

# ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES *of* OREGON

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## *Media Release*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Food Summit offers new ways to quell hunger, improve communities Gathering will mobilize faith-based projects across the Northwest**

Corvallis, OR – Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon’s (EMO) Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership (IFFP) will showcase their Corvallis projects at a food sovereignty summit on Oct. 3 for faith communities and organizations across the Northwest.

With food insecurity and obesity on the rise, IFFP will offer inspiration and practical tips for starting community kitchens, gardens, wellness policies, and buying clubs or other partnerships with local farmers. Projects foster environments that are conducive to health, economic development and strong local food systems.

“Faith communities often have great resources at their fingertips,” explained keynote speaker Sharon Thornberry, community resources developer for Oregon Food Bank. “We’ve seen first-hand how faith-based projects like gardens and kitchens can make a difference in people’s lives.”

Participants will learn what makes programs effective, how to collaborate with low-income populations, and what challenges and opportunities are unique to faith-based initiatives. Each attendee will leave with a comprehensive handbook on how to get started and what to expect along the way.

The day will begin at Westside Community Church—home to a garden that specializes in affordable plots and gardening support for low-income families. The garden also includes 5,000 square feet of crops

#### 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

grown by members of St. Mary's Catholic Church for donation to local food pantries and cooking programs.

Mid-morning, participants will board busses for a self-guided tour of the Saturday Farmers' Market, where they will learn about two ways of making local food accessible to low-income people—the "That's My Farmer" coupon program and Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT), the technology required for SNAP (food stamp) access at open-air markets.

Over a locally grown lunch, the group will learn about a program of cooking and canning classes at the First United Methodist Community (UMC) Kitchen, as well as the nationally-acclaimed "Jammin' for the Hungry" program, an effort to make jams and jellies for food pantries. Volunteers have produced over 1,600 jars of preserves since they began Jammin' a year ago.

First UMC will also inform participants about their emerging program for low-income micro-entrepreneurs who need a commercial kitchen in which to create salable food products.

"We're hoping to create viable models for other faith communities," said program evaluator Dr. Leslie Richards. "We've learned from years of experimentation what works and what doesn't, especially in terms of building relationships with low-income people and farmers."

Other EMO-run projects—La Fresa Feliz Buying Club at St. Mary's Catholic Church, congregation-based farm stands, the Congregational Wellness Project funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and more—will be on display over the course of the day.

The Summit will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 3 at Westside Community Church in Corvallis. The deadline for pre-registration is Sept. 29. For more information, visit [www.emoregon.org/food\\_farms/php](http://www.emoregon.org/food_farms/php) or call (503)221-1054.

### **What is Food Sovereignty?**

Food sovereignty is the right of all people, communities and countries to define agricultural, food and land policies that are ecologically, socially, economically and culturally relevant. Food sovereignty holds that all people have the right to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food and to food-producing resources. This framework calls for actions and strategies on local and global levels to address the root causes of hunger.

*Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's (EMO) Oregon Interfaith Power and Light project engages the faith community to strive for accountability in our individual and collective energy decisions in an interdependent world. 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.*