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*Jazz Under
the Stars*

August 1 at 7 p.m.

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Governor's visit to EMO: Budget crisis tests faith

"We have a responsibility, as a compassionate society, to provide a safety net for those who may never overcome significant obstacles," stated Governor John Kitzhaber, M.D., as he met with Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's (EMO) board of directors in June, on the eve of a special session of the Oregon Legislature to deal with an \$880 million budget deficit. EMO invited the Governor to meet with the board to discuss the impact of the budget crisis on the state's most vulnerable residents.

During the meeting, the Governor discussed the seriousness of Oregon's short-term and long-term budget problems, including the causes.



Governor Kitzhaber addresses EMO staff and denominational leaders regarding Oregon's budget crisis.

Photo credit: Drew Strayer

In addition to the current crisis, the Governor projected a \$1.3 billion shortfall in the 2003-05 budget. He outlined his recommendations to stabilize the state's financial

health. These include referring to voters a temporary income tax surcharge; raising beer, wine and cigarette taxes; disconnecting from the federal tax system; and using reserve

funds modestly.

"I appreciate the role the faith community plays in our state," the Governor stated

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Christians can be "leaven" for Middle East peace

In an informal afternoon visit to Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's (EMO) office, Elenie Huszagh, president of the National Council of Churches (NCC), told a group of religious leaders that followers of Jesus are in the best position to help create lasting peace between Palestine and Israel. "It is recognized by both sides that the Christians are the ones who bring the leaven, the balance, between the Muslims and the Jews," said Huszagh.

Huszagh, a Greek Orthodox laywoman who lives on the Oregon coast, had just returned from a trek to the Middle East with an ecumenical delegation of 13 church leaders. The U.S. delegation was invited by the Middle East Council of Churches and met with Middle East church officials, Arab heads of state, Palestinian representatives and Israeli authorities.

Huszagh told the group, "The fear on the part of everybody there is great. You can feel it. There are no rules for attacking each other, because they are not humans to each other." Christians, Huszagh says, may be able to help the combatants see their

that an enduring peace can be achieved if the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories ends and if the establishment of a viable Palestinian state alongside a secure State of Israel follows soon," U.S. church leaders said.

The delegation called for

international community, including by the Arab states. ... We condemn equally and unequivocally both the suicide bombings and Palestinian violence against Israeli society and the violence of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories," the U.S. church leaders said. "All are counter-productive to achieving peace with justice. ... Both societies are caught in a cycle of violence and revenge."

The delegation expressed sympathy for everyone who has lost family members. It also highlighted the plight of Middle Eastern Christian communities, which have shrunk as people flee the troubled region.

"What is happening in the Middle East is a situation that breaks our hearts and troubles us beyond words," says

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"It is recognized by both sides that the Christians are the ones who bring the leaven, the balance, between the Muslims and the Jews," said Huszagh.

foes as people — a key step toward peace.

In a statement issued after their visit, the council delegation called for "bold steps" to be taken by Israel and the Palestinian Authority to bring a just and lasting peace. "Our delegation leaves the Middle East convinced

the establishment of an international peacekeeping force to oversee the Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza and maintain order until a peace agreement can be fully implemented. Israel, the delegation stated, "is entitled to full recognition of its legitimacy within the

Justice in Africa: Churches can play a role

Recently EMO had the opportunity to be one of the hosts of a delegation from Africa who had traveled to the United States as part of the Peace with Justice Educational Tour. This tour is designed to build stronger ties between people in Africa and the United States and is sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). The Oregon part of the tour was supported by a diverse group of organizations including Jubilee USA Network of Oregon, Albina Ministerial Alliance, Oregon Africa Council, PMSCA-Africa AIDS Response and EMO.

It was not too long ago that churches in this country played a critical role in bringing an end to the apartheid system. Today, we have the opportunity to bring about an end to other injustices in Africa and be about the business of promoting peace and community development through life-giving policies and practices.

Among the delegates—which included a university professor, union organizer, youth worker and student—was the Rev. Dr. Molefe Samuel Tsele, the general secretary of the South African Council of Churches (SACC). Dr. Tsele is a Lutheran pastor who was imprisoned and tortured for his



David Leslie

work against apartheid in the 1980s. Today, Dr. Tsele and the other members of the Peace with Justice Tour are attempting to enlist our support in a multinational effort to address the impact that debt, violence and HIV/AIDS are having on the people of Africa. The delegates and the tour sponsors argue persuasively that we in the United States often times contribute to the problems that Africans face, and thus, have a moral obligation to help with solutions that will better lives and promote justice. The interconnectedness the Americans have with Africans is not merely theological or theoretical. Through slavery, missionary movements, immigration, famine and disaster relief, struggles against apartheid, multinational corporate development and U.S. military intervention (covert and overt) in all parts of Africa, our lives are intricately intertwined. Simply put, our country continues to impact Africa and contribute both to its well-being and suffering.

As ecumenical organizations, the SACC and EMO are also deeply connected and natural allies in this movement. We are connected by faith, sharing our common call of service to Jesus Christ and the unity of the Christian community. We are also joined together in the mission of reconciliation, justice, environmental stewardship, eradication of poverty and the

empowerment of people who are “spiritually, socially and economically marginalized” (from the SACC mission statement).

Through the Freedom with Justice Tour, we have been invited to join together with our brothers and sisters in Africa, to strengthen our call for lenders to forgive debts in developing nations (much of which was incurred by illegitimate governments like the apartheid government in South Africa). We are also called to advocate for an increase in our national financial contribution to address HIV/AIDS in Africa and to minimize our military presence and contributions in Africa and shift these expenditures to areas like housing and health care.

