

## *Media Release*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Clergy breakfast inspires faith-based health and equity work**

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's (EMO) Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership will host its first "**Clergy Wellness and Health Equity Breakfast**" at Maranatha Church at 4222 NE 12<sup>th</sup> in Portland on Thursday, May 20, from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. The free event will provide inspiration and practical resources for faith leaders interested in health ministry, health equity issues and a faith-based approach to chronic disease prevention.

The Rev. Dr. T. Allen Bethel, senior pastor at Maranatha Church and president of the Albina Ministerial Alliance, will provide opening words for the gathering, followed by a speaker from the Multnomah County Health Department who will talk about health disparities, how environments impact our health, and effective ways to make healthy changes in the congregational setting. EMO staff and other community partners will share faith-based resources such as a future mini-grant program to support healthy environmental changes at congregations, and the Congregational Health Index (CHI) assessment tool that was developed with consultants from Community Health Partnership—Oregon's Public Health Institute as part of a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation-supported Congregational

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Wellness pilot project. The CHI helps congregations examine their policies, practices, and building and grounds. It also helps congregations create improvement plans to achieve policy and environmental changes to sustain healthy choices among congregants. Congregations that were part of the pilot program have chosen a variety of activities to bring wellness to their faith communities, such as implementing nutrition guidelines for congregational meetings and fellowship time, displaying nutrition information next to food options, making physical activity a regular part of religious education or social time, creating raised-bed gardens on their property, and installing a bike rack.

There is no charge for the clergy breakfast, however, pre-registration is requested by sending an RSVP to [ksharinghousen@emoregon.org](mailto:ksharinghousen@emoregon.org) or calling (503) 221-1054 by May 14, 2010. For more information, contact Laura Raymond, Congregational Wellness Project coordinator, at [lraymond@emoregon.org](mailto:lraymond@emoregon.org) or (503) 221-1054, ext. 216, or visit [www.emoregon.org/events.php](http://www.emoregon.org/events.php).

*Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's (EMO) Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns connects, inspires, informs and empowers people, congregations and religious institutions to work for justice and the care and renewal of the earth. EMO is a statewide association of Christian denominations—including Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox bodies—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.*

#### MEMBER DENOMINATIONS

African Methodist Episcopal Church ■ American Baptist Churches of Oregon ■ Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) ■ Christian Methodist Episcopal Church ■ Church of the Brethren ■ Community of Christ  
Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon ■ Episcopal Diocese of Oregon ■ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ■ Greek Orthodox Church ■ Presbyterian Church (USA)—Presbytery of the Cascades  
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) ■ Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland ■ United Church of Christ ■ United Methodist Church ■ Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches