open and relaxed conversation that will be convened by Carol Wise. This will follow the BMC luncheon, so come for the food and stay for the conversation!
- **Resources from the Special Response Resource Committee.** Monday, 9-10 p.m., Rooms 306-307. The committee appointed by the 2009 Standing Committee will share resources they are recommending for congregational study in the Special Response process.

- **Do You Hear What I Hear? Why and How to Facilitate Conversations about Controversial Issues.** Monday, 12:30-1:30 p.m., Room 334. Why should we bother to talk about issues when it seems people's positions are already chosen and firmly held? How is it possible to have a fruitful discussion when there's the potential for people of faith to vehemently disagree?

### Global Issues

- **The World's Small Farmers: Problem or Solution?** Monday, 9-10 p.m., Room 403. How sometimes well-intentioned strategies conspire to keep the world's poorest people unable to feed themselves.
- **Stories, Insights and Sustainable Living in Guatemala.** Sunday, 9-10 p.m., Room 322. Former volunteers and the Latin America Coordinator for BVS will share stories, pictures, and a philosophy of sustainable living in Guatemala.
- **Earthquake 2010: Rebuilding Haiti.** Sunday 12:30-1:30 p.m., Room 326 OR Tuesday, 12:30-1:30 p.m. The devastating earthquake in Haiti has captured the attention of the church and the whole world. Participants will discuss the Church of the Brethren mission in Haiti and responses to other disasters
- **The Road that is Narrow and (Very) Bumpy: Peacemaking in Nigeria.** Tuesday, 9-10 p.m., Room 332. Conflict between Muslims and Christians affects how the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria (Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria, EYN) ministers in the name of Jesus. The Hoslers will detail their work with EYN in equipping Nigerian church leaders to be peacemakers.

### Peacemaking & Justice

- **CPT's Peacemaking: Getting Out of the Way – Getting in the Way.** Tuesday, 12:30-1:30 p.m., Room 324. Carol Rose, co-director of CPT, will lead an active exploration of CPT's journey toward peacemaking that undercuts oppression and stands with partners on gospel ground.
- **Brethren Justice and Witness in Washington, DC.** Tuesday, 12:30 -1:30 p.m., Room 328. Examining the CoB's work with the National Council of Churches, Bread for the World, Churches for Middle East Peace, and other partner faith-based organizations to advance our witness in the nation's capital.
- **Exploring Peace Retreats: Interactive Games that Teach.** Sunday, 12:30-1:30 p.m., Room 325. Peace Retreats, an offering of On Earth Peace, are hot – offering more than ten retreats this year. Come learn how you might bring a Peace Retreat to your congregation or district. (0.1 CEU)
- **Exploring Principles of Nonviolence and Restorative Justice.** Sunday, 12:30-1:30 p.m., Room 335. Melanie G. Snyder and Marie Hamilton discuss unconventional prison programs that promote responsibility, accountability, and nonviolence among inmates.
- **Community Ministry and Nonviolence Leadership**  
**Part 1** -- Sunday, 9-10 p.m., Room 326. Introduction to nonviolent leadership as a community ministry.

**Part 2** -- Monday, 12:30-1:30. Room 326. Stories of congregations learning about and responding to their community's real needs – hunger, gun and youth violence, drugs, unemployment.

- **Agape-Satyagraha: Conflict Resolution and Social Change Education for Youth.** Sunday, 9-10 p.m., Room 337. Combining Jesus' example for love for community and Gandhi's truth force for social change, Agape-Satyagraha is a program of On Earth Peace and Brethren Community Ministries to teach anger management and conflict resolution skills to junior and senior high youth.

## **Business Preview**

There are a few items of business to keep an eye on.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

#### **Item 1: A Statement of Confession and Commitment**

#### **Item 2: Same-Sex Covenantal Relationships**

Be sure to attend the Special Response Committee's insight session on Monday night. Also, it is crucial to remember that the Program and Arrangements Committee is not the 'victim' in the church's continued injustice involving issues of sexuality. The ones suffering most, the true "*lightning rod[s] for controversy on this issue*" are glbt persons who are excluded from full participation and leadership in the church they love. There certainly have been many "*mean-spirited, unkind attacks leveled against these faithful servants.*" And we agree that "*This unchristian behavior must stop.*"

### NEW BUSINESS

#### **Item 2: Query: Guidelines for Implementation of the Congregational Ethics Paper**

This query coming out of Western PA asks Annual Conference to consider the possibility of developing a "*uniform denominational process by which districts might deal with a congregation that engages in questionable ethical activity*". This is critical to all progressives as the congregations that have been enduring district level sanctions and attacks in recent years have been progressive congregations engaged in the "questionable ethical activity" (read: prophetic acts of justice) of welcoming glbt persons into full participation and leadership in their churches.