It was not too long ago that churches in this country played a critical role in bringing an end to the apartheid system. Today, we have the opportunity to bring about an end to other injustices in Africa and be about the business of promoting peace and community development through life-giving policies and practices.

The West Coast visit was the first part of the Peace with Justice Tour. Additional groups will be traveling throughout the country during this year. I hope that you will pray for their mission and support their efforts. I also invite you to join together with EMO in our mission to support peace and justice in Oregon and in God’s world that exists far beyond our state and national borders.

For further information on the Peace with Justice Educational Tour, contact AFSC at (215) 241-7177 or visit www.afsc.org.

Matching grants allow you to double your support

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) has received several matching grants recently that will allow you to double the impact of your donation.

The Collins Foundation has offered to match donations (up to \$75,000) for the *EMO general fund*. This fund supports EMO’s educational events, public policy advocacy, theological dialogue and administrative functions.

The Collins Foundation has also offered to match donations (up to \$10,000) for the *Parent Mentor Program*. The funds will support the program’s mission of matching volunteer mentors with parents who are successfully engaged in a social service program for addiction, domestic violence or some other serious challenge.

The Bullitt Foundation has offered to match donations of \$50 or more (up to \$5,000) for the *Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns* (INEC). The funds will support INEC’s efforts in the areas of global warming, energy and sustainable agriculture.

For more information, please call Stephanie Howell at (503) 221-1054.

Giving to EMO through United Way

Please remember you can donate to EMO through United Way contributions. Although EMO is not a United Way member agency, individuals may designate our organization as a beneficiary by selecting EMO in the “Donor Option” box on the United Way pledge form.

EMO celebrates recent grant awards

The board of directors and staff extend their appreciation to the many supporters who have given their time and talents in support of the program ministries of EMO. The following is a list of recent foundation support received by EMO.

Program	Award	Donor (Fund)
E M O	\$5,000	Templeton Foundation
Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns (INEC)	\$20,000 (\$5 match)	Bullitt Foundation
Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns	\$2,000	Jackson Foundation
Northeast Emergency Food Program (NEFP)	\$2,000	Jackson Foundation
Parent Mentor Program	\$4,000	Portland Women’s Union
Parent Mentor Program	\$5,000	Templeton Foundation
Parent Mentor Program	\$3,000	Women’s Care Foundation
Portland International Community School (PICS)	\$3,000	Blazers Boys N’ Girls
Portland International Community School	\$1,048	Southridge High School
Russian Oregon Social Services (ROSS)	\$39,600	Community 101
Russian Oregon Social Services	\$10,000	Susan B. Komen Foundation
Shared Housing	\$6,338	Oregon Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence
		City of Gresham

voice

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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

Congregations active in local agriculture

Oregon agriculture faces many challenges. International competition, the aging of the farm population and loss of food processors and distributors are some of the factors that make it difficult for farms to remain viable. The lack of communication and understanding between the urban and rural areas of our state makes it difficult to find solutions to food and farm problems.

Education is one area where congregations are making progress in connecting farmers with Oregon's urban population. Recently, First Unitarian Church in Portland and the Salem Unitarian Universalist Congregations sponsored forums that drew large crowds to discuss the future of farmers in the Willamette Valley, especially in the context of international trade. This October, congregations in Corvallis will come together to celebrate the harvest time and consider how they can deepen their connections with the farming community.

Supporting local agriculture is another way that congregations have been involved in bringing justice to the food system. Some exciting models, such as Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), have been developing in Oregon over the past few years. CSA is a rapidly growing international movement that puts

people in direct relationship with local farmers. In this relationship, a household purchases a share of the produce in advance, sharing the risk and the bounty with the farmer. The farmers provide a box of produce, and sometimes other items like eggs or meat, generally on a weekly basis from May to October.

Faith-based groups in several parts of the country have taken a lead in starting and/or supporting CSA's. In Oregon, one congregation that has made considerable progress in participating in the CSA movement is First United Methodist Church in Eugene, under the leadership of The Rev. John Pitney. Part of the foundation for this success was laid through previous organizing by Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns around the 1999 A Place at the Table Conference and 2001 Cool Congregations workshop.

Two years ago, First United Methodist started the annual "That's My Farmer" event to connect the congregation's households with local CSA's. The celebratory and educational event gathers all the CSA farmers from the Eugene area to share their stories with the congregation. Information on each CSA and how to sign up is provided. This year, the congregation recruited additional congregations to participate. On April 4 of this



Photo credit: Andrea Allen Sis

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) participants at third annual "That's My Farmer" event.

year, over 200 people came to the third annual "That's My Farmer" event from over ten Eugene area congregations, representing Jewish, Protestant and Catholic churches. Tickets sold raised \$1,200 to subsidize the price of CSA boxes for people with low incomes.

The Rev. Pitney feels that the satisfaction of the CSA relationship lies far beyond good food. He observed, "When you're used to shopping in our modern supermarkets, it's a real homecoming when you can point across the room and shout so everyone can hear, 'Hey, that's my farmer!'"

Eight ways congregations can support just and sustainable food systems

Food plays a central role in all faith traditions as symbol, a place where faith meets practice, a means to nurture fellowship, and a way to enjoy the goodness of creation.

There is much that congregations can do to help build a just and sustainable local food system. It needn't require adding another project or program to an already full plate. The opportunity is in integrating this concern into the life of the congregation and its existing resources and commitments. Congregations can enhance the local food system through the things they do every week. The following are some key areas to focus attention on.

Celebration and Worship

- 1 In most traditions, there are religious holidays or other special worship days through which appreciation for food and the call for building a just and sustainable food system can be lifted up, such as Rural Life Sundays, Rogation days and Earth Day services.

Education

- 2 Organize an educational series at your congregation on food, faith and care of the land. The course could include topics such as the spiritual, scriptural and theological grounds for land stewardship and ethical eating, sustainable agriculture, farmland preservation, food justice issues and making ethical food choices as a consumer. Include a potluck of locally grown food and a visit by a local farmer. Conclude by exploring practical action steps your congregation can take and plan follow-up steps that are manageable.

Congregational Lifestyle

- 3 Use local produce for congregational meals. Invite one of the farmers you've purchased the food from to talk at the meal.
- 4 Provide locally-grown foods for a congregational supper. Put place cards on the table to let people know where the food comes from and who grew it, and provide recipes.
- 5 Consider offering the church parking lot as a site for a farmers' market.

Community Ministry and Public Witness

- 6 Organize a food-buying club available to neighborhood residents at the congregation.
- 7 Work with farmland protection organizations to uphold and strengthen land use laws protecting farmland.
- 8 Write letters to your elected representatives to let them know of your concerns and express support for good land use laws.



Abridged from Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's *Portland's Bounty: A Guide to Eating Locally and Seasonally in the Greater Portland and Vancouver Areas*. To purchase a copy of *Portland's Bounty*, please call (503) 736-0835.

Go green!

OIPL provides new outreach for congregations and their members

The mission of EMO's Oregon Interfaith Power and Light (OIPL) is to educate congregations and their members about renewable energy and energy efficiency and to equip them to take action. Thanks to the passage of Senate Bill 1149 in the 2001 legislature, starting on March 1, 2002, residential and small business customers of Portland General Electric (PGE) and Pacific Power were provided with a new portfolio of renewable energy choices. All of these options are mandated by the state and do not affect the quality of your electric service. The Oregon Interfaith Global Warming Campaign was part of an effort by environmental, consumer and low-income organizations, led by the Fair and Clean Energy Coalition, to protect small customers from an unpredictable open market while allowing new energy choices.

Starting this spring, OIPL will be providing new resources and training for people to educate their congregations about renewable energy, the renewable options provided by their utility. It will continue to provide presentations to congregations interested in learning more about green power and energy efficiency. OIPL also is partnering with GME to provide incentives for congregations and their members to "go green." Each member of a congregation who signs up for one of the Green Mountain Energysm electricity choices can have \$10 contributed to their congregation or to OIPL's energy efficiency services. After signing up, call OIPL at (503) 221-1054, ext. 278, if you want the \$10 to go to your congregation.

Refugees “SOAR” with community support

Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees (SOAR) is a program of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) and an affiliate of Church World Service (CWS). CWS is a relief, development and refugee assistance ministry of 36 Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican denominations.

SOAR offers comprehensive resettlement services to assist refugees and immigrants in becoming self-sufficient, integrated community members of the United States. SOAR provides cultural orientation, assesses the needs of refugees, collaborates with other agencies for services such as employment placement, medical assistance, food stamps, ESL tutoring and financial assistance and makes referrals for housing, furniture, food and clothing assistance. The program also links sponsors, such as congregations, friends or community organizations, with refugees before they arrive in the United States, and helps sponsors welcome and assist the refugees in their adjustment to a new life in the Portland area.

SOAR resettles between 500 to 800 refugees a year. Since 1979, the program has helped resettle refugees from countries including Angola, Bosnia, the Congo, Cuba, Ethiopia, the former Soviet Union, Haiti, Iran, Iraq, Kosovo, Liberia, Myanmar (Burma), Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan and Vietnam.

Mohamed's flight from persecution

One of the many refugees resettled by SOAR this year is Mohamed, who fled the persecution of a military regime in Myanmar (formally Burma). Mohamed is a Muslim and member of the Rohingya minority group, which limited his options in Myanmar. He was treated as an illegal alien in his own country. He did not have the right to get a higher education, was unable to work as a teacher or in a government position or even receive social services. Mohamed joined a resistance movement led by Aung San Suu Kyi, a

Nobel Peace Prize recipient, and was sentenced to 14 years in prison for anti-government activity. While in a labor camp, Mohamed and two friends made a daring escape to Thailand. One of his friends was shot during the chase. From Thailand, Mohamed then made his way to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, crossing the border illegally. He worked under the table for low wages with no benefits, constantly fearful of being arrested as an illegal worker.

A refugee is a person living outside his or her country who is unable to return because of a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion. According to recent estimates, there are 14 million refugee and asylum seekers throughout the world.

Through nonprofit organizations in Kuala Lumpur, Mohamed learned of the opportunity to apply for refugee status at a liaison office for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. He applied in 1998, and his case was approved within three weeks. Unfortunately, the processing period for third country resettlement was not as short, and he needed to find a sponsor. Through a friend in Portland—Reza, yet another Rohingya who had fled Burma—Mohamed was connected to SOAR, which made an agreement with Bethany Presbyterian Church in Portland to sponsor him. He was originally scheduled to travel in the fall of 2001, but was delayed by the terrorist attacks of September 11. Despite the tragedy, Mohamed was not deterred.

The congregation gathered funds and volunteers to help Mohamed upon his arrival. Mohamed was met at the airport by Reza and a welcoming party from Bethany Presbyterian Church. The warm reception of a group of strangers from a completely different religious background shocked him so much that he was nearly moved to tears. When asked what was Mohamed's first impression of America, he answered, "People's respect for other human beings surpassed my expectations."

