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2020 Collins Summit explores *Shalom in Divided Times*

By Paul LeFeber, EMO director of Development & Communication

Early this summer, my wife and I took our two young daughters to a Black Lives Matter march in our neighborhood. It was a moving experience to see our community come together in support of Black lives. I was filled with hope watching young Black leaders inspire the crowd. Our emerging generations have so much to teach us.

During the march, our 8-year-old daughter Junia saw a sign that said, “All cops are bad, even the ones you know.” She tugged on my wife’s shirt and said, “I don’t think I agree with that sign.” You see, her

beloved second grade teacher is married to a police officer, and Junia knows him to be a kind and caring person.

Politics aside, we were struck how in that moment our 8-year-old was thrust into the zeitgeist of 2020. It’s hard to do anything without running into something that rattles your cage. We live in divided times.

So, the question we wrestle with is real: Can we be unified for peace, justice and shalom even when we disagree?

The Judeo-Christian concept of shalom captures

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The 2020 Collins Summit on Nov. 18 will feature Lisa Sharon Harper, a prolific speaker, writer and activist. She is one of today’s leading voices on the topics of poverty, racial justice and transformational civic engagement.

SOAR celebrates 40 years of resettling refugees in Oregon —Serving over 20,000 families from more than 25 nations

By Lisa Westarp, EMO Development officer

Jean-Claude fled his home in the Democratic Republic of the Congo when his father was killed by a militia. He was only three years old. “Hutus were killing Tutsis and they chased us from Congo,” he recalls. With his mother and siblings, he fled to a refugee camp in Rwanda.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon’s (EMO) Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees (SOAR) refugee resettlement program is celebrating its 40th anniversary. In its four decades of service, SOAR has resettled over 20,000 refugee families—including Jean-Claude—from more than 25 nations.

Refugee Act of 1980

The end of the Vietnam War and the terror of the Khmer



Jean-Claude is one of 20,000 refugees resettled by SOAR during the past 40 years.

Rouge in Cambodia had unleashed a humanitarian crisis and a flood of refugees fleeing Southeast Asia. After the fall of Saigon in 1975, President Ford directed the U.S.-sponsored evacuation of approximately 125,000 Vietnamese refugees. The U.S. State Department at the time had no official policy on refugee admissions; its refugee

office was staffed with only two people.

As tens of thousands of South Vietnamese from rural areas fled persecution in small boats to the South China Sea, the “boat people” refugee crisis precipitated action by the U.S. Congress. In 1980, the U.S. government moved from an ad hoc approach to a permanent, standardized system for identifying, vetting and resettling prospective refugees that is still in use today.

The Refugee Act of 1980 defines a refugee as a person who is able to demonstrate that they have been persecuted, or have reason to fear persecution, on the basis of one of five “protected

grounds”: race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.

When the Refugee Act of 1980 was passed, a group of concerned Presbyterians in Portland had come to The Rev. Dr. Rodney Page, then acting director of EMO, requesting that the organization create an agency to resettle Vietnamese refugees. Their church offered to act as a sponsor for the new arrivals. Given EMO’s mission to “welcome the stranger,” the idea of assisting refugees was met with enthusiasm by the organization—and the Portland community, Page recalls.

Jean-Claude and his family

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The time is now: Reckoning with racism in Oregon

We are living in one of the most transformational eras of our lifetimes. The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a light on the clear inequities that exist in our society and highlighted the importance of a fully accessible, quality health care system. The Black Lives Matter movement has brought thousands of people to the streets to demand systemic change. And it is time (way past time) for change.

Ijeoma Oluo, author of the New York Times bestselling book, “So You Want to Talk About Race,” says, “The beauty of anti-racism is that you don’t have to pretend to be free of racism to be an anti-racist. Anti-racism is the commitment to fight racism wherever you find it, including in yourself. And it’s the only way forward.”

Fighting racism requires us to acknowledge the racism that we have been socialized into, so we can recognize our role in it and interrupt our complacency and complicity. By confessing our part in the legacy of racism, we can interrupt its continuation and begin to make amends. The truth is, white people are living on land stolen from our Indigenous neighbors and participate in an economy that was founded on the slave labor of our African American brothers and sisters.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) is committed to fighting racism and to changing systems that perpetuate inequity; systems only change when hearts are transformed. This fall, EMO will begin an intensive process of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training for our staff and board. The process will include using an equity



Jan Musgrove Elfers
President

lens to discover and remove barriers that exist for people of color to be hired and to experience satisfaction in their jobs, as well as a path towards advancement.