#### **Item 3: Appeals of Program and Arrangements Committee Decisions.**

This has direct bearing on the continuing attempts to call the P&AC to act justly and fairly by providing BMC a booth in the AC exhibit hall.

## Suggested Activities Day-by-Day

### SATURDAY

#### DINNER

- **VOS Dinner** -- 5 p.m. Rooms 319-321.

### SUNDAY

#### BREAKFAST

- **Clergy Women's Breakfast.** 7a.m. Rooms 319-320.

#### LUNCHEON

- **Womaen's Caucus Luncheon.** 12 noon. Rooms 413-414.

#### INSIGHT SESSIONS 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

- **Earthquake 2010: Rebuilding Haiti.** Room 326  
*Also offered on Tuesday at 12:30-1:30 p.m.*
- **Exploring Peace Retreats: Interactive Games that Teach.** Room 325.

#### DINNER

- **Messenger Dinner.** 5 p.m. Rooms 319-321

#### INSIGHT SESSIONS 9:00 - 10:00 p.m.

- **Taking Jesus Seriously: A Bible Study in Three Parts.** Room 325.
- **Human Trafficking and Slavery: What We Can Do?** Room 332
- **Stories, Insights and Sustainable Living in Guatemala.** Room 322.
- **It IS Easy Being Green!** Room 324.
- **Community Ministry and Nonviolence Leadership: Part 1.** Room 326.
- **Agape-Satyagraha: Conflict Resolution and Social Change Education for Youth.** Room 337.

Notes:

### MONDAY

#### INSIGHT SESSIONS 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

- **Community Ministry and Nonviolence Leadership: Part 2.** Room 326.
- **When Children Hurt: How Do We Help With Grief, Trauma, and the Upsets of Childhood?** Room 325.

#### INSIGHT SESSIONS 9:00-10:00 p.m.

- **Resources from the Special Response Resource Committee.** Rooms 306-307.
- **The World's Small Farmers: Problem or Solution?** Room 403.

- **When Brethren Tweet: Technology, Theology, and Community.** Room 325.
- **Let the Children Come: Safe Spaces for Our Children.** Room 334.
- **Under the Story-telling Tree: Called by the Spirit and the Body.** Room 326.

Notes:

### TUESDAY

#### BREAKFAST

- **On Earth Peace Breakfast.** 7 a.m. Rooms 319-320

#### SPIRITUAL FORMATION

- 7:30 a.m. Room 329. Leaders: Dale and Christy Dowdy.

#### LUNCHEON, Smithfield United Church of Christ

(three blocks from the Convention Center)

- 12 noon, **BMC Luncheon** followed by an **Open Conversation** about the welcoming church movement from 2-3:15 p.m.

#### INSIGHT SESSIONS 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

- **Reaching Out to Other Cultures.** Room 326.
- **Do You Hear What I Hear? Why and How to Facilitate Conversations about Controversial Issues.** Room 334.
- **CPT's Peacemaking: Getting Out of the Way – Getting in the Way.** Room 324.
- **Brethren Justice and Witness in Washington, DC.** Room 328.
- **Earthquake 2010: Rebuilding Haiti.** Room 326  
*Also offered on Sunday at 12:30-1:30 p.m.*

#### INSIGHT SESSION 2:00 - 3:15 p.m.

at The Smithfield United Church of Christ

- **Open Conversation on Welcoming Churches.**  
An open and relaxed conversation convened by Carol Wise.

#### INSIGHT SESSIONS 9:00 - 10:00 p.m.

- **The Road that is Narrow and (Very) Bumpy: Peacemaking in Nigeria.** Room 332.
- **CoB 2.0.** Room 325. (0.1 CEU)
- **VOS ANNUAL MEETING .** Rooms 306-307

Notes: