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"Faithful to Oregon's Future"

Interfaith Advocacy Day 2009 will focus on health care, affordable housing and hunger relief in a troubled economy

The 2009 Session of the Oregon Legislature is set to convene on Jan. 12, with many critical issues facing a state that is being increasingly impacted by the current recession and global financial crisis.

Oregon state revenues are declining as Oregon's unemployment rate increases. More children and adult Oregonians lack health insurance, and the Oregon Food Bank reports increased demand for emergency food boxes at food pantries throughout the state.

Clearly, the advocacy of the religious community on behalf of those in the most need

is required now more than ever. That is why hundreds of Oregonians representing many faiths will gather in Salem on Thursday, Feb. 19, for the *2009 Interfaith Advocacy Day* (IAD) event, with the theme "Faithful to Oregon's Future."

Attendees will gather for registration between 8 and 9 a.m. at St. Mark Lutheran Church, located at 790 Marion St. NE, Salem. Morning sessions at St. Mark's, from 9 a.m. until noon, will include presentations from faith and political leaders and advocacy trainings on health care,

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Participants at *Interfaith Advocacy Day* march to the state capitol building in Salem.

Faith communities address economic crisis: *Share your stories*

"Our hope for you is unshaken; for we know that as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our consolation." II Cor. 1:7

Congregations across the state, from Bandon to Ontario, are reporting that their food pantries and the food programs they support are experiencing unprecedented need and record numbers of usage.

For the last two months, the "Good Neighbors" monthly food distribution in Bandon gave out every bit of food they had on hand—never before has this been the case. Food pantries in the eastern Oregon town of Ontario are closing early

because they are running out of supplies. Churches in Astoria have seen a dramatic increase in demand for food from their pantries, and in Hood River the usage is up by 50 percent. In Portland, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's (EMO) Northeast Emergency Food Program at Luther Memorial reports that November saw the highest demand for their service in the program's 25-year history.

This anecdotal evidence points to a state that is experiencing hunger at alarming levels. Churches also report members looking for second and third jobs in order to pay their food and utility bills. One minister

expressed anxiety about her elderly father with Alzheimer's disease losing almost 25 percent of his retirement in the last two months—money that he had saved to use for medical care he will need because of his condition.

The current financial crisis touches everyone and profoundly challenges our communities. We are all aware of the job layoffs, empty shelves at emergency food pantries and uncertainties regarding retirement plans, due to declines in the financial markets. The current economic situation clearly opens up profound questions

about the future wellbeing of our communities, as well as deeper spiritual questions about the way in which we live as a society and what we can do to bring wholeness and hope to our futures.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon believes that Oregon's faith community can, and *must*, take a leadership role in this time of uncertainty. We would like to gather information from Oregon congregations and faith organizations about the impact of the financial crisis.

Toward this end, we have setup a place on our Web site to respond via e-mail to the following questions (see p.8).

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Faithful building of the good society

A few days ago, the following headline in *The Oregonian* caught my attention: "Census data—Economic slowdown started early."

According to the Associated Press, "Things really are bad all over—and they went bad before the housing and finance industries crashed and sent the economy into a tailspin. New census data show that throughout the first half of the decade, the slumping economy touched nearly every community in the country. Incomes dropped while poverty and unemployment rose in the vast majority of the nation's cities and towns" *The Oregonian*, Dec. 9, 2008.

How true are these words. Contrary to reports of some pundits, the current economic crisis did not happen recently and wasn't caused by Congress forcing banks to lend money to poor people to buy homes they could not afford due to the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA). No, today's problems are the result of a number of forces, including age-old institutional and individual dynamics that are far more complex than those discussed on the evening news.



David Leslie

So, then, how do we address today's economic problems? First, let me suggest that to understand more fully today's situation, we must have a better sense of time and history. Now, to avoid sounding too lofty and above the fray, I must admit that lately I have found myself caught up in the happenings not only of the day but of the hour or even the minute. As investment portfolios shrink and institutional endowments grow smaller, and as more people come for help at our community ministries and the stress level of family members rises due to potential layoffs, I find that I want to know the news ... now. As such, I find myself checking on-line news sources more often, just to keep up with the latest market conditions. And I know I am not alone.

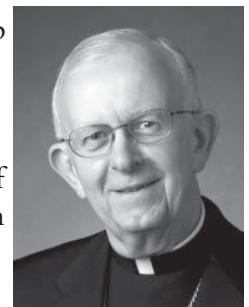
As a result, everything becomes more frantic. Time becomes very linear, with little attention paid to both natural and community seasons and cycles. The day's events are our sole attention, and as we ride the linear time express, we lose touch with one another and our collective needs. We plow unreflectively through life, failing to draw the strength and wisdom of the past that may help us weather today's storms and move us to reorder our societal structures and relationships that may minimize such problems in the future.

I would also suggest the solutions to the problems we face are not solely technical solutions. While rebalancing the market, increasing lending to banks and modernizing the U.S. auto industry may help, addressing problems caused by anger, gluttony, greed, sloth and a few of the other "Seven Deadly Sins" must also be on our list. If there is to be substantive change in today's economy, we need to seriously reconsider just how much is enough as related to issues such as national power and might, fare compensation for a day's work and expected returns on investment.

As we enter a new year, many are hoping, praying and strengthening their efforts to make this world more life affirming for all. My personal hope is that we rediscover the resolve and courage needed to amend the mistakes of the past. I also hope that we are able to reorder our lives and priorities in ways that will lead to a rebuilding of our economy and society on the foundation of justice, peace and equity—true marks of the good and faithful society. And while these hopes were born generations ago, they remain vital and necessary for today and the days ahead. May you have a joyful and blessed New Year.

Archbishop marks 25 years as a bishop

Archbishop John Vlazny celebrated the 25th anniversary of his ordination on Dec. 14, 2008, at the University of Portland's Chiles Center. He was ordained as an Auxiliary Bishop for the Archdiocese of Chicago on Dec. 13, 1983.



Archbishop Vlazny

Archbishop Vlazny was installed as the sixth Bishop of Winona, Minn., in 1987, appointed the 10th Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland on Oct. 28, 1997, and installed as Archbishop on Dec. 19, 1997.

Archbishop Vlazny serves as the chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on National Collections, a member of the Administrative Committee, a member of the Task Force on Faith Formation and Sacramental Practices, and he is a consultant to the USCCB Committee on Divine Worship. He also serves as chairman of the Board of Oregon Catholic Press, chairman of the Board of the Oregon Catholic Conference and a member of the Board of Directors of Mount Angel Seminary.

Upcoming EMO sponsored & cosponsored events

January 22 & 23

Radical Abundance: A Theology of Sustainability. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Grace Memorial Episcopal Church, 1535 NE 17th Ave., Portland. Grace Memorial Episcopal Church will present Trinity Institute's 39th National Theological Conference via webcast. Leading theologians and grassroots activists will consider radical ideas about abundance, sustainability and well-being. The conference will include keynote speakers, panel discussions and facilitated breakout groups. Among the local organizations cosponsoring this event is EMO.

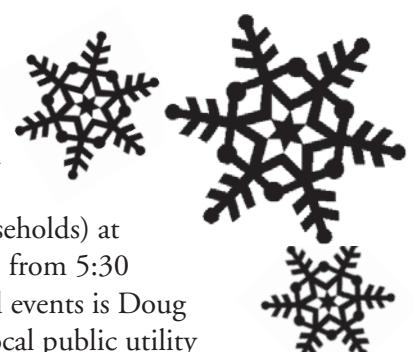
The registration deadline is Jan. 16, 2009. The fee for the conference is \$40; there is a half-off discount for EMO member congregations and organizations or Oregon Interfaith Power & Light congregations. Lunch is available both Thursday and Friday for \$10 per day. Registration is available by mail to Grace Memorial Episcopal Church, 1535 NE 17th Ave., Portland, OR 97232, by phone at (503) 287-0418, ext. 102, or by e-mail at grace@grace-memorial.org.

February 10 & 12

OIPL workshops east of the Cascades. Energy Stewardship Workshops for congregations, households and businesses are coming to Milton-Freewater, Ore., and Pasco, Wash., on Feb. 10 and 12, respectively. The workshops are sponsored by Oregon Interfaith Power & Light (OIPL) and Bonneville Power Administration. The location for the Milton-Freewater workshops will be in the Albee Room at the Milton-Freewater Public Library, and for Pasco in the board room of the Bonneville Power Administration office, 22 Pasco Kahlotus Rd.

At both locations, the workshop "Save Your Congregation Energy and Money" will be held from 3 to 4:30 p.m., "Energy Stewardship" (for households) at 2:30 p.m., and "Energy Stewardship" from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. The main speaker for all events is Doug Boleyn, OIPL's energy consultant. Local public utility and state energy office staff will give presentations. The evening workshop in Pasco will be conducted in Spanish and feature a free family-style meal.

Call (503) 221-1054 to register or download a complete brochure at www.emoregon.org.



February 19

Interfaith Advocacy Day. 9 a.m. at St. Mark Lutheran Church, 790 Marion St. NE, Salem. See page one for details.

March 4, 2009

Interfaith Energy and Climate Stewardship Advocacy Day. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Willamette University in Salem. See page 3 for details.

May 4, 2009

40th Annual Collins Lecture featuring Archbishop Desmond Tutu: "The Transformative Power of Reconciliation in Society." 7:30 p.m. at The Chiles Center, University of Portland, 5000 N. Willamette Blvd., Portland. There will also be a leadership summit on reconciliation at Buckley Hall (also on campus). See page 7 for more details.

Pie party supports local farms & food access

Four farmers, with acreage from five to 70 and crops from shallots to rabbits, agreed on one thing—it's not about the money. The panelists spoke at the Nov. 16 *Holiday Pie Party* held by the Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership in Corvallis as a fundraiser for the “That’s My Farmer” farmers’ market coupon program. The program raises awareness of local farms and provides free coupons for people with low incomes to use at the Albany-Corvallis Farmers’ Market. Nine congregations and 10 farms are involved.

Even in harder economic times, their customers prioritized high-quality food, Matt Borg of Matt-Cyn Farms in Albany said. John Eveland of Gathering Together Farm agreed and said that his customers were mostly educated people with enough income to pay a little more for organically grown food. Meanwhile, Julia Sunkler of My Pharm in Monroe said that the high feed costs had hit her hard in the last year, but she couldn’t justify raising the price for her chicken, lamb, pork, rabbit and beef.

But all four said that farming, for them, was a way of life valuable to them outside of their financial situations, and they encouraged the audience to make time in their lives for good food. The farmers were joined on the panel by



Photo credit: Liv Nevin Gifford

Farmers on the panel included (from left) John Eveland, Matt Borg, Cyndee Ross and Julia Sunkler.

Sharon Thornberry, the outreach coordinator of the Oregon Food Bank. Thornberry spoke of the need for a lobby for small farmers and funds to support storage and transportation infrastructure for food throughout the region.

