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## Oregon responds to humanitarian crisis

### *Deportation defense project for asylum seekers, refugees goes statewide*

The humanitarian crisis at the border has garnered national attention, and for good reason. Many thousands of women, children and families are making the dangerous journey to the southern border of the United States, seeking safety and security from the violence and persecution they face in their home countries. Most believe they have no other choice if they want to protect themselves and their families.

Our country has long been a beacon of hope for individuals around the world seeking protection and refuge. Asylum is a protection granted to foreign nationals already

in the United States or at the border who meet the definition of a refugee. We are bound by both American and international law to provide that protection.

A refugee is defined by the Refugee Act of 1980 as a person who has fled their country of origin and is unable or unwilling to return due to past persecution, or a well-founded fear of being persecuted in the future, on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. This definition was taken from the United Nations 1952 Convention and the 1967



Photo credit: Audrey Zunkel-deCoursey

Last year, an interfaith worship service was held just outside the federal prison in Sheridan, Ore., where 80 immigrants were being detained. Thanks to representation by immigration attorneys, one was granted asylum and the other 79 passed their credible fear interviews, a critical step in the asylum process.

Protocol, to which the United States is a signatory.

An asylum seeker is an individual who is seeking

international protection. Once an asylum seeker demonstrates a credible fear of persecution

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## Listening at the Margins

### *Collins Summit to engage participants in mutual accompaniment in pursuit of social justice*

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's 2019 *Collins Summit*, "Listening at the Margins: Ancestral Wisdom, Spiritual Resistance and Hope in Times of Trauma," will take place Oct. 16 at First United Methodist Church in Portland. An afternoon seminar beginning at 1 p.m. will feature listening and dialogue sessions on immigration justice, environmental justice, justice for the houseless, and transforming institutions for justice.

*The Collins Lecture* at 7 p.m. will feature



**Dr. Carlos Mendoza-Álvarez** (pictured above), Dominican priest, professor of religious studies at Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City, and internationally recognized liberation theologian. His work illuminates the ancestral

wisdom, yearning for justice, and hope that emerge from the resistance and resilience of survivors of global violence. He will discuss his most recent work, which examines what resurrection can mean—and how joy may be found—among the families of thousands of disappeared and murdered civilians in Mexico.

Dr. Mendoza-Álvarez will also engage in dialogue with Oregon faith leaders, modeling the practice of spiritual and theological mutual accompaniment.

Jan Musgrove Elfers,

EMO president, sat down for an interview to discuss her perspective on mutual accompaniment and "listening at the margins."

***Why is EMO involved in this practice now?***

At a time in history when so many forces are working to polarize us, to divide us, to create enemies, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is committed to the opposite: to turn towards one another, to create community, to listen to each other, to build trust and friendship with

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## Standing strong against hate

*For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.*

Galatians 5:14-15

Daily, a war is raging within our country. Hateful words are leading to violent deeds. The Galatians text rightly warns us that "we will be destroyed by each other" if we continue to "bite and devour" our so-called enemies. Our words matter. They have the power to heal or to destroy.



Jan Musgrove Elfers  
President

The recent tragic shootings in Gilroy, El Paso and Dayton illustrate the deadly consequences of unleashed hatred. The horrific reality is that an average of one mass shooting per day has occurred in the United States in 2019. There is strong evidence that the most vulnerable among us are disproportionately reaping the consequences of the hatred sown in our communities. For hate crimes continue to spiral upwards in the United States. In 2018 alone, these crimes rose nine percent in our major cities, for a fifth consecutive yearly increase. Three out of five were motivated by race and ethnicity. Religion and sexual orientation were the other two primary motivators.

The familiar story goes that one evening, an

elderly Cherokee grandfather told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, "My son, the battle is between two 'wolves' inside us all. One is filled with anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority and ego. The other is filled with joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith." The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, "Which wolf wins?" The grandfather simply replied, "The one that you feed."

It is way past time for our nation, individually and collectively, to do some serious soul-searching. What are we feeding within ourselves on a daily basis? What are we reading, what are we writing, what are we filling our minds with? For what we take in will result in actions that we take outwardly. Oscar Romero remarked, "You cannot reap what you have not sown. How are we going to reap love in our community if we only sow hate?"

Sadly, we know that hate crimes are not a new phenomenon. A country with a history of genocide and slavery cannot escape this fact. Strong legislation to address hate crimes and to promote gun safety is essential, and we must continue to work together to enact laws that make all of our communities safer. But changing the human heart requires transformation at a much deeper level. Referencing Mark 7:21, Pope Francis said, "Jesus taught that the true battlefield, where violence and peace meet, is the human heart, for 'it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come.'"

In the midst of these disheartening trends, we are not powerless. As people of faith, we have resources within our traditions to guide us. Prayer and sacred texts ground us in the foundations of mercy and justice, beginning with the belief that every one of us is created in God's image, and that we are beloved. Starting

there gives us the courage to look deeply within ourselves, and to acknowledge our own fear and the fear that permeates our world. Instead of feeding fear, we are called to "love our neighbor as we love ourself." Within that context we can, and must, speak out powerfully against hateful rhetoric, without resorting to hate speech in our response.

We also have the wisdom of spiritual leaders to call on and to emulate. I often return to The Rev. Dr. King's six principles of non-violence. These principles teach us how to respond prophetically to hate with courageous, active love, seeking to defeat injustice, not people. Our response to the "evil doer" must not sink to the level of the hater, but instead seek to restore community. In the words of St. Francis, "As you announce peace with your mouth, make sure that you have greater peace in your hearts."

It is important to be mindful of what we regularly expose ourselves to in the news and social media. Absorbing toxic rhetoric can lead us to cynicism, hopelessness and hate. Instead, it is important to "take in" large doses of compassionate wisdom, build communities of care and learn positive forms of spiritual resistance in these challenging times.

We reap what we sow. Every act of kindness and mercy that we offer to one another sows seeds of love. No act is too small. It is up to each of us to counter words and deeds that fuel hatred with the powerful and healing antidote that is love.

*"Hate ... burns off everything but itself, so whatever your grievance is, your face looks just like your enemy's."*

Toni Morrison

## In Memoriam: The Rev. John D. Dennis (1937-2019)

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) and the larger faith community remember with deep gratitude the life of our beloved friend and leader The Rev. John D. Dennis, who passed away on Sept. 4, 2019.

Pastor emeritus of First Presbyterian Church, Corvallis, John also served as president of the EMO Board of Directors from 1996 to 1998, and he was a founding member of EMO's Presidents' Circle. He was a change agent and servant to vulnerable people around the world, including South Africa and Cambodia.

Born in Pittsburgh, he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from Wesleyan University and two degrees from Princeton Theological Seminary—a Bachelor of Divinity and a master's degree in counseling. He took his ordination exams in Pittsburgh and studied alongside Fred Rogers, of children's television fame, who was a friend and also an ordained Presbyterian minister. After his ordination in 1962, John served as assistant minister at the First



The Rev. John Dennis and wife Nancy at the 2010 dedication of "Dennis Hall" at First Presbyterian Church in Corvallis, named in their honor for the years of service the couple gave to the community.

Presbyterian Church in Germantown, Pa. In 1969, John was called to serve as pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Corvallis, in the Presbytery of the Willamette. He served as pastor of the church for 37 years, retiring in 2006.

John's service to church and world went beyond his work as a pastor. In 1978, he was chosen to represent the denomination in the

struggle against apartheid and spent four months working at St. Columba's Presbyterian Church in Johannesburg, South Africa. His recommendation that U.S. banks apply tougher rules to loaning money in South Africa based on fair employment practices was adopted by the United States and played a part in the fall of apartheid. He also organized an effort to provide over 2,000 prosthetic arms and legs to landmine victims in Cambodia.

John is predeceased by his wife of 52 years, Nancy, and survived by sons Michael and Andrew and four grandchildren. A memorial service is scheduled for Oct. 12 at 1 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church in Corvallis.

As we mourn our loss and give thanks to God for a life well lived, we consider John's favorite benediction, words from H. F. Amiel: "Life is short and we have not too much time to gladden the hearts of those who travel the way with us. Be swift to love. Make haste to be kind."

## Practicing creation care at church Saving nature through habitat restoration on church properties

There's one environmental issue where faith organizations can stand out and take leadership consistent with our sacred texts: revering nature by preserving native plants and animals.

Scientists like E.O. Wilson say that at the rate we're reducing wildlife habitat, half the species of plants and animals on Earth could be gone by the end of this century, and 25 percent gone by 2050. This is due to habitat loss, starting with the loss of native plants, which anchor the chain of life up to and including humans.

Since early settler days, non-indigenous people have imported plants and trees from foreign countries into Oregon. These plants are resistant to local diseases and carry disease strains to which our local plants have no resistance. The foreign plants thus displace native plants that our wildlife depends on to survive. The chain of animal life starts with insects that cannot or will not eat most foreign plant species. Birds and higher forms of life lose the insects they need for food. This process continues up the food chain to humans who depend on plant and animal life for our health and well-being. Faith communities can save wildlife by restoring native plants on our properties.