Our Public Policy Advocacy supports initiatives that will create more equity for communities who are particularly harmed by current policies. For example, in this issue of the *Voice*, you will find EMO’s recommendations for the Oregon ballot measures. One of our recommendations is in support of Measure 110, which decriminalizes possession of certain drugs and establishes a drug addiction treatment and recovery program funded by the state’s marijuana tax revenue. By decriminalizing most drug possessions, the measure will also likely reduce longstanding and traumatic racial disparities in Oregon’s criminal justice system and direct much-needed funding to treatment programs.

Perhaps one of the most exciting projects that EMO is supporting is “Reckoning with the Racist History of Oregon.” The Common Table (commontableoregon.org), a project that EMO helped found, is organizing a statewide nine-month forum with faith leaders. Participants will meet twice monthly to learn more about past racist practices within Oregon and acknowledge the ways in which they have carried on into the present day. They will listen to Black, Brown, Indigenous, Asian and other Communities of Color inside intentional cohorts, building bridges of respect and understanding in order to identify and remove the social and economic barriers to human flourishing.

Ultimately, the purpose of this engagement is to ensure that all of our communities’ experiences, memories and stories might foster understanding and support, seek feedback, and encourage reform that will create a better society and better outcomes towards restorative justice.

The first trimester of the forums will culminate

in EMO’s annual Collins Summit on Nov. 18, “Shalom in Divided Times: Can we create just peace and real unity?” This year the event will be presently virtually. The keynote speaker will be Lisa Sharon Harper, a Black author, activist and artist (see article on page 1). During the evening, several Common Table members will participate in a discussion about the complexities involved in engaging authentically with one another when we disagree. The timing of the event is just two weeks after the 2020 national election. Whatever the election’s outcome, we expect there to be much conversation around how we heal a country that is deeply divided.

And so we ask the question, “Can we create just peace and real unity?” With God’s help, I pray that we can.

Akiyama elected 11th bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Oregon



The Rev. Dr. Diana Akiyama

In August, Episcopal delegates elected The Rev. Dr. Diana Akiyama as the 11th Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Oregon. The vote concluded a year-long process of seeking a successor for Bishop Michael Hanley, who began his service in the Diocese in 2010 and will retire in January 2021.

Akiyama currently serves as vicar at St. Augustine’s Episcopal Church in Kapaa, Hawaii, and is dean of Waiolaihui’ia School for Formation.

“Throughout my discernment for the vocation of Bishop of Oregon, I have become increasingly energized and drawn to the innovative ministries currently underway in the Diocese,” stated Akiyama. “I believe this growing connection is rooted in my diverse experiences as a priest, and in my longstanding belief that the Church is being called to respond to a changing world.”

Akiyama was baptized and grew up at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Hood River, Ore. She was ordained in 1988 in the Diocese of Eastern Oregon and has the historical distinction of being the first Japanese-American woman ordained to the Episcopal priesthood. Akiyama has extensive experience in Christian formation, teaching, social justice advocacy and mission field, having served ministries in Oregon, California and Hawaii.

Reimagining stewardship of the land: Ascension School begins land reclamation and restoration project in eastern Oregon

By Amy Jayne, executive director, Ascension School Camp and Conference Center

Ascension School Camp and Conference Center sits on approximately 100 acres on the edge of Cove in eastern Oregon. For nearly a century, 80 acres of the property have been leased out for farming. Through the support and leadership of Bishop Patrick Bell of the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon and the discernment of our values around creation care and racial reconciliation, we have been compelled to reimagine our stewardship of the land.

In November 2019, the land was returned to Ascension School’s direct care, and we began implementing the vision to re-establish the native riparian and prairie eco-system and build a nature trail throughout the 80 acres.

Knowing that this was not a simple vision and would require extensive expertise, we have entered into partnership with the Natural Resource Conservation Service through the USDA and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), which seeks to support landowners in establishing vegetation along streams, protecting water quality, and restoring fish and wildlife habitat. CREP will be a primary source of funding for the restoration component of the project.

Native grass seed was already planted in early November 2019. We hired a director of habitat management, Bobby Fossek, who specializes

in land restoration and indigenous studies. He oversees the project and provides leadership around environmental stewardship for all the land in our care—including the 20 acres on which Ascension School’s main campus sits.

We are driven by the conviction that our relationship to the land is critical in our spiritual formation and connection with the Creator. We are equally convicted by the need for racial justice, and we name the fact that we inhabit the ancestral lands of the indigenous people of our region—many who were dispersed and displaced by our occupancy. This project is an opportunity for reconciliation with our native brothers and sisters and has opened new relationships and partnerships.

In recent months, we are reminded of how critical advocacy and restitution is in this restoration story. The land will once again provide first foods and seed harvest from native plants, including camas and various berries, and be a gathering space for the tribes. Beginning this fall, we will provide space for tribal sovereignty camps—including a camas bake. We have been awarded a sizable grant from the Wildhorse Foundation of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and another from the Episcopal Church’s Task Force on Creation Care and Environmental Racism.



In 2019, Ascension School Camp and Conference Center in central Oregon began re-establishing the native riparian and prairie eco-system.

All Ascension School visitors can view the project via the trail system that meanders throughout the property and creates a conservatory and sanctuary for those who visit. Educational, cultural and spiritual markers will guide visitors. In the future, we are excited to incorporate this “classroom” into our Outdoor School program, camping ministry and adult formation retreats. We look forward to observing the land come to life once again.

For more information about the project, visit coveascensionschool.com or contact Bobby Fossek, habitat manager, at bobby@coveascensionschool.com.

Meet Cherice Bock, EMO’s Creation Justice advocate

The Creation Justice program of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) activates congregations seeking to improve their practices of environmental stewardship and environmental and ecological justice. Our mission is to love God’s Creation through education, relationships and advocacy. We are excited to have Cherice Bock lead these efforts as EMO’s Creation Justice advocate.



Cherice Bock

chickens, and a beloved Australian shepherd dog named Kiona.

Why did you choose to work for EMO?

I have admired EMO’s work for years and appreciate the organization’s emphasis on practical action and policy advocacy on topics of moral importance. When I heard they were hiring a Creation Justice advocate, I jumped at the chance to join the team! This work combines my passion for living out the gospel in meaningful ways in our time, educating people of faith about climate change and environmental concerns, and working toward a shalom community based on equity and love.

What is your vision for Creation Justice?

My vision is to gather people in Oregon who are already doing this work, to network them with one another and with those who need examples of how to begin, and to catalyze spiritually-grounded action to care for the environment, other creatures, and people who are most impacted by the effects of climate change. Part of this includes the work of repentance—participating in the transformative work of Christ in order to turn around and go a different and more sustainable direction. And part of this work is creating resilient and hope-filled communities ready to meet the challenges before us, living out the gospel, which is good news to the poor.

A framework for creation justice that I really appreciate is called watershed discipleship, in which we learn how to be disciples of Jesus within our watersheds, collaborating with those in our region, and learning about God

through other parts of the created world. This work includes asking forgiveness and seeking reconciliation with the land and the Native people who stewarded it well for centuries before European Americans arrived in our region.

It also includes attending to the race, class and gender inequities exacerbated by the problems climate change is bringing. This is deep, intense and joy-filled spiritual work, and it represents a shift in the way most of us relate to one another and the rest of God’s creation. By forming regional partnerships and networks, we can support one another in this challenging work of our time.

What can volunteers do to assist your program?

If you have a skill—such as a liturgical element, a sermon, or an educational offering relating to the environment and faith—and you are willing to share it with others, I would be glad to connect you with congregations that need your skill. If your congregation has done things like energy audits, installing solar panels, hosting a community garden, bioswales, pollinator gardens, or other “greening” actions on your church’s building and grounds, I would like to hear about it. If you’re willing to share with others about your experience implementing those actions, I would like to create a list of people with experience to connect to those who are wondering how to get started. Please also share with me any events or actions your congregation is engaging in, and I can help spread the word so others can participate.

Contact Cherice Bock at cbock@emoregon.org.

Meet Paul LeFeber, new director of EMO’s development and communication

Tell us about your background.

I’ve been a pastor for most of my career. I started out as a worship arts pastor and transitioned into lots of different aspects of pastoral ministry (executive, creative, teaching). At my core I’m an artist (music, theatre and writing). I love to see something come from nothing. That creation process fuels me more than anything else. My wife Mariah and our two young daughters (Junia and Adah) moved here from Wisconsin five years ago. I spent the last five years as the executive pastor at New Hope Church.

Why did you choose to work for EMO?

I love God and love people. EMO has a unique way of creating space for both of those things. I was especially drawn to our direct service and



Paul LeFeber

advocacy work. The way EMO rallies around people who are often forgotten or discriminated against connects with me on the deepest level. I was also really excited by the opportunity to work for an organization that has such a rich history in the state of Oregon, so many good people and faith partners are part of the EMO family.

What is your vision for EMO?

I’m a passionate storyteller, and I’m really excited to help tell EMO’s story. There is so much incredible stuff going on all the time. I’m thankful for the chance to help share that story with the world, increasing our profile and gathering new people to partner with us.

What do you find most rewarding about your work?