After the discussion, about 50 people stayed to enjoy pumpkin pie, apple cider and music from the local Creole band Gumbo. Pies were baked by graduates of cooking classes held in the kitchen of First United Methodist Church in Corvallis. Through donations at the door and sales of a green tomato chutney made with local ingredients, \$880 was raised for the continuation of the “That’s My Farmer” program in Corvallis.

Advocacy day to focus on climate stewardship

On March 4, 2009, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., people of faith from throughout the state will gather for Oregon Interfaith Power & Light’s second *Interfaith Energy and Climate Stewardship Advocacy Day* at Willamette University in Salem.

Governor Ted Kulongoski has been invited

to provide the keynote. Religious leaders including Bishop David Brauer-Rieke of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Oregon Synod—a member of the Global Warming Commission—will share faith perspectives on energy and global warming. A briefing on the most comprehensive set of state policies ever to address global warming emissions will be provided, followed by dialogue between legislators and citizens and an advocacy skill-building session.

Of special concern will be how to make the transition to a low carbon economy in a way that creates family wage jobs and where impacts on people with low-incomes are cushioned.

To register, download a brochure from the events page at www.emoregon.org, send an e-mail to oipl@emoregon.org or call (503) 221-1054. Registration fee before Jan. 30 is \$15 and \$20 after that date. Carpooling will be arranged.



Over 130 people attended the first *Interfaith Energy and Climate Stewardship Advocacy Day* in 2007.

Earth Day forum to explore ecology & theology

Ecology and Theology Earth Day Forum with Dr. John Hart will be held on Sunday, April 26, 2009, from 2 to 4 p.m., at Central Lutheran Church, NE 21st and Hancock, Portland.

Dr. Hart is professor of ethics at Boston University. His interests are in the areas of social ethics, environmental ethics, liberation theology and ethics, and science and Christianity. His writings are focused particularly on issues of social and ecological justice, and on ecology as a bridge between science and religion. Internationally known for his work in social ethics and environmental ethics, Hart has given almost 200 presentations on four continents. The forum is free and sponsored by

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon’s Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns, Central Lutheran Church and St. Andrew Lutheran Church.

Dr. Hart will also be speaking April 24 and 25 at the *Swim with the Salmon Symposium* at Oregon State University, organized by Lutheran Campus Ministries.

Admission for the forum is free. For more information or to pre-register (preferred), call (503) 221-1054, or register at the door.



Corvallis mayor declares Dec. 1 “Harvest for the Hungry Day”

Interfaith Food & Farms Partnership projects named in proclamation

City of Corvallis Mayor Charles C. Tomlinson declared Dec. 1, 2008, “Harvest for the Hungry Day” at an assembly where, on that day, local organizations addressing hunger were in attendance. Two of EMO’s Interfaith Food & Farms Partnership (IFFP) programs were named in statements within the proclamation honoring a youth program, community gardens and minority hunger advocacy groups.

The IFFP programs on the list of five community contributors are the community garden at Westside Community Church, honored for “offering affordable garden plots and garden support to local families,” and the “That’s My Farmer” coupon program, honored for providing funds for low-income families to buy local produce and for connecting local farmers to the community.

The proclamation aims to raise awareness that many Benton County residents go hungry every year and honors citizens and groups in Corvallis who worked in gardens this year to feed the hungry.

Others honored in the decree are Iglesia Cuadrangular Emanuel, Plant a Row for the Hungry and the Corvallis Environmental Center’s Youth Garden Project.

In the decree, Mayor Tomlinson urges all citizens and organizations to “celebrate and give thanks to the many people who till the soil, tend the plants and harvest the produce that helps to feed the hungry citizens in our community.”

Swim with the Salmon

Lutheran Campus Ministry at Oregon State University (OSU) will host *To Swim with the Salmon: Spirituality and Ecojustice in the Pacific Northwest*, a one-day conference on Saturday, April 25, 2009, at the OSU LaSells Stewart Center. A generous grant from the Philip N. Knutson Endowment, along with partnership support from area congregations, the Northwest House of Theological Studies and Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, makes this possible.

To Swim with the Salmon will feature keynote speaker Dr. John Hart, Boston University School of Theology environmental ethicist. He will address ways in which the salmon is a rich spiritual symbol of our region and how it reveals where healing of the natural world is needed. Conference storyteller Elizabeth Woody—educator, writer, poet and artist—will offer river and salmon reflections from an indigenous perspective.

For detailed information and online registration, please visit <http://oregonstate.edu/conferences/SwimwithSalmon2009>.

Debate over federal tax policy looms as economic crisis deepens

One Christian scholar argues that tax policies should be informed by biblical principles of justice

By Kevin S. Finney, EMO Public Policy director

Even before U.S. and global financial markets came unhinged, before the \$700 billion bailout package known as TARP passed Congress, and even before the U.S. unemployment rate began climbing, the U.S. government was facing a growing fiscal crisis. Although there were four straight years of federal budget surpluses from 1998 to 2001, the federal government has run a deficit in every year since.

In 2000, the federal budget ran a \$236 billion budget surplus, which at the time was projected to increase to a \$573 billion surplus in 2007. Instead, in 2007, the government ran a budget deficit of \$161 billion—a \$734 billion reversal. Even larger deficits are anticipated for 2008 and 2009.

What happened? According to an analysis by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

(CBPP), slower than expected growth in the economy combined with important policy changes brought about this fiscal turnaround. The single largest policy factor was tax cuts—primarily the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts proposed by the Bush administration and enacted by Congress. The second largest factor was increased spending on defense and homeland security. Increases in spending on entitlement programs and domestic discretionary spending lagged far behind as a cause of the increase in red ink.