Faith communities have a unique and leading role here. Many congregations own enough real estate to learn and practice habitat

restoration—or naturescaping—and to demonstrate the life-preserving values of these practices to our neighbors. With our creation care ethic and our presence in and among wider communities worldwide, faith communities can start a movement that could catch on and literally save nature, including humans.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon and our partners are committed to education and action to bring attention to the biodiversity crisis and to equip member congregations with the tools needed to take meaningful action to help save nature. We hear the alarm bells scientists are ringing. In the context of our commitment to creation justice—which includes our stewardship responsibilities to all life and all of God's creation—we are seeking partner congregations interested in participating in a pilot project to restore native plants and habitats and to sequester carbon on church properties. These programs can and should, if possible, be extended to include the properties of congregational members with ability and interest, building true community around our shared practices of environmental stewardship.

All of our denominational members have made theological statements in support of this work. All of our denominational members are calling us to this work as an important expression of our faith.



*For more information and to inquire about becoming a pilot project partner, please contact EMO Board member and Creation Justice Committee chair Peter Sergienko at [petersergienko@gmail.com](mailto:petersergienko@gmail.com).*

## Students demand action on climate change Portland metro area students joined in the international climate strike

Thousands of students marched through Portland on Friday, Sept. 20, as part of the international strike declaring a climate emergency. Students demonstrated outside Portland City Hall, coming from schools all over the Portland metro area. From there, students walked across the Willamette River to OMSI for a "climate festival" featuring speeches by student leaders and local government officials.

"Our generation feels ignored. This is our future, this is our health, this is our safety," said West Linn High School junior Matilda Milner. "We're running out of time and we're running out of resources, and we're running out of options. So I think we need to force radical change through, whether it's the easiest option or not."

The global demonstrations are meant to push for adoption of green policies by governments at every level. In Portland, youth activists urged the city and county to fund TriMet's YouthPass program and Mayor Ted Wheeler to sit out a world summit of municipal leaders scheduled for October in Copenhagen, among other things. Student activists in cities across the state are also demanding Oregon lawmakers adopt a Green New Deal, phasing out fossil fuel infrastructure and investing in renewable energy.

Previous student marches have intentionally excluded adults from the effort, but for the Sept. 20 strike, student organizers reached out to parents and other community members to



Thousands of students marched through Portland on Friday, Sept. 20, joining the international climate strike.

offer support. Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) and EcoFaith Recovery answered the call for support by organizing people of faith for a spiritual grounding pre-gathering preceding the strike. Both faith organizations hosted a resource table at the climate festival.

"It was an extraordinary day," said Peter Sergienko, member of the EMO Board and chair of EMO's Creation Justice Committee. "The platform for action the youth announced calls for a more just and sustainable society powered by clean, renewable sources of energy, which aligns well with the values and priorities of EMO and our members."



EcoFaith Recovery and EMO hosted a resource table at the climate festival.

Photo credit: Sara Rosenau

Photo credit: Peter Sergienko

# 4 Community Ministry

## NEFP is entering the final renovation phase of Project UpLift

At the beginning of this year, EMO's Northeast Emergency Food Program (NEFP) launched Operation UpLift to address necessary repairs and to create a bolder, brighter and more efficient place to work, volunteer, serve and receive.

Over the last 11 years, NEFP has proudly served the emergency food needs of nearly 100,000 families from its home in the Luther Memorial Lutheran Church in the Cully neighborhood of Portland. Preparing for the next 11 years of service meant getting our facility ready for the next 100,000 families who will enter our doors.

Our restrooms have been totally redone—new toilets, sinks, moisture resistant walls and beautiful tile flooring. The kitchen is a dream with all stainless-steel work surfaces and appliances, soft lavender touches and tile flooring as well. The lower pantry has been upgraded with new floors, shelving, fresh paint, produce bins and so much more.

With more major facelifts underway to the waiting area, clothing center, storage areas, prep areas and offices, we are very excited to be near completion of our year-long uplift journey!



We invite you to view NEFP's renovations in person, or follow the progress of the remodel on Facebook at [facebook.com/NEFPpdx/](https://facebook.com/NEFPpdx/). NEFP is located at 4800 NE 72<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Portland.

For more information about NEFP and Project UpLift, contact NEFP at [nefp@emoregon.org](mailto:nefp@emoregon.org) or (503) 284-5470.



Photo left: Project UpLift volunteers have generously contributed many hours of their time, both inside the facility and outside.

Photo right: NEFP's lower pantry has been upgraded with new floors, shelving, fresh paint, produce bins and so much more!

### Humanitarian crisis

*Continued from page 1*

if forced to return to their home country, they are released and given a court date at which to present their claim for asylum. Many asylum seekers have relocated to Oregon, where staff attorneys at EMO's SOAR Immigration Legal Services may represent them and help with preparing their asylum cases.

The American legal system is based upon the core principle that everyone is entitled to due process of law, an attorney and a meaningful opportunity to be heard. But for far too long, the immigration system has failed to provide immigrants with a system of justice that lives up to this standard. The majority of immigrants who are in deportation (or in legal terms, "removal") proceedings before the immigration court are not represented by an attorney. This is because attorneys for immigration court are not provided at government expense, but must be paid for by the asylum seeker.

