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Responding to the needs in our community during the COVID-19 pandemic

Pivoting overnight, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) has been responding swiftly as the COVID-19 pandemic has unfolded across Oregon. With a crisis that changes daily, readers are encouraged to check the emoregon.org website for the latest developments.

Frontline programs, particularly our food distribution services, have ramped up sharply, with demand growing six-fold in a matter of days from so many people becoming suddenly unemployed.

Our **Northeast Emergency Food Program** (NEFP), housed in the basement of Luther Memorial Church in the Cully neighborhood,

shifted immediately to an outdoor delivery system. Local businesses and nonprofits such as the Oregon Food Bank have provided mountains of additional food, refrigerated trailers, and pallet jacks to store and move that food.

A'Jay Scipio, NEFP program manager, and her staff of two began a drive-up distribution for a line of cars that has, at times, stretched for blocks. Even as dedicated, older volunteers began having to stay home due to health concerns, fresh volunteers have stepped up to offer their time and energy. This newly reconfigured NEFP team has been serving as many as 650 boxes of food to clients in a

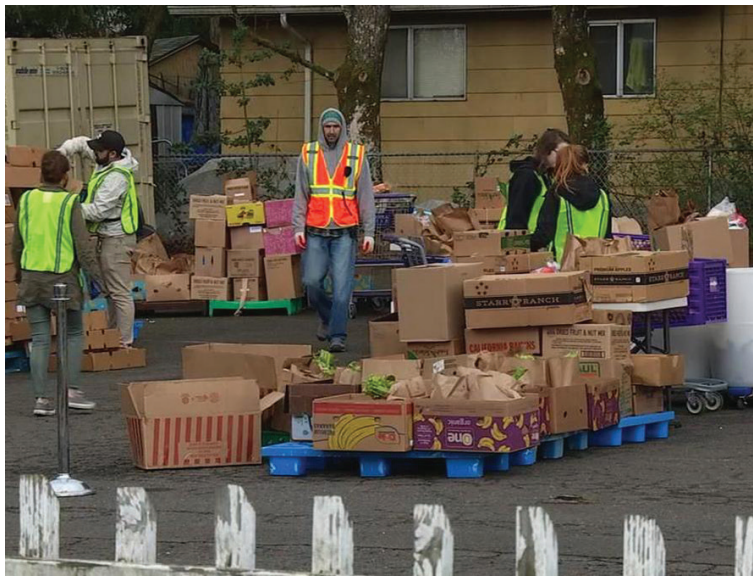


Photo credit: KOIN News

Staff and volunteers at EMO's Northeast Emergency Food Program prepare food boxes for "drive-up" food distribution.

single day, and nearly 3,000 boxes in just one week.

Forty-some blocks away in the basement of Ainsworth United Church of Christ,

the EMO **HIV Day Center's** indoor drop-in services have been suspended. Instead, daily breakfasts and lunches have

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EMO cancels *Benefit Dinner*, honors community leaders

Although public health considerations mean that this year's *Benefit Dinner & Awards Celebration* will be cancelled, our work carries on! At Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO), we are committed to carrying out our mission to create a more just, compassionate, sustainable and peaceful world (*see story above*).

Proceeds from EMO's annual event comprise a major portion of our annual budget. We invite everyone who would have attended to make a donation now!

We hold up and honor our amazing 2020 awardees, whose courage, moral vision and uncompromising action have transformed our statewide community.



Anoinette Edwards

Community leaders honored
Antoinette Edwards, former director, *City of Portland Office of Youth Violence*: "Ecumenist of the Year" in recognition of inspirational leadership and unconditional love for people who are suffering. Edwards has brought power, grace and compassion to a

lifetime of healing people and communities.

Bonny Groshong, former EMO Board President: "Rodney Page Ecumenical Service Award" in recognition of lifelong advocacy and action on behalf of the most vulnerable, including work for the American Cancer Society, Lutheran communities of Oregon, Legacy Health Systems, LIFT Urban Portland, and ecumenical community building.