The tax cuts that have driven up deficits include reductions in individual income tax rates, dramatic reductions of the estate tax, and reductions in capital gains and dividend taxes. Significantly, nearly all of these tax cuts are set to expire by the end of 2010. That means the next two-year session of Congress (the 111th Congress) will have to decide whether to renew some or all of these tax cuts, or to let them expire as scheduled. According to the CBPP, making these tax cuts permanent would cost about \$4.4 trillion in lost revenue over the next decade (when the cost of additional interest on the federal debt is included). Clearly, unless these tax cuts are allowed to expire, or reduced dramatically, the long-term result will be increased deficits or crippling cuts to important government programs.

A Judeo-Christian perspective on tax policy

Do Christians have something distinctive to offer in these debates over tax policy? At least one Christian scholar, Susan Pace Hamill, believes there is a distinctive “Judeo-Christian” perspective on tax policy. She notes that federal tax debates are usually conducted in terms of secular economic analysis, and that this gives short shrift to important moral issues raised by tax policy.

Hamill argues that “Judeo-Christian standards of justice express special concern for those with little wealth and power, and require those at higher levels of income and wealth to endure real economic sacrifices beyond their voluntary efforts of beneficence and charity.”

The foundation of the biblical notion of justice is found, according to Hamill, in the creation account in the Book of Genesis, “which reveals God to be the only supreme being, and the sole creator of all humankind in God’s image.” When this notion is combined with the commandment in Deuteronomy 6:5 to “love your Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength,” and with the commandment in Leviticus to “love your neighbor as yourself,” what is established, according to Hamill, is “an ironclad and unbreakable bond linking a proper relationship with God to a proper relationship with all other human beings.” This basic principle finds echoes in the Gospels as well.

Hamill goes on to argue that this biblical notion of justice not only forbids oppression or exploitation of others, but also requires “that a



community’s laws ensure that each individual enjoys a reasonable opportunity to reach his or her potential.” This principle of biblical justice is rooted, according to Hamill, in creation theology, “... because each person is created in God’s image, with a unique potential to carry out God’s work on earth, all persons must have a meaningful chance to develop this divinely inspired potential as a matter of biblical justice.”

For Hamill, this requires that government play a role in guaranteeing that all individuals have access to minimum subsistence, decent health care and housing, along with education and job training. She then argues that “because of the universal presence of human greed, these costs can only be met with adequate tax revenues.”

The core Judeo-Christian principles for tax policy, then, are first, that it must provide adequate revenues to insure each person has the opportunity to realize their potential, and second, that those revenues must be raised through a moderately progressive system of taxation, which imposes greater tax obligations on those enjoying higher levels of income and wealth.

Rising income inequality and poverty levels bolster biblical arguments for progressive taxes

This biblical argument for a progressive tax system has been further bolstered in recent years by the fact of rising income inequality in the United States. U.S. Census data shows that in 1980 the top 20 percent of households made 44.1 percent of all income, but by 2006 and 2007, they made 50.1 percent of all income—a 13.5 percent increase in the percent of income going to the top 20 percent. At the same time, the bottom 20 percent of households made only 4.2 percent of all income in 1980, but even that had declined to 3.4 percent in 2006 and 2007—nearly a 20 percent drop in income for the bottom 20 percent of households. Moreover, the working class and middle class also saw their share of income drop. The 40 percent of the population just above the bottom 20 percent saw their incomes decline from 27 percent of all income in 1980 to 23.3 percent of all income in 2006 and 2007¹.

In addition, recent years have seen an increase in the number of people living in poverty. According to U.S. Census bureau data, in the year 2000, 11.3 percent of Americans lived in poverty—some 31.6 million people. By 2007, that figure had increased to 12.5 percent—37.3 million Americans were living in poverty. And that was before the recent

Religious statements on federal tax & budget policies

[We support] ... tax and budget policies that reduce disparities between rich and poor, strengthen democracy and provide greater opportunity for everyone within the common good.

National Council of Churches, “A Social Creed for the 21st Century.”

It is ... both unacceptable and unconscionable for the government to provide tax cuts that benefit the richest at the expense of the most needy amongst us. Instead we should be investing in initiatives that will ensure that all Americans have a bright and prosperous future and that will realize the biblical vision “there shall be no needy among you (Deuteronomy 15:4).

Statement of Mark J. Pelavin, associate director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, responding the 2001 tax cut and budget proposals of President Bush.

It is the responsibility of all citizens, acting through their government, to assist and empower the poor, the disadvantaged, the handicapped and the unemployed. Government should assume a positive role in generating employment and establishing fair labor practices, in guaranteeing the provision and maintenance of the economy’s infrastructure. ... It should regulate trade and commerce in the interest of fairness. Government may levy the taxes necessary to meet these responsibilities, and citizens have a moral obligation to pay those taxes. The way a society responds to the needs of the poor through its public policies is the litmus test of its justice or injustice.

Economic Justice for All Pastoral Letter issued by the U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1986.

National Ecumenical Advocacy Days effort for global peace continues to grow

The 7th annual *Ecumenical Advocacy Days* will explore ways to bring about a world with “Enough for All Creation.” Faith-based advocates and activists will learn about the connections between climate change, migration and poverty in the United States and around the world, and discuss the abundance of our world and how it can be allocated in a way that is fair and just for all creation. The conference will be held from March 13 to 16, 2009, in Washington, DC.

With a new president and new Congress, *Ecumenical Advocacy Days* can have an even greater impact. Historically, the first term of any president is a period ripe for change—a time in which we can have the most influence.

Ecumenical Advocacy Days began in 2003 as a gathering of 400 religious advocates concerned about U.S. foreign policy in Africa and the Middle East. The conference has grown steadily since, with over 700 attending the 2008 conference.