I love getting to work on all kinds of different things. I’m not wired to do the same thing over and over again. Fortunately, my work is varied, and EMO is a remarkably varied organization. I also love the opportunity to connect people who want to help with a way in which they can help.

Contact Paul LeFeber at plefeber@emoregon.org.

New Americans Initiative celebrates 10 years of helping Oregon's low-income immigrants become US citizens!

SOAR Immigration Legal Services (SOAR Legal), a program of EMO, has provided culturally competent immigration-related legal representation and education to low-income Oregonians since 1992. About 110,000 Lawful Permanent Residents (Green Card Holders) live in Oregon, and over 84,000 of those are eligible to apply for U.S. Citizenship.

In 2010, SOAR Legal launched the New Americans Initiative, a comprehensive project to support low-income immigrants with becoming U.S. Citizens. We have assisted clients from more than 70 different countries who live across the state of Oregon. Over the past decade, we have:

- Supported almost 3,000 low-income immigrants with applying for U.S. Citizenship.
- Taught more than 1,500 low-income immigrants ESL and Citizenship Classes.
- Helped almost 1,000 newly naturalized U.S. Citizens register to vote.

There are several components of the New Americans Initiative. Our attorneys provide free legal representation and support with filing the required applications for U.S. citizenship (naturalization) and represent our clients at the interview. We accomplish this through one-on-one meetings (both in person and virtually) with clients in our offices in Portland and Hillsboro, as well as through Citizenship Day Workshops in



One of our citizenship class participants celebrates after his citizenship oath ceremony this summer.

Photo credit: Angie Kelly

rural Oregon locations.

Over the past 10 years, we have hosted more than 20 Citizenship Day Workshops in five different Oregon cities, and our first Virtual Citizenship Day Workshop in September of this year. In addition to our staff, our work is supported by pro bono attorneys, law students, paralegal students, interpreters and community members who help make our services possible.

Our team of education professionals provides free ESL and citizenship instruction to teach students how to read, write and speak English, as well as the required U.S. history and civics content necessary to pass the citizenship test.

In addition to this, a key aspect of the New

Americans Initiative is to encourage clients and students to fully integrate and participate in civic engagement activities. These activities range from speaking with guest judges who visit our classes to explain the American judicial system, to visiting local landmarks and museums, to volunteering or writing a letter to an elected official. Over the years, we have offered four levels of ESL and Citizenship Classes in 10 different cities in Oregon and in a distance learning online format. Additionally, we offer citizenship instruction in English, Spanish and Russian.

The final component of the New Americans Initiative is the Voter Education Project, during which we engage our newly naturalized U.S. Citizens in a course during which they learn all about voting in Oregon and have the opportunity to register to vote. As 2020 is an election year, it is important to remember that citizenship brings powerful rights and responsibilities with it. All citizens have an opportunity to shape the city, county, state and country in which we can all thrive, by voting and engaging in their communities.

Learn more about our services at soarlegal.org. If you are interested in supporting the New Americans Initiative by donating or volunteering, please contact Caroline van der Harten at cvanderharten@emoregon.org.

SOAR refugee resettlement

Continued from page 1

waited in a refugee camp in Rwanda for 23 years, hoping each day that they would be among those to be selected randomly for an interview for the opportunity to start life anew in a safe country. The admissions process to the United States is so arduous and lengthy that many, like Jean-Claude, grow up in refugee camps as they wait.

For Jean-Claude, as with all potential refugees abroad, the first step was to obtain the opportunity to register with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). UNHCR officials collect documentation and perform an initial screening, then refer qualifying applicants to U.S. State Department Resettlement Support Centers (RSCs). RSC officials interview, verify personal data and submit information for rigorous background checks by multiple U.S. national security agencies.

Only after passing these background checks can the applicant be cleared for entry to the United States. In Jean-Claude's case, the background check took one year. He was able to come to the United States in 2017.

"When I arrived [in the United States] for the first time, everything was new and challenging and strange," says Jean-Claude. "I wondered how I would survive. I did not know anyone here. I was told there would be a case manager who would take care of me. SOAR met me at the airport. It was amazing! They helped me with everything: ID, social security, provided me with the house I am living in, rent for the first month, food and furniture. They helped me with any problem. I did not know anything!"

This is what SOAR does for every one of its clients, each from a staggering array of different

countries and cultures. How is SOAR able to do this work?

In the United States, nine nongovernmental organizations work with and are funded by the State Department to resettle refugees. These religious or community-based organizations are known as a VOLAG (short for "voluntary agency"). Each VOLAG in turn contracts with some 200 local affiliates across the country who provide reception upon arrival; support with housing, food and clothing; community orientation; English lessons; enrollment in various benefit programs; and referral to social service providers for health care and job training and placement.

Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees is one of three refugee resettlement agencies in the state of Oregon and operates under a contract with Church World Service, one of nine VOLAGs. Traditionally, SOAR has received approximately one-third of its annual funding from Church World Service and the remainder directly from the federal government. Funding is on a per-capita basis and provides support for each refugee's first eight months in the United States.

Most of SOAR's staff have been refugees themselves. Their personal experiences of adjusting to a new culture give them invaluable resources and empathy for their clients. Jean-Claude says, "From what I have seen, helping someone is more than a job for them, it is more than work, they do it with passion, they do it with love. I could not have made it alone without them."

Vesna Vila, SOAR's program director, came to United States as a refugee from the former Yugoslavia, where she was a pediatrician. She recalls the difficulties of adjusting to an entirely new way of life, and she brings this experience to

SOAR—where she has worked for the past 22 years.

Vila's passion for health and human development has led her to create a new intensive case management protocol for people coming from refugee camps with untreated medical conditions such as hypertension, addiction, depression or HIV. She has also developed a parenting class that acknowledges that different cultures raise children differently, and presents our own culture's understanding of education, nutrition, hygiene and child development.

Among Vila's first clients was Yelena Grigoryeva, a refugee from the former Soviet Union who is now a SOAR case manager herself. Grigoryeva speaks of the culture shock she experienced upon her arrival to the United States as a refugee: "We have to start a new life in the United States from scratch. Learn English, learn how to drive and obtain a driver's license, learn how to sort mail, bills (we never had them back home!). We need to learn how to live in United States as all others." That personal experience informs her work with newly arrived refugees.

Vila and Grigoryeva made a life-changing impression on Jean-Claude. "After seeing what they are doing for me," he says, "I thought, 'This is a good job. I wish I could do this too, helping

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Vesna Vila, SOAR program director

Metro HomeShare developing digital tools to increase access to affordable housing

Metro HomeShare (MHS) is thrilled to announce the program has been selected to receive an AARP Community Challenge grant. The program is one of only 184 grantees selected from across all 50 states, Washington DC, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Metro HomeShare, a direct service program of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, helps home providers stabilize and retain their housing, while offering access to affordable rent or services to home seekers. Lack of affordable housing is a huge challenge in the Portland metro area. For seniors on a fixed income, rising expenses can easily overwhelm them. Home-sharing is a creative, low-cost solution.

The goal of this "quick action" grant is for people to tap into MHS however and whenever works for them. To meet this goal, MHS will create a video-based educational platform that allows folks to learn all about the program, as well as complete each phase of enrollment, from wherever they access the internet.

The grant will also allow staff to conduct on the spot orientations and intakes while out in the community—all thanks to a new mobile technology suite! No paperwork, no intake appointments, no traveling across town.

Metro HomeShare has always recognized the importance of accessibility. Now more than ever, we are finding that folks want an option that truly meets them where they are. "COVID has certainly changed the way people access services, so we are honored to be able to create this new avenue for program delivery," said Devon Hoyt, MHS outreach coordinator.

AARP believes that great communities take a long time to build and sustain, but it also believes that "quick actions" can be the spark for long-term progress. The MHS "quick action" project will implement changes to improve livability for residents of all ages, backgrounds and abilities in Multnomah and Washington Counties.

"We are incredibly proud that AARP selected Metro HomeShare to receive this grant," says Andrew Brown, MHS program manager. "AARP is a nationwide leader on making neighborhoods, towns and cities more livable for all residents, and we are honored that they see the tangible value this project will bring to our community."

Completion of the Community Challenge Project is expected in November 2020.

To learn more about Metro HomeShare, visit metrohomeshare.org, call (971) 271-5195 or email metrohomeshare@emoregon.org.

NE Emergency Food Program is meeting the challenge!



During the first five months of the COVID-19 pandemic, EMO's Northeast Emergency Food Program (NEFP):

Served **250,000** individuals, an increase of **1,300** percent.

Distributed **6.5 million** pounds of food, valued over **\$8 million**.

Continued from page 4

others to improve their lives."