Kayse Jama, executive director, *Unite Oregon*: "Peace and Justice Award" for vital work on behalf of immigrants, refugees, rural communities, people of color and people

experiencing poverty to build a unified, intercultural movement for justice in our state.

Gustavo Morales, founding executive director, *Euvalcree*: "Young Visionary Award" for groundbreaking work to involve the Latino community in local government that empowers, regenerates passion and inspires hope for Oregon's Latinos in service of diversity, equity and inclusion for all.

Ben Sand, CEO, *The Contingent*: "Humanitarian Award" for work to develop and strengthen diverse leadership for the spiritual and social renewal of our city;

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Living faithfully in a time of pandemic

As the realities of life with COVID-19 continue to unfold, there seems to be no shortage of things to fear. It is impossible to comprehend how much the world has changed in the last several months.

As I write this in early April, the virus has infected over a million people worldwide and has killed tens of thousands. With each day we learn new and frightening information—that the coronavirus can be spread simply by talking and breathing in the same room with another, and that the shortage of masks and ventilators puts even more people at risk. The severe economic downturn has resulted in an exponential rise in the unemployment rate, which has then spiraled into increased homelessness and hunger.

These factors, along with physical isolation and the inability to leave our homes, create a dangerous scenario for surges in domestic violence, suicide and substance abuse. Fear fosters a spike in gun sales and the scapegoating that comes when people are afraid and seek someone to blame.

This is a critical time to seek God's wisdom. *How do we at Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon—our board and staff—live into these challenging times, faithfully and even prophetically?*

In times of crisis, denial and panic are common reactions. But for Christians and all people of faith, our ancient traditions call us to choose another, wiser way. It is said that courage is the willingness to be afraid and act with love



Jan Musgrove Elfers,
EMO President

anyway. If we acknowledge our fear, and act with compassion, then the things we are most afraid of can transform us. The world is yearning for wisdom and it is important that we share it, with humility and vulnerability.

We are presented with a challenge and an opportunity. This is a time when we hold paradoxes. And there are many situations in which we recognize these tensions.

Humans are created to live in community. Prolonged isolation, for the vast majority of us, can be devastating. Yet it is essential to follow the directives of medical professionals and practice physical distancing and quarantines. Places of worship have found creative methods to honor both by livestreaming services and creating phone banks to check in on people. Video meetings, conference calls and social media are connecting us in new ways. People are organizing to deliver groceries and other necessities to those who can't leave their homes.

Our values call us to care for the most vulnerable among us. To feed the hungry, clothe the naked, heal the sick and visit those in prisons. Yet so many of the most vulnerable must be isolated to prevent the spread of the virus. This includes many of our volunteers, who work on the front lines in direct service programs. EMO is adapting to this new reality. Our Northeast Emergency Food Program, for example, is feeding record numbers of families by filling boxes of food for people to take while maintaining a safe physical distance. Volunteers and employees in our programs who are not in "at risk" categories wear masks and keep safely apart from each other. Some EMO employees work remotely so our programs can continue to serve clients in this time of great need.

intensified by the new "stay at home" mandate. As Eves said, "Sheltering in place with your abuser is a very scary prospect." The challenge is even greater for people who lack English language and other skills to seek help outside. Program Manager Anya Stepanova and her assistant, Yekaterina Kozachuk, both on the job less than a month, are moving swiftly through their trainings, planning to be back open for operation by the time this article is published.

In side-by-side offices with ROSS in a building overlooking I-84 and NE Halsey, our **Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees (SOAR)** and **SOAR Immigration Legal Services** had already been facing challenges from federal restrictions on refugee resettlement and immigration. However, thanks to substantial advocacy by Britt Conroy and his **Public Policy Advocacy** team, significant new funding was secured last year from the Oregon Legislature for these two programs. Only now comes COVID-19 with fresh sets of challenges.

Even as our SOAR refugee resettlement program has had to put its 40th anniversary celebration slated for June on hold, Program Director Vesna Vila and her dedicated team have continued to serve refugees remotely, supporting and advocating for clients and their needs by phone and email. Of particular concern are clients who are losing their jobs in this sudden economic downturn.