If you are interested in attending and



Photo credit: Rick Reinhard

Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, president of the National Council of Churches, gave the closing worship service at the 2008 Ecumenical Advocacy Days.

lending your voice to a growing ecumenical chorus of pastors, activists and leaders with the support of the policy staff of both protestant and catholic offices in Washington, DC, visit www.advocacydays.org to register. General registration is \$160 until Feb. 13, when it will increase to \$175; the student/Seminarian rate is \$130 until Feb. 13, when it raises to \$150.

Second, because the growing federal deficit has and will continue to prompt spending cuts in many areas benefiting the poor and the struggling lower-middle class, they violate the principle that tax policy must provide adequate levels of revenue, so that the government can insure that each individual have a real opportunity to develop their god-given potential.

The religious voice for moral tax and budget policies

Tax policy alone cannot solve the fiscal crisis facing the U.S. government. Allowing most of the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts to expire will greatly improve our fiscal health as a nation, but we face other important long-term threats to our fiscal health as well.

In June 2008, Peter Orszag, the director of the Congressional Budget Office, told the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance that “...under any plausible scenario, the federal budget is on an unsustainable path—that is, federal debt will grow much faster than the economy over the long run. In the absence of significant changes in policy, rising costs for health care and the aging of the U.S. population will cause federal spending to grow rapidly. If federal revenues as a share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) remain at their current level, the rise in spending will eventually cause future budget deficits to become unsustainable ... [consequently] revenues must rise as a share of GDP, or projected spending must fall—or some combination of these two outcomes must be achieved.”

Now, with the economy rapidly in decline, federal and state tax revenues are likely to decline considerably below expectations during the next two years, while President-elect Obama is likely to increase federal spending on infrastructure investments and other economic stimulus measures in an effort to get the economy moving again. Thus, a two-phase strategy is required. Over the next two

Oregon Interfaith Advocacy Day 2009

Continued from page 1

hunger relief and affordable housing legislation. Rep. Dave Hunt, who is expected to become the next Speaker of the Oregon House, has been invited to give the keynote address. After lunch, the gathering will march to the Capitol Building, where religious delegations will meet with their legislators at appointments scheduled throughout the afternoon.

Your help and support is needed to make IAD 2009 a huge success. Have your congregation, denomination or other organization consider becoming a sponsor of the event. Sponsorship forms are available online at www.emoregon.org or by e-mailing Kevin Finney at kfinney@emoregon.org. You may also phone him at (503) 221-1054, ext. 204. There is no cost associated with becoming a sponsor of the event, though donations are encouraged in order to hold down costs and help fund publicity.

The following organizations have already signed up as sponsors of Interfaith Advocacy Day, and many more are expected: Augustana Lutheran Church, Portland; Bilal Mosque Association; Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon; First Congregational Church, UCC, Salem; Interfaith Council of Greater Portland; Jewish Federation of Greater Portland; Jewish Family and Child Service; Oregon Area Jewish Committee; Oregon Center for Christian Values; Oregon Faith Roundtable Against Hunger; Muslim Educational Trust; and St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal Church, Portland.

To register for the 2009 Interfaith Advocacy Day, visit www.emoregon.org.

to three years, budget deficits will rise in order to fund economic recovery programs, but over the longer five- to 10-year horizon, a balance of increased revenues and careful budget cuts are required to bring the deficit and the growing federal debt back under control.

States governments are also facing a growing revenue crisis as the economy loses steam, and Oregon is no exception as recent revenue projections have made clear.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is working to address these growing fiscal crises at both the federal and state levels. Along with the Oregon Center on Public Policy (OCPP) and the national Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), we are advocating for tax measures that provide needed revenue for education, health care, affordable housing, hunger-relief and other programs, while increasing the basic fairness or progressivity of state and federal taxes. As part of this effort, we are offering workshops on state and federal tax and budget policy to churches throughout Oregon. If your church or denominational meeting would like to host a workshop, please contact Public Policy Director Kevin Finney at (503) 221-1054, ext. 204, or kfinney@emoregon.org.

¹ This data reported in the Congressional Research Service (CRS) report entitled “Inequality in the Distribution of Income: Trends and International Comparisons,” authored by Brian W. Cashell, and updated on Oct. 20, 2008.

² “Recession could cause large increases in poverty and push millions into deep poverty,” by Sharon Parrott, located at www.cbpp.org, released Nov. 24, 2008.

Debate over tax policy

Continued from page 4

dramatic downturn in the economy.

What is likely to be the impact of the current economic decline? According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, there are likely to be another 7.5 to 10.1 million people added to the poverty rolls, if unemployment rises to 9 percent, as Goldman Sachs is currently forecasting. Moreover, the number of Americans living in “deep poverty” (making less than 50 percent of the official poverty line), is also likely to increase by between 4.5 and 6.3 million. That increase will include 1.5 to 2.0 million children who will slip into deep poverty².

Do Bush tax cuts meet biblical standards of justice?

When President Bush took office, the federal income tax burden was allocated under a moderately progressive model with five rate brackets starting at 15 percent and climbing to a top rate of 39.6 percent, with lower rates for capital gains. The top rate of 39.6 percent applied to income exceeding \$288,350 for taxpayers who were married, filing jointly.

In 2001, Congress and the president cut income tax rates in the top four brackets, lowering the top rate to 35 percent while adding a new 10 percent bracket at the lower income levels. The 2001 tax cuts also included reductions in estate and gift taxes. In 2003, President Bush and Congress cut the tax rates on both capital gains and income from dividends.