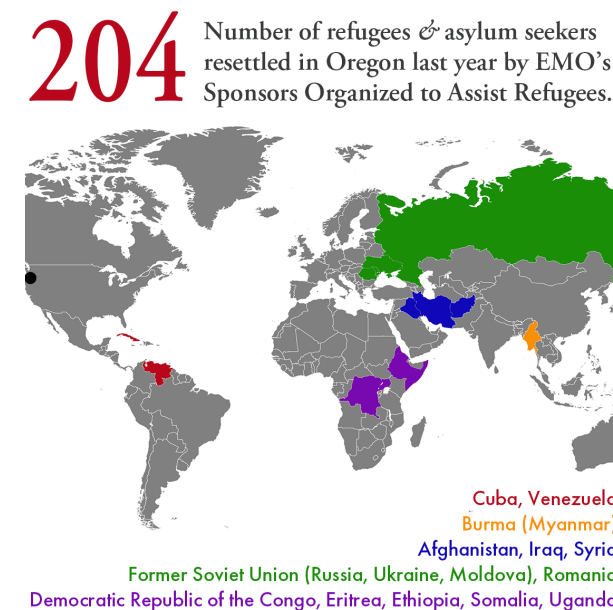
"My plan is to continue with my studies," he adds. "If I get a chance to go back to school, I want to do social work. I got deep inspiration from the people at SOAR."

The changing status of resettling refugees in the United States

The United States has historically been a global leader in the resettlement of refugees—and the need for such leadership remains enormous. The number of refugees around the world who are fleeing violence or persecution in their home countries in search of safety abroad has grown dramatically over the past decade—from 42.7 million in 2007 to 79.5 million by the end of 2019. Yet, less than 1 percent of the total number of displaced people in the world is granted resettlement each year.

Much of the increase in need has been fueled by ongoing armed conflicts in Syria, Myanmar and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. People are also being displaced in large numbers by conflicts in Burundi, the Central African Republic, Iraq, South Sudan, Sudan, Ukraine and Yemen. The majority of new arrivals settled by SOAR in recent years are from countries that comprised the former Soviet Union.

Until recently, the United States offered refugee each year to more people than all other nations combined. But the Trump administration has drastically reduced the maximum number of refugees that can enter the United States—from a cap of 110,000 set by President Obama in 2016 to a nearly impossible limit of merely 18,000 in fiscal year 2020. In 2017, the number of refugees resettled in the United States decreased more



than in any other country, representing the first time since the adoption of the 1980 U.S. Refugee Act that the United States resettled fewer refugees than the rest of the world (according to Pew Research Center). As the number of refugee admissions has been cut, so has federal funding for their support.

Across the country, the funding crisis has forced many refugee organizations to lay off staff and shut their doors. And the federal government has reduced the number of agencies who can settle refugees. At SOAR, the staff has been cut from 12 to only five.

In order to continue to provide indispensable services to newly arrived refugees, SOAR has joined forces with Oregon's other two refugee resettlement agencies—Catholic Charities and Lutheran Community Services Northwest—to create a unified coalition to develop alternate sources of funding. To help cover federal budget cuts, The Collins Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, MRG Foundation, Pride Foundation

and Oregon Community Foundation have collaborated to provide emergency funding for legal services, outreach and education, research, basic human needs, and civic engagement and advocacy on behalf of refugees in our state.

Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees is unique in Oregon in that, as a program of EMO, it has access to EMO's public policy advocacy resources. In 2019, with the sponsorship of Oregon State Rep. Carla Piluso, EMO Public Policy Director Britt Conroy worked with partners to write House Bill 2508, the Welcoming Refugees Bill, which was passed with near-unanimous support. The bill provides \$2 million in state funding over the 2019-2021 biennium to refugee resettlement organizations, allowing them to extend the amount of time they can support newly arrived refugees from eight months to two years.

In addition, EMO has reached out directly to the public for funding, soliciting donations that will enable SOAR to continue to provide critical services to help refugees become self-sufficient participants in our communities. Donations may be made at emoregon.org/soar/give/.

Hopes for the future

"My hope is that we can survive this difficult time, get back on our feet, and continue to provide services to refugees," says Vila.

Page adds, "We need to change [our country's] dynamic to one of compassion and kindness and justice. Without a vision, the people perish. That vision is the social bond we have with one another, the values, the community we share."

"I am very proud to share my story, my experience, my background," says Jean-Claude. "I want others to feel motivated and encouraged."

Providing affordable legal services for immigrants benefits entire community

EMO and partners draft proactive plan to honor workers, prevent the deportation of Oregon's DACAistas, and rebuild Oregon's economy

In this economic downturn, many Oregon immigrant workers cannot afford immigration legal services. The financial strains caused by the coronavirus pandemic are preventing Oregon immigrants from accessing the immigration legal services they need to secure and maintain employment and avoid deportation, destabilizing the state's workforce and slowing Oregon's economic recovery.