Mohamed's fellow countrymen and many Americans have played a big role in making his resettlement successful. A couple from Bethany Church, Linda and Larry, hosted Mohamed in their home the first two days after his arrival. Lou taught him English twice a week. Owen, another member of Bethany's congregation, became one of Mohamed's biggest supporters by helping Mohamed get an Oregon ID, open a bank account and find an apartment. Owen claims that he is the most changed by this experience. He was struck by the obstacles that refugees face when adapting to our society and was impressed by Mohamed's intelligence and sense of humor.

Mohamed plans to find work and to earn a college degree. He doesn't care how hard it is or how long it takes. After what he faced in Burma, he proclaimed, "I can deal with it!" What is hardest for Mohamed is not having the words to express his gratitude to those who have assisted with his resettlement.

How to get involved

You, your church, friends or community organization can help resettle an individual or family. Sponsors create a hospitable environment for refugees and provide for material needs upon their arrival to the U.S. Sponsors also help refugees find affordable housing, greet refugees at the airport, helping with transportation, be a friend in time of need, and assist with other tasks necessary to a new life.

For more information, please call the SOAR office at (503) 284-3002.

Contributor:

Dana Margosian, SOAR case manager



PICS graduating students (from left): Ray Mendez, Jason Baltazar, Timo Gibbs, Vita Gula and Samuel Villegas. Not pictured: Zakari Ewing, Jorge Hidalgo, Inga Matlashevsky and Gilberto Vega-Ramirez.

Portland International Community School (PICS), an alternative high school for refugee, immigrant and multi-cultural youth, working in partnership with Portland Public Schools, held its second annual graduation ceremony at the Foursquare Church in southeast Portland on June 11. Following the ceremony, community supporter Anne Hughes hosted a reception at her Kitchen Table Cafe at SE Twelfth and Oak, which is located across the street from PICS.

Graduates honored were: Jason Baltazar,

Zakari Ewing, Timo Gibbs, Vita Gula, Jorge Hidalgo, Inga Matlashevsky, Raymond Mendez III, Gilberto Vega-Ramirez and Samuel Villegas.

Of this year's nine graduates, five were born in other countries—two in Mexico, two in the Ukraine, and one in England. One of the graduates was born in the United States shortly after his parents and brother arrived from Germany. Another graduate, a second generation Portlander, is a registered member of the Shoshone nation. The other two graduates are second generation Mexican-Americans.

All of the graduates had a history of poor attendance and struggled with school in many ways before coming to PICS. They all agree that they found the support they needed to succeed at PICS. With interests including automotive repair, early childhood education and social work, most plan to go to college. One of the graduates received a college scholarship from the I Have A Dream Foundation. Another graduate is focusing on the challenges of being a new parent.

For further information about the school, please contact Rachel Baldwin at (503) 232-5334, or rbaldwin@emoregon.org.

International school celebrates new graduates

Patton Home nears completion



Morgester honored for work with recovery homes

On April 18, Michael Morgester, outreach coordinator for the Oregon Recovery Homes, an Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) program, was honored with the Beverly “Ma” Curtis Award at the 15th Annual Conference of the Oregon Coalition on Housing and Homelessness (OCHH). Each year, OCHH presents the Beverly “Ma” Curtis Award for Homeless Activism to a homeless/formerly homeless person or homeless self-help group that has made a significant contribution to ending homelessness on either a local, state or national level.

The award is named in memory of Beverly Curtis (1922-1991), who spent most of her adult life (25 years in all) living on the streets. During her recovery from alcoholism, she joined the National Coalition for the Homeless board of directors, spent the last five years of her life sober, and dedicated her remaining years to helping those who were homeless. Ms. Curtis mobilized a grassroots movement by recounting her own personal story and informing interested persons on how to become involved through both direct service and lobbying activities.

Like “Ma” Curtis, Morgester has dedicated his life and work to helping those who are homeless and living with addictions. He was

“shocked and honored” to be the recipient of the Beverly “Ma” Curtis Award. As outreach coordinator, Morgester develops support for Oxford Houses, which is the primary recovery home model for the Oregon Recovery Homes program. An Oxford House is a self-supporting, democratically self-run, alcohol- and drug-free living environment for individuals in recovery from alcoholism and/or drug addiction. EMO administers a state-funded, interest-free loan fund program for Oxford Houses. The houses receive up to \$5,000 of start up money to pay for deposits, furniture and appliances. These households of peer-based groups are a practical and cost-effective method in breaking the cycle of addiction.

A recovering addict himself, Morgester began his recovery on October 10, 1994, and six days later, he was accepted into an Oxford House, where his peers “held his hand” through his recovery process. Today, he sees this as Divine Intervention. Morgester comments, “Being the rebel I was, I now believe a peer group was the only source of help I would allow myself to receive at the time.”

Morgester reflected on his experience as outreach coordinator, “It has truly become a passion for me. My self-esteem was built upon



Bob Repine (left), director of Oregon Housing and Community Services, presents award to Michael Morgester.

the foundation of service, which is a part of recovery. Witnessing so many lives change for the better has always been my motivation and my reward. I have had the privilege of helping to open over 40 Oxford Houses. ... I am a fortunate man. God has been good to me.”

For more information about Oregon Recovery Homes and Oxford Houses, you may contact Michael Morgester at (503) 244-7890.

Breast cancer outreach for Russian community continues

In January 2002, the Oregon and Southwest Washington Affiliate of the Susan B. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation awarded Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon’s (EMO) Russian Oregon Social Services (ROSS) a grant to continue the ROSS Breast Health Education Project, which educates Russian-speaking women of the risks of breast cancer, teaches them about early detection and facilitates their access to healthcare screening programs.

