

# ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES *of* OREGON

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## *Media Release*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **EMO honors The Rev. Dr. Marilyn Sewell as “Ecumenist of the Year”**

The Rev. Dr. Marilyn Sewell will be named “Ecumenist of the Year” on May 18, 2016, at the *Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) Annual Community Awards & Celebration Dinner*. Sewell is a Unitarian Universalist minister, writer, activist and spiritual leader. The award is presented in recognition of her outstanding leadership and commitment to ecumenical and interfaith dialogue, community ministry and public policy advocacy.

Sewell holds master’s degrees in English literature, social work and divinity, and a PhD in theology and literature. After careers as an English teacher, clinical social worker and television on-air personality, she served for 17 years as senior minister of the First Unitarian Church of Portland, growing the church from 600 to 1,500 members—the largest Unitarian Universalist church in the nation. Sewell communicates a bold view of God’s inclusive welcoming and compassion for all. She began her tenure at First Unitarian by wrapping the entire church block in red ribbon and declaring it a hate-free zone in response to a state ballot measure against gay rights.

In addition to being a compelling, deeply self-revealing speaker, Sewell is the accomplished author and editor of books of essays and poetry. Her memoir *Raw Faith* provides the back story to an award-winning documentary film about her life and work. Today her justice work is focused on engaging faith communities in the call to address the urgent moral issue of climate change.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon’s annual event is a joyful celebration of our shared commitment to compassion, justice and goodness of God’s creation. More than 400 faith and community leaders come together in a spirit of hope and service, honoring past successes, pledging ourselves to work for a healthy and equitable Oregon, and applauding outstanding individuals and organizations who are guided by their faith to serve Oregonians in need.

This year, the event will be held on May 18 at the Portland Hilton, 921 SW Sixth Ave. A reception and silent auction to benefit EMO's ministries will be held from 5 to 6:30 p.m. and the dinner and award presentations will begin at 6:30 p.m. Reservations, available at [www.emoregon.org](http://www.emoregon.org), are \$100 per person or \$1,000 per table of 10. For more information, contact Carla Starrett-Bigg at (503) 221-1054, ext. 275, or [csbigg@emoregon.org](mailto:csbigg@emoregon.org).

*Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a statewide association of Christian denominations, congregations, ecumenical organizations and interfaith partners working together to improve the lives of Oregonians through community ministry programs, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, environmental ministry and public policy advocacy.*