For many low-income Oregon immigrants, legal services are what rent assistance is to housing security and what grocery support is to food security. Immigrant families and the essential services they provide are in jeopardy when these families lack access to legal services.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's (EMO) SOAR Immigration Legal Services and Public Policy Advocacy are partnering with Immigration Counseling Service, Catholic Charities and many other partner organizations to advocate for state funding to improve access to immigration legal services. Funding proactive legal services means families don't have to wait until a deportation proceeding to get legal support. The following Oregonians need legal support now.

■ Frontline Workers

In Oregon, 1 in 7 essential workers are immigrants, and Oregon's immigrants are 54 percent more likely to be essential workers than other Oregonians.

■ DACAistas/Dreamers

As many as 1 in 3 DACAistas are eligible for other immigration protections, meaning they could be spared deportation should the federal government end this program. Due to the Supreme Court decision in June blocking the Trump Administration's attempt to dismantle DACA, roughly 900 Oregonians are newly eligible to apply for DACA.

■ Asylum Seekers

Asylum seekers typically must file an asylum application within one year of their arrival to the United States. For many, missing this deadline means their asylum application will be denied.

■ ICE Detainees

An individual who is detained in an ICE raid, traffic stop or other action, but who has a pending immigration application, is typically not deported before their application has been adjudicated.

■ Would-Be Citizens

In Oregon today, over 84,000 legally permanent residents are eligible to apply for naturalization. Naturalizations help counter a community's fear and panic responses to the threat of federal immigration actions. Those able to naturalize are paid higher wages (on average) than legal permanent residents, actively engage in their communities, vote, and are more secure from deportation.

Immigration legal services stabilize families and drive state economic growth. When legal support leads to a work permit holder obtaining a green card, or a green card holder becoming a citizen, families are strengthened, the social safety net is less strained, and the state receives more tax revenue.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon and its partners have proposed the following four-part approach for the state of Oregon to stabilize families and Oregon's immigrant workforce.

1 Know Your Rights trainings across the state would offer crucial information and identify new clients. Legal providers would bring their expertise to underserved communities, leveraging their community ties and partnering with other community-based organizations to recruit community members to these trainings.

2 Follow-up legal consultations would identify individuals who are eligible for permanent relief, such as visas for victims of crime or abuse.

3 Immigration attorneys would prepare federal immigration applications in one-on-one appointments or through express immigration application filing workshops that in the past have served up to 100 clients in a single day.

4 State funding would cover the cost of legal representation and federal application filing fees, because legal and application filing fees should not stand in the way of stable employment and a reliable workforce, especially now.

Providers already serve low-income clients statewide—whether they live along the coast or in the Gorge, in eastern Oregon or the Willamette Valley, in Medford or in the Portland metro region. This proposal would enable more of our families and neighbors to access these services.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon and our partners will be working this fall to secure support for this proposal in next year's long legislative session.

Sign up for EMO's Peace & Justice e-news (emoregon.org/advocacy-action) to stay up-to-date on this and all of EMO's advocacy campaigns.

IMMIGRANT WORKERS ARE

58%

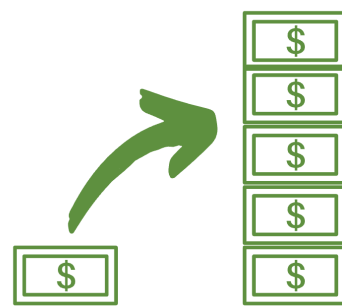
MORE LIKELY TO HAVE LOST JOBS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

NATURALIZED IMMIGRANT HOUSEHOLDS MAKE

37%

MORE THAN NON-CITIZEN IMMIGRANT HOUSEHOLDS

For every \$1 invested in Immigration Legal Services, Oregon citizens receive \$5.



Sources: The Urban Institute, "Understanding the Economic and Fiscal Impacts of Immigration Reform," 2013. Center for Migration Studies of New York, "US Foreign-Born Essential Workers by Status and State, and the Global Pandemic," 2020; EMO analysis of American Immigration Council and Center for Migration Studies of New York data. Community Services Analysis, "Oregon's Legal Immigration Services: Social Economic Impact and Return on Funding Investment Analysis," 2020.

Election Day at a county election office or on the Oregon Secretary of State website.

Oregon ballots will begin to be mailed to voters on Oct. 14. Voters can use any official ballot drop site in Oregon to return their voted ballot during the 20-day voting period. To locate Oregon ballot drop boxes, go to sos.oregon.gov. Ballots may also be returned in person or by mail to a county election office by 8 p.m. on Nov. 3.

Vote and make your voice count!

The Nov. 3, 2020, election is a statewide general election and will be vote by mail

Any Oregon resident who is at least 18 years old on Election Day is eligible to vote, but voter registration is required. Register online on the Oregon Secretary of State website at sos.oregon.gov/voting, or turn in a voter registration card to any county election office within five calendar days after signing the card. The last day to register is Oct. 13.

