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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **EMO honors Oregon prison chaplains for innovative interfaith approach to restorative justice**

Kelly Rath and Karuna Thompson will be honored with the “Two Pauls Award” at *Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon’s (EMO) Annual Community Awards & Celebration Dinner* on May 18, 2016. Presented in recognition of outstanding work in the interfaith spirit of community service, dialogue and relationship building, the “Two Pauls Award” was established in 1994 to honor two significant Oregon clergy members, The Rev. Dr. Paul Wright and The Most Rev. Paul Waldschmidt.

Serving as Christian and Buddhist chaplains for the Oregon Department of Corrections (ODC), Rath and Thompson initiated and carried out an interfaith chaplaincy approach to serve the diverse humanist, spiritual and religious needs of the incarcerated, which has become a model for prisons across the United States and abroad. They have helped thousands of incarcerated men and women discover and develop meaningful beliefs that sustain them on the journey to restorative justice. They have also helped humanist and faith groups of every kind to use their gifts and traditions as volunteers in the prison system to help victims and perpetrators overcome the disastrous impacts of crime. Thompson continues to serve as chaplain at the Oregon State Penitentiary, and Rath is currently administrator of the Office of Inmate and Community Advocacy for the ODC.

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 Hilton Portland, 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.*