*Those immigrants who are represented by an attorney are five-and-a-half times more likely to have a successful outcome than those who are unrepresented.*

Immigration law is complex, and even a strong case, if not articulated perfectly, is unlikely to succeed. Those immigrants who are represented by an attorney are five-and-a-half times more likely to have a successful outcome than those who are unrepresented.

In October 2018, thanks to funding from the City of Portland, SOAR Immigration Legal Services began providing free removal defense services to low-income immigrants in Portland who were at imminent risk of deportation. Together with Catholic Charities, Immigration



With funding from the City of Portland, staff at SOAR Immigration Legal Services are able to provide free removal defense services to low-income immigrants in Portland who were at imminent risk of deportation.

Counseling Service, Innovation Law Lab, Metropolitan Public Defender, and IRCO, we built Equity Corps of Oregon—a partnership dedicated to providing universal representation to low-income immigrants in deportation proceedings.

This Equity Corps Universal Representation Project reinforces the concept of justice in the U.S. immigration court by providing representation by an attorney to low-income Portlanders during their removal or deportation proceedings. The majority of people we represent are asylum seekers and unaccompanied children seeking safety, security and a better life.

Over the last year, together with our Equity Corps of Oregon partners, our attorneys have already helped more than 300 people facing deportation with their immigration court cases. During this past Legislative Session, the Oregon Legislature allocated funding to bring the Equity Corps Universal Representation project statewide!

*If you know someone who is at risk of deportation, please contact EMO's SOAR Immigration Legal Services at (503) 384-2482 for an immigration screening. If you would like to get involved by donating or volunteering, please contact Caroline van der Harten at [cvanderharten@emorgon.org](mailto:cvanderharten@emorgon.org).*

### What clergy should know about elder abuse

Each year, the Oregon Department of Human Services and its partners receive thousands of reports of abuse and exploitation of vulnerable older adults. The most common forms of abuse are financial exploitation, neglect and physical abuse.

Older adults and people with disabilities who are abused often suffer in silence. Frequently, their abuser is someone they know and trust. Many older people are too ashamed to report mistreatment, fearing that if they make a report it will get back to the abuser and make the situation worse.

If you are a clergy member, you are in a unique position to witness or hear about potential abuse. You are also a mandatory reporter, which means you fall into a special category under Oregon State law that requires you to report abuse if you hear about it or see it occurring.

The State of Oregon has set up a toll-free confidential abuse hotline where you can report abuse: 1-855-503-SAFE (7233). You don't need to be certain that abuse has occurred to make the call. You will be asked what you observed, what your concerns are, and if the person you are concerned about has shared anything with you. Adult protective services will follow up.

There are experts throughout Oregon who can speak at one of your congregational events to share information on warning signs and what to look for, as well as provide resource materials. Send a message to [APD.APSUnit@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:APD.APSUnit@dhsosha.state.or.us), if you are interested.

## Metro HomeShare is expanding west!

Homesharing is a creative solution to address the shortage of affordable housing. It is an arrangement between two people—one with housing to offer (home provider) and one in need of housing (home seeker). Homesharing helps home providers stabilize and retain their housing by developing the unused portions of their home into affordable rentals for home seekers. Often the home seeker provides needed services like cleaning, grocery shopping or pet care. By facilitating these arrangements, EMO’s Metro HomeShare contributes to safe and affordable housing in our community, while fostering financial independence for our clients.

In July 2019, Metro HomeShare entered into a multi-jurisdictional partnership to expand services into Washington County. This expansion triples the geographic area Metro HomeShare covers, doubles the number of participants served, more than doubles our funding, and increases our staff by 25 percent!

The cities of Beaverton, Hillsboro and Tigard, along with Washington County, contributed funding and resources to support our expanded programming. In addition, the City of Beaverton has arranged free office space for Metro HomeShare at the Griffith Park Building in central Beaverton. The partnership

will also provide trained mediators to oversee lease agreements and dispute resolution in our participants’ homes.

Metro HomeShare staff have been doing intensive outreach in Washington County to let people know we are open for business. Our primary focus has been to meet as many of our community service partners as we possibly can. By targeting social service providers for our first round of outreach, we have learned how houselessness and poverty have impacted this region of the metro area. Connecting with service providers also assures appropriate referrals and helps us find participants well suited for our services.

“The response has been amazing! Everyone we talk to about Metro HomeShare is grateful we are here in Washington County,” said Devon Hoyt, Metro HomeShare outreach coordinator. “Over and over we hear how tough it is to find housing, and how much our services are needed.”