There are more than 100,000 Russian-speaking refugees and immigrants living in the Portland metropolitan area. Over 20 percent are 65 years or older, making them one of the oldest age groups immigrating to the U.S. Because a woman’s chance of getting breast cancer increases with age, the Russian-speaking population is especially at risk. Many Russian-speaking women do not understand the importance of preventive health. In their native countries, little information about breast cancer is available to women and mammograms are rare. In the United States, factors such as language barriers, culture differences and isolation due to religious beliefs, keep Russian-speaking women from using health care services that are available in their communities. This creates a need for culturally relevant educational outreach. With the foundation’s support, ROSS will be able to continue to meet the need in the Russian-speaking population for breast cancer education.

To date, the ROSS Breast Health Education Project has been very effective as a bridge between Russian-speaking people and the available resources in this community. By understanding the unique cultural differences and information needs of the Russian-speaking population, outreach efforts increase the number of women who receive breast cancer screening, preventative and medical care. So far, hundreds of Russian-speaking women have attended presentations, a large audience has been informed

about the issue through local radio and newspaper media, and over 6,500 Russian-language breast health brochures have been distributed among the Russian-speaking population. Over 50 women have been referred for free mammograms.

Program nationally recognized

The ROSS Breast Health Education Project is unique as a population-specific program at the regional level, as well as at the national level. In recognition of this leadership, the project was selected to present at the Fifth Annual Susan G. Komen Conference in Washington D.C. this June. The conference program focused on

research and advancements in breast cancer genetics, diagnosis, treatment and community-based education and outreach programs. It was an opportunity for researchers, healthcare professionals, Komen affiliates, advocacy groups and cancer survivors to discuss priorities in the fight against breast cancer.

The recognition is considered by ROSS staff to be an acknowledgment of the work that the ROSS Breast Health Education Project has provided in the community.

For more information about ROSS and the Breast Health Education Project, call (503) 777-3437.

Clothier named new Parent Mentor Program manager

On May 13, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon’s (EMO) Parent Mentor Program named a new manager – Patti Clothier, MSW. Clothier is not new to EMO; she has worked with the Parent Mentor Program since Oct. 2001 as the Parent Mentor Program support specialist.

Clothier is a single parent of two teenage boys, Ryan and Evan. She grew up in Washington and Montana and has lived in Oregon since 1978. She owns a home in SE Portland, where she has lived since her children were born.

Clothier received a bachelor’s degree in education and psychology and a master’s degree in social work from Portland State University. Before joining the Parent Mentor Program, she worked for several educational and social service organizations including North Clackamas School District as a substitute teacher, Big



Patti Clothier, new Parent Mentor Program manager.

Brothers/Big Sisters as a program coordinator and Parry Center. While acquiring her MSW degree, Clothier became a home visitor to senior citizens, helping them clean their homes and taking them shopping and to doctor appointments. She continues to be a home visitor to this day, because she has a special place in her heart for each one of her clients.

In her spare time, Clothier enjoys hiking, camping, sightseeing, traveling, watching movies and spending time with friends and family. “I am a ‘people’ person and enjoy hearing what others have to share.”

If you would like more information about the Parent Mentor Program, you may contact Patti Clothier at (503) 231-3571 or mentor@emoregon.org.

EMO urges national poverty reduction

During the spring, the faith community throughout the county has been actively involved in advocating for effective reauthorization of Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF). Phillip Wong, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's (EMO) public policy director, met with Oregon's congressional delegation in Washington, D.C., during the debate on reauthorization of TANF. EMO was there to ensure that poverty reduction be the goal of TANF and not just reduction of persons on welfare rolls.

EMO's visit to Washington, D.C. was part of a national lobby day organized by The Rev. Jim Wallis and Call to Renewal. Over 200 people from 42 states came to meet with their U.S. Senators about TANF. EMO brought a message of reducing poverty and not welfare rolls, restoring benefits to legal immigrants, adjusting state funding to inflation, allowing flexibility in work and training requirements, and maintaining Oregon's waiver. Many of these issues are not in the current version of the bill.

Both U.S. Senators Smith (R-Ore.) and Wyden (D-Ore.) were sympathetic to these issues. However, it was clear that more work needs to be done to provide a clearer picture of poverty in Oregon.

In response, EMO organized a local prayer vigil at Ainsworth United Church of Christ in Portland. The vigil brought together community and faith leaders and concerned citizens. The service included prayers from The Rev. Dr. Héctor López, The Rev. Cecil Prescod, Northeast Emergency Food Program manager Jennifer Core, Mike Hiland with Bread for the World, Mike Leachman from the Oregon Center for Public Policy and EMO public policy program assistant Drew Strayer. The service concluded with an offering of letters mailed to Senators Smith and Wyden.

Congress originally passed TANF in 1996 as part of the Welfare to Work legislation. Federal welfare laws required recipients to work for their benefits, focusing on the personal responsibility aspects of poverty. It also excluded legal immigrants from welfare benefits. Although the

welfare rolls were reduced across the nation, including Oregon, poverty barely saw a decline, despite the economic boom of the 1990s.

The U.S. Senate is set to vote on a tri-partisan bill (Independent, Democrat and Republican) during the first or second week of July. The bill includes the President's marriage promotion programs and higher work requirement in 70 percent of state caseloads. In mid-May, the U.S. House of Representatives passed its version of TANF that comprises many of the President's proposals, including increasing the work requirements.

Putting your faith into action

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's (EMO) public policy advocacy strives to enable people of faith to put their beliefs into action. EMO's charge is to discern God's call for unity of all people and to provide the education and tools necessary for the faith community to confront the injustices of the world.

As our society struggles with many social problems and competing values, EMO has taken leadership on many issues important to the faith community. The public policy advocacy program has been actively tracking state and national policies. Work is also underway on producing EMO's widely distributed ballot measure guide for the fall election.