After a lengthy analysis, Hamill concludes that the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts violate biblical principles of justice in two primary ways. First, by reducing the tax burden on the wealthy and increasing the burdens on middle-income and low-income taxpayers, the cuts violate the principle that taxes should be allocated under a moderately progressive structure.

Home-sharing provides sustainable housing

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's innovative Shared Housing program has expanded the program in Washington County.

Unique among housing programs in the Portland metro area, Shared Housing is a sustainable way to address homelessness one person at a time, while fighting isolation and keeping seniors and people with special needs in their homes.

For more than 25 years, Shared Housing has been matching people who need housing with those willing to rent out a room of their house. Full background checks are included. As awareness of the need to protect the environment grows, this model has increasingly drawn attention as a way to address homelessness without the expense and environmental effects of new construction. It is the ultimate in low-impact housing.

Sharing homes increases the diversity of neighborhoods and decreases the social isolation felt by people who previously lived alone. And, in our climate of growing economic need, those providing housing have a small source of additional income, while those housed have a safe place to live at a lower cost than that of a market-rate apartment. Home sharing is an exciting way to increase the livability of our metro area without changing its landscape substantially.



In addition to its downtown Portland location at First Baptist Church, Shared Housing also provides interviews at the Hillsboro senior center and All Saints Episcopal Church in Hillsboro, as well as St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Tigard. The program plans to expand during January by offering interviews at the Beaverton Community Center.

Shared Housing staff is available to speak to your congregation or group about this unique model. Flyers are also available as are pledge forms and donation envelopes. Thank you for helping us spread the word! For any of these needs, please call Shared Housing at (503) 225-9924 or e-mail housing@emoregon.org.

How will Oregon's "Smoke Free Workplace Law" affect your congregation or organization?

Does your house of worship allow smoking on the grounds? Probably not. That's because faith-based leaders strive to provide healthy and safe environments at houses of prayer and worship. For families and the community, these values are epitomized in your faith-based community. Yet, no product slips under the radar like tobacco.

Effective Jan. 1, 2009, Oregon's Smoke Free Workplace Law goes into effect. How will the law affect your congregation or organization? The law applies to any business or organization, including congregations, with one or more employees, and it prohibits smoking within a minimum of 10 feet of any entrance, exit, window or air intake vent, as well as enclosed areas, regardless of ventilation.

A growing number of faith-based communities have taken a leadership role to eliminate tobacco use. Many already offer support through in-house tobacco resource centers and substance-abuse programs. This law provides an opportunity to provide additional support and resources for smokers who want to quit.

With the new law, families weary of unrelenting tobacco advertising designed to capture market share with their unhealthy consumer goods, will benefit from the change.

Furthermore, Lifework NW, a mental health and addictions service provider, used its tobacco program to create a proclamation many clergy have posted, which declares their entire campus tobacco-free. The proclamation reads:

- Prohibit tobacco use at meetings, conferences or any sponsored program activities.

Client story with Sherrie & Rita: "Shared Housing can really work"

Sherrie has Multiple Sclerosis and needed help around the house. Rita needed a place to live after leaving her abusive husband. Both women heard about Shared Housing and called to sign up with the program. Now Rita and Sherrie live together.

Rita doesn't pay rent, although she does split utility costs, and in exchange, Rita takes care of Sherrie.

Sherrie and Rita also share some perks, for example, they are splitting the cost of a Costco card. They enjoy "picking on each other" and having a good laugh together. Their one big problem—Rita does too much for Sherrie! Rita says, "When I take care of someone, I take care of them, but I have to stop. She needs to move around." Sherrie agrees, "I need to be filling up my own water bottles."

The women have been living together for almost seven months, and Sherrie says she's planning on hanging on to Rita for a long time. They want others to know that Shared Housing can really work.

EMO Ministries by the numbers

(July - September 2008)

Northeast Emergency Food Program at Luther Memorial ... Received 14,820 pounds of donated food and supplied three- to five-days worth of groceries to 2,016 families (up from 1,979 families during the same quarter last year).

Portland International Community School ... Reached the school's maximum capacity of 51 students.

Russian Oregon Social Services ... Provided 194 Russian-speaking clients with direct services, including assistance to 65 domestic violence/sexual assault clients; 12 women received mental health counseling and 23 received a free mammogram, 3 clients received rental assistance, 15 dental care, 8 legal assistance and 15 attended ESL classes.

Shared Housing ... Arranged 138 housing matches, providing 380 months of housing.

Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees ... Received 41 refugees and asylees including 11 from the Former Soviet Union, 15 from Cuba, 6 from Burma and 9 from Iraq; 9 children from the Former Soviet Union, Cuba, and Iraq were enrolled in the Multnomah County School Impact Project; 112 clients were provided immigration services.

2009 Collins Lecture: “Day of Reconciliation” featuring Archbishop Desmond Tutu

One of the most influential religious leaders of our day will be the keynote speaker at Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's (EMO) 40th Collins Lecture. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the celebrated Anglican priest from Cape Town, South Africa, will speak on “The Transformative Power of Reconciliation in Society,” on Monday, May 4, 2009, at 7:30 p.m. at the Chiles Center on the University of Portland campus. Following the Archbishop’s lecture will be a facilitated question and answer session.

That afternoon at 1 p.m., a leadership summit on reconciliation at Buckley Hall (also on campus) will feature a panel discussion and skill building workshops. Participants will consider critical areas where reconciliation is needed—among families, races, ethnicities and religions—and explore personal and communal responses to these challenges.

Before Archbishop Tutu’s lecture, a concert will be held and include various musicians who reflect the wide variety of ethnicities and styles comprising the local musical scene.