In order to faithfully serve our Washington County participants, Elise Schaff Laubach has been hired to serve as Metro HomeShare client coordinator for Washington County. She will also help us design and launch a new mobile service delivery platform. She comes



Metro HomeShare contributes to safe and affordable housing in our community, while fostering financial independence for our clients.

to us from Family Promise of Tualatin Valley, where she developed and launched a faith- and community-based shelter network.

We are very excited about opening this new chapter in our story and have great respect for the effort and energy of our Washington County partners.

*If you would like to learn more about Metro HomeShare, visit [metrohomeshare.org](http://metrohomeshare.org) or contact our staff at (971) 271-5195 or [metrohomeshare@emoregon.org](mailto:metrohomeshare@emoregon.org).*

## Support our HIV Services at a *World AIDS Day* fundraiser lunch



Please join EMO’s HIV Services for our annual *World AIDS Day Fundraiser Luncheon* on Wednesday, Dec. 4, from 12 to 1 p.m., at Concordia University’s Hagen Center in northeast Portland. This is an opportunity for us to honor and celebrate those in our communities who live daily with HIV/AIDS, and those who support the work we do at EMO’s HIV Day Center and Daily Bread Express.

Many of the HIV Day Center’s most compelling and meaningful moments happen over a shared meal, and we invite you to join us in a meal, sponsored by and held at our

neighboring Concordia University. Partners and supporters both new and old will have the chance to hear where this past year has taken HIV Services and where we are headed in 2020. We welcome all to this opportunity to give vital financial support to a beloved community resource. There is no cost to attend; donations will be gratefully accepted.

To RSVP to the *World AIDS Day Luncheon* or if you are interested in hosting a table for your friends, family or congregation, contact Chris Eves, HIV Services program manager, at (503) 460-3822 or [ceves@emoregon.org](mailto:ceves@emoregon.org).

## Join EMO’s Sustaining Partners

Sustaining Partners—donors who give monthly to Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) and our programs—provide a steady source of income that EMO can rely on to fund our vital ministries and plan for the future.

We currently have 114 Sustaining Partners who give \$5,542 each month to support our Core Mission (general fund) plus HIV Day Center, Northeast Emergency Food Program, Second Home, SOAR Legal Immigration Services, Creation Justice and other programs.

Sustaining membership is the easiest way for you to support EMO. As a Sustaining Partner, monthly contributions from your checking account or credit card go directly into EMO’s account. Your monthly contributions are automatic, so there’s no need for us to ask you for donations throughout the year. We’ll send you one acknowledgement letter for your tax purposes in January each year. This lowers our expenses and saves time and paper for EMO and you.



To set up your monthly donation, go to [emoregon.org/donate](http://emoregon.org/donate), press “Donate Now” and enter the donation amount, select the fund you wish to support, and check the box “Make this a monthly gift.” Then, after you’ve entered your name and address, either input your credit card number or your bank account information (“Direct Debit”). Or simply call one of our donor coordinators, Kristi Baack or Erika Martin, at (503) 221-1054, ext. 203, and they can set it up for you and answer any questions you may have.

### Voice

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

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Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference • Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

# 6 Public Policy Advocacy

## How EMO's legislative priorities fared during the 2019 Session

The 2019 Legislative Session came to a close on June 30. Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) proudly played an indispensable role in securing funding for Oregon's homeless youth and refugee and immigrant communities, while partnering with people of faith to advocate for a range of other key legislation. EMO's advocacy efforts are driven by the neighbors and clients we serve in our direct service programs, and by our faith values. As always, thank you for making these victories possible! The following are bills EMO helped to pass in 2019.

### Welcome the Stranger

*Welcome Refugees Bill* (House Bill 2508): This Session, EMO was a part of the Refugee Resettlement Collaborative, a group of resettlement agencies and partner organizations who came together to advocate for extended case management services for our refugee communities. Together, we secured \$2 million to continue service for our refugee communities in the face of federal budget cuts. This is a huge win for all of our communities around Oregon, and it cements welcoming new neighbors as an Oregon value!

*Immigrant Defense Fund*: EMO and our partners fought for better legal representation for our immigrant neighbors who face legal hardships. This effort provides \$2 million to ensure that immigrants have proper legal defense. This victory will help families stay together and make our communities stronger in Oregon. For more information on removal defense, please read the article on page 1.

*Driver Licenses for All* (HB 2015): This will eliminate the requirement that a person provide proof of legal presence before the Department of Transportation issues a noncommercial driver license, noncommercial driver permit or identification card.

### Give Shelter to the Houseless

*Homeless Students*: EMO drafted language included in the Student Success Act (HB 3427), passed in May, which will foster partnerships between schools and communities to close the achievement gap for homeless students.

*Second Home Funding*: EMO secured \$300,000 for Second Home, our program that matches unaccompanied homeless high school students with volunteer home providers in their community.