To learn how you can get involved, please call Phillip Wong, public policy director, at (503) 221-1054 or e-mail pwong@emoregon.org to get regular updates and action alerts on policy matters.



EMO board members The Rev. Marvin Jones and immediate past president Virginia Robertson look on as Governor Kitzhaber explains current budget deficit.

Photo credit: Drew Strayer

Governor's visit to EMO

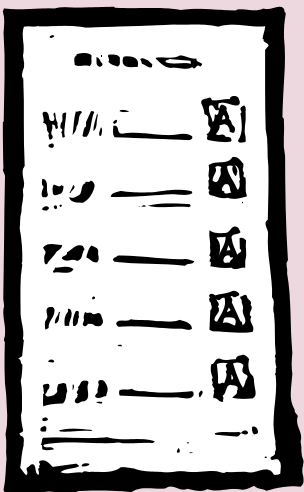
Continued from page 1

during his visit. "You [the faith community] can play a significant role in educating our Legislature on the scope of the problems we are facing."

The meeting with the Governor provided timely insights for EMO's legislative strategy for the third legislative special session. During the first two special sessions, EMO called on state leaders to increase beer, wine and tobacco taxes; repeal an anti-tax measure; overhaul the state tax structure for long-term stability; and maintain safety net services.

Following the meeting with the Governor, EMO held a meeting with participants to discuss a call to action with steps to protect safety net services for basic human needs. The group developed an interfaith strategy that focused on educating key legislators on the importance of protecting the most vulnerable, mobilizing members of the faith community and working in coalitions to accomplish these goals. "Working to end poverty and advocating for justice are central to our call as Christians. We will be present in Salem and throughout the state in months ahead, discussing long-term solutions to the myriad of challenges facing Oregonians," said Phillip Wong, EMO's public policy director. ■

Ballot measure guide available this fall



Every general election, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) produces its highly regarded and sought-after *Guide to Oregon Ballot Measures*. In the year 2000, EMO distributed over 20,000 guides statewide. EMO is continuing its tradition of producing this guide for the 2002 general election. Every statewide ballot measure will be summarized and include arguments from proponents and opponents. Also included will be the position of EMO's board of directors for each measure.

EMO's ballot measure guide will be available to member congregations and the public in early September, cost permitting. Additional copies will be available at minimal cost.

Donations are needed to help us print and distribute the guide statewide. The suggested donation is \$25 but any amount would be appreciated.

Representatives from EMO will be available to come to your community to conduct discussion forums on the ballot measures.

If you would like to order copies of the ballot measure guide, to make a donation or to set up a discussion forum, please call (503) 221-1054 or e-mail emo@emoregon.org.

"The measure of any government is found in the care of its poorest citizens. Compassion and hospitality require us to take their needs into consideration before all others. Now is the time to step forward and renew the pioneer spirit of care and cooperation, which made possible our great State. What is needed today is a vision to serve the needs of those most in need and the courage to carry out the vision. The quality of life for all Oregonians is at stake."

Excerpt from resolution to the Oregon State Legislature regarding the State's budget deficit from the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, dated June 2002.

Visions of justice, prayers for peace in the Middle East

The Voice recently spoke with three community religious leaders familiar with the peoples and the issues of the Holy Land: The Rev. Roula Alkhouri, a Presbyterian pastor from Bend, who was born in Syria; The Rev. Richard Toll, an Episcopalian who leads St. John the Evangelist parish in Milwaukie; and Catherine Lingas, a congregational leader from Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Portland.

Although all offered different perspectives of the region, the themes that emerged from their comments included justice, commitment, historical presence and the need for education and prayer. All agreed that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an important issue for Americans to be informed about, for humanitarian, historical and political reasons. Alkhouri shared, “We are connected as part of the human family; therefore, we have a moral and global commitment to all people around the world in defending their human rights and security.”

Lingas is one of many Orthodox Christians in the United States concerned about the welfare of Christians in Palestine. “What many American Christians have forgotten,” she said, “is that there have been Christian communities in all of the Middle East countries since Biblical times ... but the Arab/Israeli conflicts since 1948 have devastated them.” She continued, “There are only 174,000 Christians left in the Holy Lands, and many, if they are able, are leaving.”

Toll’s primary concern about the ongoing

violence in Israel and Palestine centers around the principle of justice and what he considers the one-sidedness of American foreign policy. “Justice issues are not being addressed. Palestinians are losing their land, culture and human rights. They have been under occupation for 35 years. ... It is to the advantage of the United States to begin to support a two state solution in order to allow the Palestinian people to emerge as a separate, defined democracy in the region.”

Alkhouri also hopes for justice for the Palestinian people. She commented, “Palestinians have been suffering for over 50 years, and our world has done very little to help them.” She is concerned by the lack of international intervention in the region, saying, “I hope and pray that we will soon have a strong United Nations peacekeeping presence in Israel/Palestine.”

A just peace in the Middle East is a vision shared by all of the leaders. Alkhouri visualizes, “All people having the right to self-determination and having equal access to economic resources. I would like to see a recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to exist and to organize themselves as a nation.”

For Lingas, a just peace will only come through compromise by all parties. “I see a Jerusalem open to all people, with an Israeli state secure within its current borders. They would have pulled out of the settlements in the occupied territories, which would now be used to resettle Palestinian refugees. In turn, the Palestinian refugees would give up the right to return to their lands in Israel.” She continued, “A contiguous Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, engaged in trade and development with Israel,

Web Sites

Your denominational Web site may feature information about conflicts, dilemmas and ministries in the Middle East. You may also find the following web sites helpful and informative as you explore the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in your own faith community.

