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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon honors Saints Peter & Paul Episcopal Church for its community service to those in need in southeast Portland**

Saints Peter & Paul Episcopal Church, and its Columba Center, will be honored for its direct services in the community with an “Ecumenical Service Award” on May 6, 2008, at the Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) Annual Community Awards & Celebration Dinner. The award is presented in recognition of the church’s hope-inspiring, Christ-centered ecumenical community ministry in southeast Portland.

The Columba Center is a vision for deeply committed Christian life inspired by the example of the ancient Celtic Christians. The natural outgrowth of this modern monastic interpretation of contemporary Christianity is a drive to serve the marginalized populations who call the urban neighborhood adjacent the parish “home.” One of the most compelling aspects of this new Christian vision is the concept that those who receive services are not considered “clients” or distinguished as separate from the members of the faith community itself; instead, they are viewed as equal members of the neighborhood community, and often, vital members of the parish itself. Direct services include ministering to the homeless through Brigid’s Table and to women in prostitution through Rahab’s Sisters, and providing free dental services for those without insurance with regular visits by the Medical Teams International Dental Van.

For over 20 years, Brigid’s Table has ministered to the homeless. Their hot meal program serves more than 50 people struggling with poverty and homelessness every week. About 20 members of Saints Peter & Paul and members of two other churches, as well as community members from throughout Portland, participate in this ministry, whose overriding philosophy is to treat their guests in the same way guests would be treated in their own homes. The ministry is named for St. Brigid of Kildare, a fifth century Irish Celtic saint who founded a religious community known for their wisdom and compassion, hospitality and healing.

Rahab’s Sisters provides a ministry of presence to women working in the sex industry on Portland’s SE 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. The ministry gives hospitality and friendship to women of all faiths and women of no faith, offering food and a chance to come in off the streets to talk and pray in a safe place. Rahab’s Sisters is a collaborative ministry of the Columba Center of Saints Peter & Paul Episcopal Church and parishes of the Metro-East Convocation of the Diocese of Oregon. The ministry has expanded rapidly since its inception in 2003, with about a dozen parishioners currently active as volunteers, joining women from many other congregations as well as others attracted to the ministry. Each Friday night, they visit with anywhere from eight to more than 20 women, who are among the poorest and most marginalized in southeast Portland.

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#### MEMBER DENOMINATIONS

African Methodist Episcopal Church ■ African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church ■ American Baptist Churches ■ 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)  
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) ■ Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland ■ United Church of Christ ■ United Methodist Church ■ Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

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The EMO Annual Community Awards & Celebration Dinner will be held at The Governor Hotel, 614 SW Eleventh Ave., Portland. A reception and silent auction to benefit EMO's ministries will be held from 5:30 to 7 p.m. and the dinner and award presentations will begin at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$60 per person and table sponsorships are available for \$600. For more information, call Carla Starrett-Bigg at (503) 221-1054 or [csbigg@emoregon.org](mailto:csbigg@emoregon.org).

*Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon 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.*