*Other housing legislation*: Senate Bill (SB) 608 provides protections against spikes in rent increases and also protects renters from the threat of no-cause evictions. SB 5512 includes \$50 million for emergency rent assistance and shelter through EHA/SHAP. HB 5005 has \$150 million in general obligation bonds to build more affordable housing to rent and sell through the LIFT program.

### Promote a Just and Climate-Friendly Clean Energy Economy

*Retire and Retrofit Dirty Diesel* (HB 2007): Prohibits titling of certain motor vehicles powered by certain model year diesel engines.

Despite the many successes during the Legislative Session, we were disheartened over the last-minute failure of HB 2020, the *Clean Energy Jobs Bill*. The legislation would have put into place a program to cap and reduce

Oregon's climate pollution, while investing in well-paying jobs, especially for those most impacted by climate change. EMO's advocacy team and our climate project Oregon Interfaith Power & Light are working to ensure this bill passes in 2020.

### Reform the Criminal Justice System

*Death Penalty*: With the passage of SB 1013, the death penalty will now be applicable in far fewer crimes. This law will reduce the number of new people put on death row in Oregon. Oregonians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty has been working for many years to end the death penalty altogether, and this is an important step.

*Juvenile Justice Reforms*: SB 1008 will provide a check on transferring kids to adult prisons and keep youth from getting life sentences.

*Accountability and Equity Act*: SB 3064 will strengthen the investment in alternatives to incarceration. This legislation will ensure that Justice Reinvestment resources are reaching historically underserved communities, including communities of color, women, LGBTQ people, and rural and tribal communities. This bill will hold counties accountable by ensuring that their use of Justice Reinvestment funding is reducing our reliance on incarceration.

### Gun Violence Prevention

During the 2019 Oregon Legislative Session, fewer advances were made on gun safety than we had hoped for. One key bill, which combined various safety measures, was sacrificed during political negotiations surrounding the first walkout by Republican senators.

*Boyfriend Loophole*: The one bill that did pass (HB 2013), closes the so-called "Boyfriend Loophole" that allowed some people convicted of stalking or abuse to keep weapons that should have been removed and creates a statewide process for jurisdictions to comply with the fix.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a partner with the Lift Every Voice Oregon (LEVO) campaign to ban assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. LEVO authored a



Rep. Carla Piluso (right) sponsored the Welcome Refugees Bill (HB 2508) to provide funding to support voluntary resettlement agencies including EMO's Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees, who do important work to help refugee Oregonians get on the path to stability.



On Sept. 17, Governor Kate Brown signed into law the "Welcome Refugees Bill." Present for the signing were (from left): Deputy Director of Policy and Advocacy for Church World Service Immigration Meredith Owen, EMO President Jan Musgrove Elfers, and EMO Public Policy Advocacy Director Britt Conroy.

bill in the 2019 Session, which did not receive a hearing. An iteration of this bill may come before voters in 2020 as a ballot initiative.

To get involved in the effort to end gun violence, see box below about the *End Gun Violence Sabbath*.

## Join us for the *End Gun Violence Sabbath*

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) and Lift Every Voice Oregon (LEVO) invite faith communities from all backgrounds and all parts of our state to join us on a single weekend, lifting our voices for a peaceful world free from gun violence.

On the weekend of Nov. 15 to 17 (whichever day works best for your faith community), people from diverse religious backgrounds will unite in remembering gun violence as part of their regular worship—through a prayer, note in the bulletin, guest speaker or educational program. Join us in lifting a collective voice for peace and an end to the gun violence that leaves our communities grieving.

There are many ways you can participate. Get creative! For inspiration, visit the Events page at [EMOoregon.org](http://EMOoregon.org) and download *End Gun Violence Sabbath*—a resource packet with sermon reflections, prayers, hymns and educational sources.

Lift Every Voice Oregon is a coalition of faith-based communities promoting policies prohibiting the sale of assault weapons and large-capacity magazines. In the wake of recent mass shootings, and in an era in which we write that phrase far too often, EMO joins the call for common-sense gun safety legislation.

To get involved in ending gun violence or for updates from the LEVO campaign, contact [cosa@emoregon.org](mailto:cosa@emoregon.org) or visit [lifteveryvoiceoregon.com](http://lifteveryvoiceoregon.com).

## Gathering around the Common Table

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is pleased to announce that the Murdock Charitable Trust has fully funded a multi-year grant proposal for the Common Table. This, along with a grant from the Oregon Community Foundation, means the Common Table project is now ready to officially launch.

The central metaphor for the project is a kitchen table—the one where family members gather in love and vulnerability to talk from their hearts.