- Information on prayer vigils for Middle East – www.loga.org/PrayerVigilHome.htm
- Israeli-Palestinian public policy think tank – www.ipori.org
- Palestinian Christian advocacy site – www.sabeel.org
- Churches for Middle East Peace – www.cmep.org
- Middle East Council of Churches – www.mecchurches.org

could create a growing dynamic economy that would be a model for other neighboring states.”

For Toll, a just peace would also include a two state solution. He envisions an end to the occupation and return to the border of 1967, with removal of Israeli settlements and a shared Jerusalem. He sees “the Palestinian state having its own sovereignty and maintaining its own borders on the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and the West Bank.”

What can we as Oregonians do to help the Middle East peace process? Toll advises, “Pray for peace. Learn of the history of the conflict.” Alkhouri advocates for prayer and study, “The Middle East churches are inviting us to join them in prayer and understanding of the situation. Become more aware of the issues at hand. Equally listen to moderate voices from both sides of the conflict and get involved in local advocacy groups.” Her close ties to the region and memories of growing up in Syria also give Alkhouri a sense of hope about the future. “I would like people to know about the kindness and hospitality of people in the Middle East. Despite war and tensions, people there are incredibly generous and hospitable to others.”

Christians can be “leaven” for Middle East peace

Continued from page 1



Children greet NCC-led delegation in Jenin.

Rev. Wes Taylor, EMO board president. “Perhaps we can understand a bit more and discover ways we can individually and as Christian communities make the situation not quite as helpless and hopeless. Warfare does not solve problems. Forgiveness is the hope for us.”

Most of the Christian leaders at the Portland meeting called for a balanced view of the Middle East conflict, saying that Jesus’ teachings on peace can help. David Leslie, executive director of EMO, called the discussion an attempt “to find common ground while we discuss passionate issues.”

Huszagh pointed out that Americans on all sides of the issue seem strongly invested in what transpires in the land that is holy to three major faiths. “This issue has ramifications much larger than these two peoples not able to get along in this little place of the world,” she concluded.

Contributors: Ed Langlois, *Catholic Sentinel* and Melinda Smith, EMO

Oregon children respond with hope to 9/11 tragedy

More than 8,000 young Oregonians ended the school year by using art to express their feelings about the events that shook the world last fall. As part of the Children’s 9/11 Solidarity Project, each child painted two tiles: one that depicts the world as they see it today and another as they wish it to be. The long-term goal of the project is to create a mosaic of the painted tiles that will be erected in a public place in the Portland area (location still to be determined). The artwork will be unveiled at a ceremony on Sept. 11, 2002.

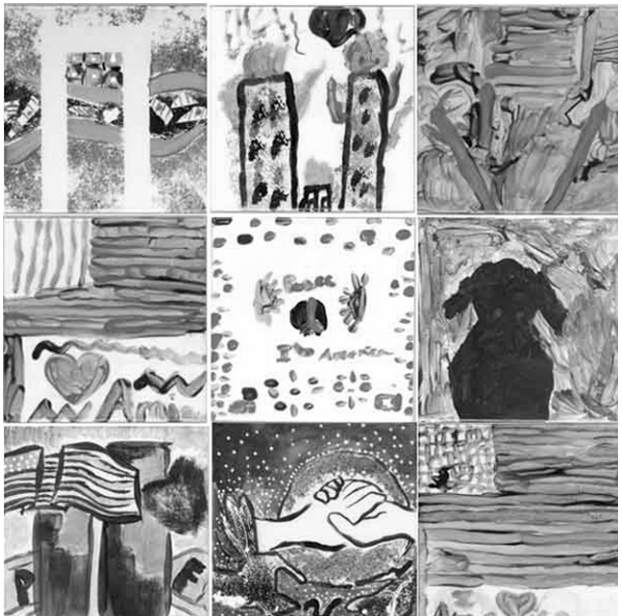
“We wanted to give the children in our community a gift—something that can help them heal,” says Jim Zehren, the Portland attorney who founded the project. “But in reality, these children are giving us their gift of hope in the form of a tangible tribute to a more peaceful future.”

The Children’s 9/11 Solidarity Project was established last fall by a community-based group of educators, business people, religious and nonprofit leaders as a means to offer children a positive and proactive way to deal with their feelings. The project is administered by Mercy Corps.

The project is still accepting tiles from groups such as Sunday schools and youth groups. Financial support is also needed to help complete building of the mosaic. People

interested in contributing tiles or making a donation to the project can send their support by calling 1-800-292-3355, ext. 250; mailing to Mercy Corps, Children’s 9/11 Solidarity Project, Dept. CR, P.O. Box 2669, Portland, OR 97208; or visit their Web site at www.mercycorps.org.

Other Sept. 11 events will be posted on EMO’s Web site at www.emoregon.org.



Pictured above are samples of tiles created for the Children’s 9/11 Solidarity Mosaic. (Provided by Mercy Corps)

Calendar of Events

Date correction for EMO's Annual Community Celebration Dinner:

Tuesday, February 25, 2003 at the Portland Downtown Marriott.

July 10

Community Food Security Educational Luncheon. 11:30 a.m. at the Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Portland. Community food projects are designed to increase food security to those in need. The goal of this event is to draw together the faith community and explore our unique commitment to food security and how we can improve upon it. Presentations will be given by the Oregon Food Bank, the Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force, Growing Gardens and many more. The Holy Cross Lutheran Church in partnership with Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's Community Food Security Project will host the luncheon. This event is the first of a four part series. The July 10 luncheon is open to representatives from various faith communities located east of 82nd Street in Multnomah County. For more information, or if you are interested in attending this luncheon, contact Olga Dedulin at (503) 284-0398.