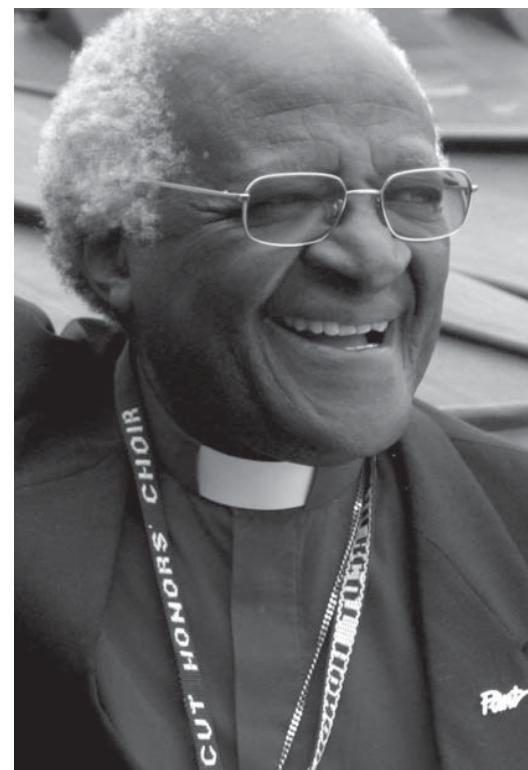
Tutu’s courageous fight against injustice under the apartheid regime was recognized with the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984. Following a short stint as Bishop of Johannesburg, Tutu was elected the first black South African Archbishop of Cape Town in 1986 and held the office until his retirement in 1996. In that same year, he was appointed by President

Nelson Mandela to chair the Truth and Reconciliation Commission—a body set up to probe human rights violations during apartheid.

Archbishop Tutu is currently the chairman of The Elders—a group of 12 international figures noted as elder statesmen, peace activists and human rights advocates. Tutu is also vocal in his defense of human rights and uses his high profile to campaign for the oppressed. He campaigns to fight AIDS, poverty and racism. Besides the Nobel Peace Prize, Archbishop Tutu has received the Albert Schweitzer Prize for Humanitarianism and the Gandhi Peace Prize in 2005.

The Collins Foundation is the presenting sponsor of the event. Additional major sponsorships already committed to the “Year of Reconciliation” theme include Legacy Health Systems and Providence Health Services. Other sponsors are the Archdiocese of Portland, Augustana Lutheran Church and St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal Parish. If your congregation or organization would like to join us as a sponsor, please contact Carla Starrett-Bigg at (503) 221-1054, ext. 275.

As they become available, further details about the “Day of Reconciliation” featuring Archbishop Tutu will be posted on EMO’s Web site at www.emoregon.org. For information, call Jan Elfers, EMO Member Relations director, at (503) 221-1054, ext. 208. Tickets for the event will be available early 2009.



Archbishop Desmond Tutu will be the featured presenter at the 40th Annual Collins Lecture on May 4, 2009.

Celebrate ecumenism during Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity* 2009 will take place during Jan. 18 to 25. The chosen theme is “That they may become one in your hand” (Ezekiel 37:15-19, 22-24a).

The Church Unity Octave, a forerunner of the *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*, was developed by Fr. Paul Wattson, SA, at Graymoor in Garrison, New York, and was first observed from Jan. 18 to 25, 1908. Today, the *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity* invites the whole Christian community throughout the world to pray in communion with the prayer of Jesus “that they all may be one” (John 17:21).

Materials for the *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity* 2009—including daily scripture and prayer guide, ecumenical celebration of the word of God, prayer card, poster and worship bulletin—can be ordered from Graymoor Ecumenical & Interreligious Institute at www.geii.org/.



Religious leaders urge legislators to propose executive ban on torture

On Nov. 12, EMO led a delegation of eight religious leaders to Sen. Ron Wyden’s office for a “National Day of Witness for a Presidential Executive Order to Ban Torture.” The visit was part of a nationwide effort organized by the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT), whose Web site is www.nrcat.org. A similar meeting also took place on Nov. 12 in Rep. Peter DeFazio’s office in Eugene, led by the Rev. Dr. Dan Bryant, pastor of First Christian Church in Eugene, and other Eugene area religious leaders.

Supporters of the ban seek to persuade President-elect Barack Obama to sign such an Executive Order as one of his first official

actions in office. They are also asking for the creation of a Select Committee of Congress to conduct a full investigation into the use of torture by U.S. personnel since Sept. 11, 2001, to ensure that U.S. sponsored torture never happens again. The Executive Ban is based upon a Declaration of Principles written by NRCAT and is grounded in the “Golden Rule” principle, which states that we will not authorize or use any methods of interrogations that we would not find acceptable if used against Americans, be they civilians or soldiers.

Individuals are encouraged to endorse the declaration of principles, which can be found at www.campaigntobantorture.org.

Interfaith peace services

Sponsored by the Interfaith Council of Greater Portland, the theme of the 2008-09 series of interfaith services highlights the transformative power of religion in the world.

This is the fourth year of these monthly observances, which gather together people from various faiths to foster an appreciation for the values we share and the unique gifts that our diverse traditions offer. Each service emphasizes a shared value.

The services are held on Sundays at 4 p.m. through May, located at a different venue each month. See *upcoming services below*.

January 25, “Power of Reconciliation,” at Augustana Lutheran Church, 2710 NE 14th Ave., Portland.

February 22, “Power of Love,” at Bilal Mosque, 4115 SW 160th Ave., Beaverton.

March 15, “Power of Peace,” at First Unitarian Universalist, 1011 SW 12th Ave., Portland.