The work started last fall at a retreat with a group comprised of 30 statewide faith leaders, who gathered to put aside their political and ideological differences to rediscover what we have in common. Participating faith traditions included Baptist, Buddhist, Catholic, Christian Missionary Alliance, Church of God, Church of Latter Day Saints, Episcopalian, Evangelical, Indigenous, Jewish, LGBTQ Christians, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Metropolitan Community Church, Muslim, Presbyterian, Quaker, Sikh, United Church of Christ, and Young Life. The group reconvened in March at



Faith leaders gathered in July for a Common Table retreat at the Muslim Educational Trust.

the Archdiocese of Portland and again in July at the Muslim Educational Trust.

Now we hope to extend the work of bridge-building across Oregon over the next three years.

As a formal project, the Common Table is already reaching out to various leaders in local hubs across the state and asking them to consider a formal process of peacemaking and community development. A part of this process will involve a “mapping” project to discover the collective faith-based impact on hunger and

housing throughout Oregon. The Common Table participants will gather as wisdom keepers to re-imagine how Oregon’s rich and varied faith traditions might demonstrate finding common ground for the common good. We believe this is the prophetic edge of our times, and the way of transformation beyond the spiritual gridlock that binds our country.

*For more information, call (503) 221-1054, ext. 213, or visit [commontableoregon.org](http://commontableoregon.org).*

## Collins Summit

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one another; and as we do that, to creatively address the problems that we are facing: immigration, houselessness, climate disruption and the need for institutional change.

At this year’s *Collins Summit*, we’ll be creating engaged communities that look at these problems through the lens of liberation theology, which is grounded in listening at the margins to people who are experiencing suffering, which informs our work together and helps us to build communities of caring. We will discern the connections among those topics, that climate change isn’t separate from houselessness, for example. These issues are all woven together.

### *What do we mean by “the margins”?*

We have to turn towards one another in these days. With this practice, we start from a place of all sitting together in a room. We don’t know who comes from what vantage point. We’re in a posture of listening, and as we sit together and listen to stories and listen deeply to one another, then we will be vulnerable together. And who knows who is at the margins at any one time or another? Sometimes I might be at the margin because I’m in deep grief and feel totally disconnected.

Clearly, we have to acknowledge our country’s history of injustice and white privilege: stealing land and decimating the Native American culture, enslaving Africans to build our economy, and colonizing land that was settled by our neighbors to the south. These historic injustices have perpetuated systemic inequality that marginalizes those who are denied access to adequate housing, a good education, well-paying jobs, and all of the advantages are part of being on the “inside.”

What we will also explore in this event are the places of our own margins. The loss of a job, a medical or mental health crisis, or the death of a loved one can cause suffering that enables each of us to identify in some way with

*“If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. If you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”*

**Lilla Watson, Indigenous Australian visual artist, activist and academic**

feeling on the “outside.” This realization can become an opportunity to come alongside one another in deep and profound ways in support as we recognize our shared humanity.

### *What are we hoping participants in the Collins Summit will learn, will come away with?*

The sense that I am not alone. I am part of something much bigger. There are other people who care deeply for these issues. There is hope. We’re not without answers. It’s not beyond us. But it will take all of us listening to one another, working together, having a sense of the long term as well as the short term, that we’re not going to solve houselessness the day after this is over, but we’re going to make progress, we’re going to find other like-minded people who also care deeply about this from different venues, from different ways of life, that these are communities we’re engaging in that will go on beyond this.

There are already networks that we are inviting people to become a part of, including Leaven Community Land and Housing Coalition, Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice, and EcoFaith Recovery. We’re saying, “Come join this movement if you care about these issues.”

The lens that we’re looking through is the third wave of liberation theology, which used to be “the preferential option for the poor,” but that can sound condescending, so it is a new way of listening to people and elevating the voices that may not always be heard. It’s almost

like when you go to AA meetings and everybody sits around a circle and we don’t know their background and then we tell our story. Some people around the circle have stories that are profound and can change us. It’s a different way of entering into conversation. It’s a way of stripping the labels off and saying, “Let’s be human together, let’s enter into relationship based on our shared humanity,” acknowledging that if I have white skin, I have privilege that I was born with, but at any time, we could each of us be on the edge and in need of help.

I think we’ve all been at a point in our lives where we say, “I feel totally on the edge, on the margin.” And at that point in time, I need help, and maybe just in sharing my story and being vulnerable I can help somebody else. And in that way, something happens, we create community, we realize we’re in this together, we’re not separate from one another. And that is the wisdom of our religious traditions: acknowledging that we are family, we need each other, we are not separate from one another. It’s the truth that emanates from all of the religious traditions.

### *About the 2019 Collins Summit*

Registration for the Oct. 16 event is available at [emoregon.org](http://emoregon.org) or by calling (503) 221-1054.

The annual Collins Lectures have been a signature EMO event for more than 40 years. Underwritten by the Collins Foundation, the series presents emerging and inclusive theological and social perspectives on contemporary issues.