July 11 to 14

Earth's Energy, God's Light: Faithful Responses to the Energy Crisis. Linfield College, Oregon. Eco-justice ministries conference includes worship, workshops, science and theology plenaries, energy fair and site visits. Sponsored by Presbyterians for Restoring Creation. Co-sponsored and co-organized with the eco-justice unit of the Presbytery of the Cascades. Ecumenical friends welcome. Registration fee is \$135. Call Rebecca Barnes-Davies at (888) 728-7228, ext. 5811, Jenny Holmes at (503) 281-8175 (evenings) or www.pcusa.org/prc.

July 29 to 31

New Life for Aging Congregations. To be held at Willamette University, Salem. Topic of Christian Education as key to congregational renewal and growth. Instructor: Dr. Charles Foster, Senior Scholar, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. For a brochure giving details about this continuing education workshop, contact NHTS at (503) 588-4344 or e-mail nhts@open.org.

August 1

Jazz Under the Stars. 7 p.m. on the grounds of Hopewell House Hospice Center at 6171 SW Capitol Highway in Portland. *See box on upper right corner of this page for more details.*

August 13 to 17

Wilderness Trip of Perspective. This is an opportunity to experience the natural beauty of the Oregon Cascades. For four days we do not have to answer the phone, be distracted by the media or hear the normal noises of daily life. This is a back-to-basics kind of experience, with time for community and personal reflection. For more information, contact Journey Into Freedom at (503) 244-4728, e-mail mail@journeyintofreedom.org, or Web site www.journeyintofreedom.org.

Jazz Under the Stars

Jazz Under the Stars, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's (EMO) annual fundraiser for Hopewell House Hospice Center, will be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, August 1, on the grounds of the hospice at 6171 SW Capitol Highway in Portland.

Featuring the smooth and expressive jazz of Portland virtuoso guitarist Dan Balmer, *Jazz Under the Stars* offers concertgoers hors d'oeuvres, desserts and gourmet coffee in a unique open-air setting. The evening also includes a silent auction, featuring items as diverse as beach weekends, specialty baskets, artwork, quilt and craft, and garden items. Also for sale will be truffles handmade by Mona Ballard, Hopewell's French-trained chef.

All monies raised at *Jazz Under the Stars* will benefit EMO's Hopewell House Charitable Care Fund, which provides funding for patients who cannot pay for the cost of their care at Hopewell. Last year's event drew a record 230 guests, raising over \$7,000 to support the Fund.

Tickets for *Jazz Under the Stars* are \$30 each and available by calling (503) 221-1054. **Sponsorships for the event are available, and donations of items for the silent auction are welcomed.** If you would like to inquire about sponsorship or can donate an item to the silent auction, please call Janet Snedecor at (503) 244-7890.



Guitarist Dan Balmer

September 6 and 7

EnneaGrammar School: Weekend Studies with the Enneagram in Relationships, Work and Spirituality. Friday evenings 7 to 9 p.m. and Saturday mornings 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. (series continues on 1st and 3rd weekends of each month through first week of December) at the Interfaith Spiritual Center, 3910 SE 11th Ave., Portland. The Enneagram is an ancient teaching that describes nine personality types and how they relate to each other. This series will lay the foundation for thoroughly understanding your type and the types of those important to you. The cost is \$400 per person for the entire series, with a \$50 pre-registration required and \$100 due at the first session. Send a check payable to Dale Rhodes, c/o Interfaith Spiritual Center (address listed above). Space is limited to 16 participants. For more information, contact Dale Rhodes at (503) 233-2026, ext. 3 or e-mail Hollylistening@aol.com.

September 11

Events in the Portland metro area. Sunrise religious services will be held in Clackamas, Clark, Multnomah and Washington counties. There will also be events throughout the day at Pioneer Courthouse Square in downtown Portland. Visit the United Way Web site for more information about times and locations at www.unitedwaygp.org.

October 4 to 6

Serving God and Mammon: The Impossible Dream. To be held in Portland. This workshop is about how money permeates our country and each of our lives and will look at the difficult challenge to step outside of our culture's values and into a radical study of the Gospel. Presented by Journey Into Freedom. To register or for more information, call (503) 244-4728 or e-mail mail@journeyintofreedom.org.

October 20 to November 9

Africa Trip of Perspective: Kenya and Ethiopia. This is not a tourist trip. It is an adventurous journey to places or settings that are unfamiliar; where we will experience a world bigger than ourselves; be challenged by situations we cannot control or change; witness how two-thirds of the world live; be taught by those who have less than we do and gain a new perspective that will forever change our lives. For more information, contact Journey Into Freedom at (503) 244-4728, e-mail mail@journeyintofreedom.org, or Web site www.journeyintofreedom.org.

October 25 to 27

Contemplative Writers Workshop. To be held in Portland. This workshop is for writers, and would-be writers, who have a hunger for God, for truth, for getting voice on paper, to experience what happens when words, silence and heart come together. Presented by Journey Into Freedom. To register or for more information, call (503) 244-4728 or mail@journeyintofreedom.org.

Save the date: November 4

The 35th Collins Lecture—Shaping Our Genetic Futures: Theological and Ethical Implications of Stem Cell Research.

7 p.m., location to be announced. The guest lecturer will be The Rev. Dr. Audrey R. Chapman, director of the Dialogue on Science, Ethics and Religion, American Academy for the Advancement of Science, Washington, DC. More information will be provided in the October issue of the *Voice*.



To submit calendar items for the *Voice*, please e-mail mbush@moregon.org.