Meanwhile, SOAR Immigration Legal

For some, this extraordinary time in our history can provide an opportunity to slow down, to reflect, to refrain from consumerism and to quiet our lives. But there are those among us whose very livelihood depends upon clients and customers—nonprofits, locally owned restaurants and other small businesses struggling to survive. The federal government has passed legislation providing financial aid that will help many Americans, and we are grateful. Unfortunately, not all of those impacted by this crisis will receive the help they need. EMO's public policy team is advocating for those on the margins who are suffering and in dire need of financial support.

I pray that we will encourage our communities to hold these tensions of these times. We are all impacted in some way by the coronavirus. And the truth is that we need each other now more than ever. Our hope continues to be grounded in loving God and tenderly loving our neighbors. It is our task to creatively and compassionately care for one another, honoring our interconnectedness, while also practicing physical distancing. We cannot allow this pandemic to be an opportunity for people to foment xenophobia by labeling this a foreign or Chinese virus. Communities must denounce any rhetoric that incites blame and racism leading to violence against our neighbors. *We are truly in this together.*

There will be a day when we are able to once again physically embrace one another. We long for that day to come. And when it arrives, we will be changed. May we allow the uncertainty of these times to make us more grateful for our interconnectedness and more open-hearted to the world.

Services has clients who face court deadlines regardless of quarantine and stay-in-place orders. Our legal team of 11, under the capable leadership of Caroline van der Harten, has been curtailing drop-in services and shifting work schedules between their Portland and Hillsboro offices to maintain social distancing requirements. Removal defense court hearings and other filings move forward regardless, and citizenship classes are being conducted online.

In the wake of school closures, unaccompanied homeless high school students still need safe host families to live with and continue their studies. **Second Home** Program Director Jenny Pratt-Hale and her amazing team have gone remote with operations to continue to connect host families with students in need.

Likewise, **Metro HomeShare** continues to find housing for unhoused adults, linking them with those who have spare room. Working from home in both Washington and Multnomah Counties, Program Manager Andrew Brown and his staff continue to ensure houseless people are safe.

Behind all these staff members is a passionate core team, keeping our workforce of 58 serving so many people in need during this time. Core guarantees frontline staff are cared for, your donations get where intended, bills are paid, and solutions are found.

As EMO's Board co-chair, The Rev. J.W. Matt Hennessee recently stated, "This is a wonderful time for EMO to be creative."

HereTogether: "Vote Yes" to support our neighbors in need

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) is proud to provide critical services to people experiencing homelessness through our direct service programs Metro HomeShare, Second Home and the HIV Day Center. But with 30,000 people in the Portland metro region experiencing some form of chronic or episodic homelessness every day, there is more we can and must be doing.

On the May 19 Oregon ballot, voters in Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington Counties will vote on Measure 26-210 to address this housing crisis.

If passed, the measure will create a marginal income tax of one percent on household income over \$200,000 (over \$125,000 for individual filers) and a business profits tax of one percent on businesses with over \$5 million, generating around \$250 million per year for services to reduce homelessness in the Metro region. The taxes would be in effect for ten years (2021 to 2030).

The revenue will fund affordable housing, rental assistance, mental and physical health services, eviction prevention, financial literacy, employment support, and other services to help people who are houseless or housing insecure.

This ballot measure is the result of advocacy

and organizing by HereTogether—a coalition in which EMO participates. EMO has endorsed Measure 26-210, as we seek to fulfill one of our 2019-2020 Legislative Priorities to "Give Shelter to the Houseless." For more information on the ballot measure, to endorse it on behalf of your community of faith, or to pledge to vote in favor of it, visit WeAreHereTogether.org.

Schedule a virtual presentation for your group HereTogether has generously offered to conduct informational video conference presentations, so people of faith can learn about the measure and ways they can help raise awareness about it.

If you are interested in organizing a video conference presentation for your faith community, email Cole Merkel, HereTogether's deputy director of outreach and engagement, at cole@heretogetheroregon.org.