Cosponsors include *Premiere Sponsor* Evangelical Lutheran Church in America – Oregon Synod and *Presenting Sponsor* Providence Health & Services. Other cosponsors to date include the Episcopal Diocese of Oregon; Institute for Christian-Muslim Understanding; Muslim Educational Trust; Oregon Quakers; Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary; United Church of Christ – Central Pacific Conference; United Methodist Church – Columbia District; United Methodist Church – Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference; Warner Pacific University.

EMO celebrates grants & gifts

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon’s board of directors and staff extend their appreciation to those who support EMO’s ministries. The following is a partial list of foundation and community support received by EMO since the last issue of the *Voice*.

Donor (Fund)	Program
Benson Family Foundation	NE Emergency Food Program
Ceres Policy Research	Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees (SOAR)
The Collins Foundation	Public Policy Advocacy
Emily Georges Gottfried Fund	Annual Fund
Episcopal Bishop of Oregon Foundation	Criminal Justice
Estate of Rosemary J. Dodds	Annual Fund
First Presbyterian Church	NE Emergency Food Program
Jackson Foundation	NE Emergency Food Program
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Kaiser Foundation Hospitals	Russian Oregon Social Services; Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees
NEO Philanthropy	Public Policy Advocacy
New Seasons Market	HIV Services
Oregon Community Foundation	Annual Fund; Public Policy Advocacy
Oregon Food Bank	NE Emergency Food Program
Oregon Jewish Community Foundation	Annual Fund
Oregon Law Foundation	SOAR Immigration Legal Services
Pendleton High School Associated Student Body	SOAR Immigration Legal Services
The Regeneration Project	Oregon Interfaith Power & Light
St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church	SOAR Immigration Legal Services
St. Luke Lutheran Church	NE Emergency Food Program
St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church	NE Emergency Food Program
Soundview Recording	2019 Annual Benefit Dinner
Westminster Presbyterian Church	NE Emergency Food Program
Youth Service America	NE Emergency Food Program

The 2019 Collins Match: A challenge worth taking

We are deeply grateful to the Collins Foundation for leading the way in Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon’s (EMO) 2019 Annual Fund drive with a \$70,000 challenge grant. New and increased donations made to EMO will be matched by the Collins Foundation. Your support will bring together Oregonians for interfaith dialogue, direct service to those who need it most, and advocacy addressing the root causes of poverty and environmental degradation.

To double your new or increased gift to EMO, please use the form below or make a secure online donation at [emoregon.org](http://emoregon.org).

Double my gift to EMO with the Collins Match!

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*Please send your gift to:*  
EMO, 0245 SW Bancroft St., Suite B, Portland, OR 97239.  
**You may also make a secure online donation at [emoregon.org](http://emoregon.org).**

Honor & Memorial Gifts

March - August 2019

Gifts in Honor

*in honor of the birthdays of Joseph Kim Corrado and Kiernan Victor Corrado*  
Kevin Corrado

*in honor of Elida*  
Nancy Kirksey

*in honor of Kevin L. Gregory*  
Karen Horn

*in honor of Adam Jenkins*  
Terry Bain

*in honor of the Kelly Family*  
Laura Rogers

*in honor of the birthday of Howard Kenyon*  
Gloria J. Cox

*in honor of Ted Liljeholm*  
Edward Gilman

*in honor of Calvin D. McConnell*  
Velma McConnell

*in honor of Carla Starrett-Bigg*  
Nancy Alexander

*in honor of Kay Toran*  
Andrea Cook,  
Portland Observer

*in honor of Mary Jo Tully*  
Michael Prendergast

*in honor of Katie Ugolini*  
Ann and Brook Howard,  
Marcia Kahn

*in honor of Lisa Westarp*  
Richard Toll

Gifts in Memory

*in memory of Nicole Sangsuree Barrett*  
Marsha Barrett and  
Ronald M. Grosjean

*in memory of John Martin Bell*  
Curtis Bell and  
Linda McKim-Bell

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*in memory of Richard Dillard*  
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Nancy and James Kranpitz,  
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Phyllis and Raymond Krueger

*in memory of Robert G. Lindstedt*  
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Carol Lindstedt

*in memory of Ashley Shamberger*  
David and Lois Shamberger

*in memory of Mary Tavis*  
Jesse Herbach

*in memory of Karen S. Wright*  
William Wright

Our annual report is paperless!

In an effort to cut back on printing expenses and paper waste, EMO’s 2018 *Annual Report: Building Bridges, Healing Communities* is now available as an electronic document. You may download the report at [emoregon.org](http://emoregon.org), from either the home page or About Us page. If you wish to receive a paper copy, please contact the EMO office at (503) 221-1054 or [emo@emoregon.org](mailto:emo@emoregon.org).