April 19, “Power of Nature,” at Dharma Rain Zen Center, 2539 SE Madison, Portland.

May 17, “Power of Justice,” at St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal, 120 NE Knott, Portland.



Honor & memorial gifts

Gifts in Honor

August through November '08

In honor of Professors Donna Backand, Barbara O'Malley Floyd, Lee Paton & Joyce Zerwekh, Concordia University School of Nursing
Jennifer Bransfield

In honor of Joyce Zerwekh, director of the Bachelor of Science Program, Concordia University School of Nursing, "In recognition of her leadership"
Dr. Gary A. Withers, J.D.

In honor of Concordia University School of Nursing
George R. Thurston, Jr.

In honor of Mr. & Mrs. Russell Dodd
Elizabeth Girard

In honor of Raul
Diane E. Sutter

In honor of David A. Leslie
Robert & Candace Leslie

In honor of Holly Mulcahey
The Honorable Chip Shields

In honor of Rev. Eugene Ross
Patricia Stryker

In honor of Richard Royse
Otto & Eleanor Blumhagen

In honor of Bob Holland
Dr. Melissa D. Murphy

In honor of Virginia Cain-Wilder

Leonard Cain & Roberta Badger-Cain

In honor of Susan Shearer
Rosemary Dodds

Gifts in Memory

August through November '08

In memory of Bruce K. Nichols
Esther M. Nichols

In memory of Elva, Lorraine & Ethel
Virginia E. King

In memory of Emily Morris
Chris M. Hefty

In memory of Brian E. Bounous
Brenda Mendiola

In memory of David E. Druse
Kathleen Bernards, Warren W. Braley, Arthur Danner, George E. Johanson, Edward H. Kirschbaum, Phil S. Larke, Jean Maris, Sue Parr and Martha W. Torson

In memory of James A. Mundell
Paul A. Extrom

In memory of Clarence True Wilson
Robert D. McNeil

In memory of Robert Joseph
Shelley Turner & Belinda López

In memory of Bill M.
The Rev. Tom Tucker

EMO celebrates recent grants & gifts

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's Board of Directors and staff extend their appreciation to those who have supported EMO's ministries. The following is a partial list of foundation and community support received by EMO since the fall issue of the *Voice*.

Donor (Fund)	Program
Alpine Mortgage	HIV Services
American Cancer Society	Russian Oregon Social Services
Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon	2008 Annual Fund
Cascade AIDS Project, Inc.	HIV Services
Central Lutheran Church	NE Emergency Food Program at Luther Memorial
The Collins Foundation	2008 Annual Fund
First Congregational United Church of Christ, Corvallis	Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns
Fremont United Methodist Church	NE Emergency Food Program at Luther Memorial
Gilead Sciences	HIV Services
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church	NE Emergency Food Program at Luther Memorial
James F. & Marion L. Miller Foundation	NE Emergency Food Program at Luther Memorial
Juan Young Trust	Portland International Community School
Kiwanis Club of Portland	HIV Services
Kiwanis Club of Portland Foundation	Shared Housing
Legacy Health System NW	2008 Annual Fund
Mission of the Atonement	2008 Annual Fund
M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust	Membership Outreach & Development
Northwest Health Foundation	Public Policy Advocacy
Open Society Policy Center	Public Policy Advocacy
Oregon Bears	HIV Services
Oregon Department of Energy	Oregon Interfaith Power & Light
Polk Family Charitable Fund	HIV Services
Rose E. Tucker Charitable Trust	Portland International Community School
Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Spirit Mountain Community Fund	Russian Oregon Social Services
Susan G. Komen for the Cure	Russian Oregon Social Services
Oregon Community Foundation	2008 Annual Fund
United Methodist Church, Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference	2008 Annual Fund

Faith communities address economic crisis

Continued from page 1

- How is the current financial situation impacting your organization/congregation and its members?
- How is your faith community responding to the needs of your members?
 - Are you forming support or discussion groups to create an opportunity for people to discuss the current situation?
 - Does your congregation/organization provide food, counseling, emergency shelter or other services for your community members?
 - Has the need for these services grown?
- Would you be interested in having EMO present a workshop, facilitate a discussion or bring a speaker(s) to your congregation? We are putting together a speaker's bureau of experts who will be able to give insight into economic, social and spiritual aspects of the crisis and to explore possible responses.

Please visit www.emoregon.org to submit your stories and suggestions. You may also mail your responses to EMO, 0245 SW Bancroft St., Suite B, Portland, OR 97239; e-mail Jan Elfers, Member Relations director to jelfers@emoregon.org; or fax to (503) 223-7007.

Your stories will help us better interpret how the faith community in Oregon is responding to the multitude of needs in our congregations and communities, as well as better connect ourselves to one another in prayer, spiritual support and possibly resource sharing.

In this time of uncertainty, our faith communities can provide the supportive environment that enables us to respond to the challenges we face in a thoughtful and spiritually directed way. Now more than ever, we need to be places of refuge, compassion and support. Your input will help our communities in the coming months.

EMO welcomes new members

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) welcomes the new members listed below, which were approved at the September EMO Board of Directors meeting. Our growing list of members reflects the vibrant community of faith in Oregon and enables us to establish partnerships so we can better serve the needs of people in our state.

Congregations: First Christian Church, Albany; Grace Memorial Episcopal Church, Portland; and Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Portland.

Ecumenical Organization: Franciscan Spiritual Center, Milwaukie.

For information on how your congregation or faith organization can become a member of EMO, contact Jan Elfers at (503) 221-1054, ext. 208.

Voice

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

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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