EMO Recommendation:
Vote "YES" on Metro Houseless and Housing Services Measure 26-210, based on EMO's social principles of *Economic Justice* and *Family & Community Well-Being*.

Faith community advocates for homeless youth

On Feb. 14, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) staff were joined by over 30 faith leaders and congregants from around the state for *Youth Homelessness Advocacy Day*, calling upon lawmakers to address Oregon's rate of youth homelessness and support HB 4039 to expand the continuum of services available to Oregon's unaccompanied houseless youth (UHY). The number of UHY in Oregon is currently tied for highest in the country.

Attendees rallied at St. Mark Lutheran Church in Salem before meeting with dozens of legislators to urge them to invest in our young people. And on President's Day, a dozen students from the Beaverton School District's Club Hope joined EMO staff in Salem to advocate on behalf of their peers experiencing homelessness. The students met with their local lawmakers to talk about the needs of high school students and to ask the lawmakers to support HB 4039.

HB 4039 passed unanimously through both the House Committee on Human Services



Youth Homelessness Advocacy Day participants.

and Housing and the Joint Ways and Means Committee, but it did not receive a floor vote in either chamber before the session abruptly ended.

Making an investment in UHY remains a top priority for EMO. Our advocacy team is working with our partners and Reps. Cheri Helt and Alissa Keny-Guyer to advocate that HB 4039 be brought back during a potential special session.

2020 Collins Summit: Lisa Sharon Harper



The 2020 Collins Summit, featuring guest lecturer Lisa Sharon Harper, is scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 18, at a Portland location to be determined.

Harper will explore how, in these politically divisive and turbulent times, we as people of faith can come together to create *shalom* (a just peace).

Harper leads trainings and events that increase clergy and community leaders' capacity to organize people of faith toward a just world. A prolific speaker, writer and activist, she is the founder and president of FreedomRoad.us.

Harper is the author of several books including the critically acclaimed, *The Very Good Gospel: How Everything Wrong Can Be Made Right*. The book, recognized as the "2016 Book of the Year" by *Englewood Review of Books*, explores God's intent for the wholeness of all relationships in light of today's headlines. As a columnist at *Sojourners Magazine*, Harper writes extensively on *shalom* and governance, immigration reform, health care reform, poverty, racial and gender justice, climate change, and transformational civic engagement.

For developing details about the 2020 Collins Summit, please check EMO's website at emoregon.org/events.

Benefit Dinner cancelled


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to recruit and support committed foster parents to care for vulnerable children; and to build bridges between Evangelical and other faith communities in pursuit of the common good.

Our Children's Trust: "Creation Justice Award" for creating a game-changing, youth-driven, global climate recovery campaign to protect the Earth's atmosphere and natural systems for all present and future generations.

Support for EMO's services

Your support to EMO will ensure that we do all we can to meet the increasing needs of those affected by the pandemic. Please carefully consider what you would have spent on this year's Benefit Dinner—tickets at \$150 apiece, auction purchases, the Paddle Raise—and make a donation now to EMO in that amount or even greater. Donate at emoregon.org/give or mail a check to EMO (you may use the "Collins Match" form on the back page). On behalf of all in our community, *thank you!*

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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
American Endowment Foundation	NE Emergency Food Program
American Immigration Lawyers Association, Oregon Chapter	SOAR Immigration Legal Services
Arlene Schnitzer Trust	Common Table, Creation Justice
Benson Family Foundation	NE Emergency Food Program
Brainerd Foundation	Creation Justice
Broadway Cares Equity Fights AIDS	HIV Center
Cascade AIDS Project, Inc.	HIV Center
Catholic Legal Immigration Network	SOAR Immigration Legal Services
The Collins Foundation	Annual Fund
Harris Family Foundation	Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees
Irwin Foundation	NE Emergency Food Program
Joseph E. Weston Public Foundation	Annual Fund, Common Table, Second Home
Juan Young Trust	Second Home
Kaiser Foundation Hospitals	Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees
Many Dances Family Fund	Annual Fund
Meyer Memorial Trust	SOAR Immigration Legal Services
MJ Murdock Charitable Trust	Common Table
National Christian Foundation NW	NE Emergency Food Program
Northwest Industrial and Foundry Supply Co. Inc.	NE Emergency Food Program
Oregon Food Bank	NE Emergency Food Program
Oregon Law Foundation	SOAR Immigration Legal Services
Portland Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence	HIV Center
Pride Foundation	HIV Center
The Regeneration Project	Oregon Interfaith Power & Light
Reser Family Foundation	Second Home
Schoenfeld & Schoenfeld, P.C.	HIV Center
United Methodist Women of Hillsboro	SOAR Immigration Legal Services
Valley Community Presbyterian Church	Second Home
Wright Land Company	Annual Fund
Youth Service America	NE Emergency Food Program

2020 Collins Match: Helping EMO meet the challenges ahead

In this time of crisis, we are deeply grateful to The Collins Foundation for making your donations to Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon’s (EMO) 2020 Annual Fund go even farther. The Collins Foundation will match all new and increased donations made to EMO up to \$70,000. This generous addition to your support will help us meet an increased need for direct services—while continuing to bring together Oregonians for interfaith dialogue 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/give.

Double my gift to EMO with the Collins Match!

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please make tax-deductible check payable to EMO or pay by:

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express ZIP code _____

Card # _____ Code _____ Exp. _____

Amount: ☐ \$1,000 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ Other _____

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.

Honor & Memorial Gifts

September 2019 - February 2020

Gifts in Honor

in honor of Gaile Baack – Patricia Jane Eby

in honor of Gaile Baack, Kristi Baack & Bernie Deazley – Eric Baack

in honor of Kristi Baack’s birthday
– Gaile & Donald Baack, Lisa Brown, Michelle Bush & Miguel Camacho, Joanne Deazley, Claire & Pete Holland, Erika & Shawn Martin, Tever Nickerson & John Ott, Christine & Luke Patrick, Karin Pease, Melissa Thompson, Thy Vo & Thanh Nguyen, Lisa & Tom Westarp

in honor of Paul Belz-Templeman
– Wendi Kissell

in honor of Arthur Brooks – Albert Brooks

in honor of the children on our block
– Joel & Laine Schipper

in honor of David Church – Nicole Caputo

in honor of Marianna Conner
– Celia Carlson

in honor of Michael Connolly
– Sean Connolly

in honor of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority – Patricia Dickerson, Lesley Unthank, Sharon White

in honor of Helen Dennis – Michael Dennis

in honor of Jan & Mick Elfers
– Jeffrey & Sharon Musgrove

in honor of Felix – Rodney & Sandra Page

in honor of Brantley Field – Gail Sanford

in honor of Bruce & Cynthia Fitzwater
– Richard & Rhonda Sevaly

in honor of Linda Gebetsberger
– Helen Dennis

in honor of Eugene & LaRae Groves
– Vernon & Betty Groves

in honor of Kim Hale & Jacob Schmitt families – Catherine & Allan Schmitt

in honor of John & Melinda Hawkins
– Jeffrey & Sharon Musgrove

in honor of Ben & Jen Hayes
– Judith Preisler

in honor of Jill James & Brian Brandt
– Zoe Copeland

in honor of Tom Jordahl – Eric Jordahl

in honor of Twila Jordahl – Eric Jordahl

in honor of Ted Liljeholm – Edward Gilman

in honor of Nancy McGrath Green
– Robert Caporale, Kathryn M. Kocurek

in honor of John Meadows, aka “Candy Wrapper” – Imperial Sovereign Rose Court of Oregon

in honor of Marcus Michinson
– Rhoda Fuentes

in honor of Rodney Page
– Elizabeth & Gilbert Eklund

in honor of Bill Parsons & Kay Rencken
– Merritt & Carolyn McCall

in honor of Piedmont Rose Connection
– Marian Gilmore

in honor of Barbara & David Plum
– Michelle Bush & Miguel Camacho

in honor of Jenny Pratt-Hale
– Richard & Pat Bryant

in honor of Eugene & Pat Ross
– Mary Sue Evers

in honor of Richard & Arlene Rumble
– Kathy Rumble

in honor of A’Jay Scipio
– Rose City Park Presbyterian Church

in honor of Richard Sirianni
– James & Mary Ann Buck

in honor of SOAR’s Citizenship Day
– Savage Midlife Wrestling

in honor of Lynn & Susan Spruill
– Michael Dennis

in honor of Connie M. Tilgner
– Sophia Kremidas

in honor of Katie Ugolini & Chris Lopez
– Lynne Phillips-Werbel

in honor of Ernie Valach
– Paul & Ruth LaRue

in honor of Susan Van Winkle
– C2 Recreation Consulting

in honor of Pat & Debbie Walsh
– Emily & Timothy Walsh

in honor of Zak & Heather Zimmers
– Jeffrey & Sharon Musgrove

Gifts in Memory

in memory of John L. Anderson
– Peggy Anderson

in memory of Bonnie Blackwolf
– Nikki Johnson

in memory of Brian Bounous
– Brenda Mendiola

in memory of Trudy Bradley – Dan Bradley

in memory of Dale Brandt – Barbara Brandt

in memory of John Casas
– Raymond L. Barnes

in memory of Jeff Choonoo – Sara Wise

in memory of Robert Colclessor
– Teresa & Dwight Meisner

in memory of John Cotton
– Mark and Jane Cotton

in memory of Martin D. Courch
– Eddy Marie Crouch

in memory of Dennis Cunningham
– Fred Neal & Mark Haack

in memory of John E. Danze
– Kathy Danze & James Valluzzi

in memory of John Dennis
– Vickie & Steven Athay, Harvey & Nancy Black, Jane Boubel, Nancy Colbaugh, Suzanne & David Cutsforth, Charlotte & Xavier Denis, Helen Dennis, the Dennis Family, Susan Doescher, William & Karen Early, Bill Eddy, David & Mary Eklund, John Enbom, Edward Fiske, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Gray, Kinsey Green, Ronald & Mary Ann Guenther, Joyce Howland, Judith Kelley, Karin Krakauer, Valerie Krauss, David & Leigh Leslie, Robert & Candace Leslie, Ann & Ron Marek, James & Elizabeth McDonnell III, Frances Menlove, Betty Miner, James Moiso & Lea Lawrence-Moiso, Barbara J. Moon, Gretchen & John Morris, George & Kay Novak, Edward Prindle, Elaine Rea, Ginny Robertson, Joanne Ross, Pete Sandrock, Richard & Margaretta Scanlan, Stephen Schneider, Lew Semprini & Nancy Wortman, Deborah Sorensen, Lynn & Susan Spruill, Pat Starker, Carla & Matthew Starrett-Bigg, Clifford & Jo Anne Trow, Patricia White, Judith Widen & Warren Bull, Joe & Lois Zaerr

in memory of Russ George – Barbara George

in memory of Lucy Higgins
– Patricia Leritz-Higgins

in memory of Glenn W. Jaquith
– Judith Jaquith

in memory of Siegfried Kind
– Erika & Shawn Martin

in memory of Freddie Mercury
– Alexis Alcala

in memory of Bill Mitchell
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in memory of Tom Parker – Janet L. Parker & Robyn Hartwig

in memory of Gail Reed – Cheryl Reed

in memory of Ann Schneider – Sharon Loomis-Malin, Stephen V. Schneider

in memory of George Ivan Smith
– Ann Smith

in memory of June Tanis
– Janice & Tom Harvey

in memory of Sandra Walker Long
– Sylvia DePue

in memory of Robert J. Weber
– Marilyn Weber

in memory of Teresa Whipple
– Lloyd & Genevieve Johnson

in memory of Karin Wright
– William Wright

in memory of JoAnn Zinck
– Mark & Jane Cotton