A registered voter who has moved, changed address or changed their name must re-register. This information may be updated through

Join the journey to dismantle racism within our own faith communities

The death of George Floyd and the rise of Black Lives Matter protests across America created a *kairos moment* for communities of faith here in Oregon: a moment of maximum opportunity. A moment when change is possible. A moment when all things "come together" and align.

This was, and is, a moment for the Common Table to act. This collective of faith leaders from across Oregon—of which Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) is one of many diverse members representing many different beliefs—has already taken action to advise our elected officials how to respond with respect and empathy to the need for racial justice in our institutions.

Now, the Common Table has invited representatives of organizations from across the state to participate in "Reckoning with Racism Cohort"—a deliberate process of dismantling racism inside one's own faith community or institution, as well as out in the public square. For those who want to grapple with Oregon's racist legacy alongside other faith communities throughout our state, this nine-month journey is a unique opportunity to learn, to listen and to engage.

Together participants will work not just to dismantle racism "out there," as if it were an objective phenomenon, but to deal with it "in here," inside our own institutions, our own ecclesiastical cultures, and in our own hearts.

What does it really mean to reckon with the racist history of Oregon? Common Table organizers suggest that it means we hold ourselves accountable to keep walking the path toward racial justice, even when other urgent issues make claims on our attention. This path includes learning, listening and engagement.

Collins Summit

Continued from page 1

this tension well. It's a Hebrew word that means wholeness, harmony, prosperity and peace. In the Hebrew Bible, we watch Israel's struggle to overcome diverging views, social tension, enmity and war. Shalom is at the center of this struggle. It's a complex idea, often oversimplified, similar to the way "unity" becomes a euphemism for sameness.

We frequently talk about unity and shalom in a kumbaya sort of way. The skeptical or marginalized among us roll their eyes and say, "Easy for you to say. You aren't dying in the streets. You don't feel the weight of oppression our marginalized brothers and sisters feel. Take your platitudes somewhere else, I'm fighting for justice over here."

It's an understandable reaction. Especially when nuance and a concern for the vulnerable become obfuscated. All too often, calls for unity end in the status quo.

This is why Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) has chosen to focus on "Shalom in Divided Times" at this year's Collins Summit. Through an innovative virtual format, we will explore these racial, political and social divisions, asking how we bring our whole selves to the table and stay engaged in *light* of our differences, not in *spite* of them.

The summit will feature Lisa Sharon Harper, a prolific speaker, writer and activist. She is one of today's leading voices on the topics of poverty, racial justice and transformational

■ **Learning.** Conversations with a diversity of faith leaders have revealed the need for knowledge of the facts of Oregon's history. Many people may not know that the Oregon Territory was originally designed to exclude people of color, or that Oregon's "lash laws" encouraged gruesome institutionalized violence. These examples are just the tip of the iceberg. A shared curriculum is required, not just to understand horrors that happened in the past, but how those horrors still live on in new forms.

■ **Listening.** While learning new information is useful, it takes more than information to transform a community. The Common Table's working theory of social change involves changing relationships and a deep spiritual shift that comes when you make friends with people who offer perspectives that differ from yours. The workshop will put faith communities in dialogue with marginalized voices here in Oregon and train them how to deepen such relationships in their own communities. Beyond what we read about the past, what does the racist legacy of Oregon look like for people of color today? What is the lived experience of all those "hidden histories"?

■ **Engagement.** Learning and listening only preface direct engagement. This work calls for representative teams from faith communities of many different backgrounds. The Common Table's goal is to create a container for mutual discernment and accountability, so each community can be held responsible for working to dismantle racism in its own local context. The nature of this engagement will vary widely.

civic engagement. Harper is author of the critically acclaimed, "The Very Good Gospel: How Everything Wrong Can Be Made Right." Recognized as the 2016 Book of the Year by Englewood Review of Books, Harper explores God's intent for the wholeness of all relationships in light of today's headlines.

The summit will also feature the work of EMO's Common Table initiative—a groundbreaking, statewide collective of interfaith leaders who are modeling the kind of complex shalom we so often neglect. The summit will include a lecture from Lisa Sharon Harper, a live Q&A, and the opportunity to hear from members of the Common Table and learn about their important work.

We invite you to join us for this significant and timely event. With the upcoming election, it's likely these topics will get even more complex. Let's come together on Nov. 18 and do a deep dive into shalom, unity and just peace.

Join us for the 2020 Collins Summit

"Shalom in Divided Times" will be held from 7 to 8:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 18, 2020.

This virtual event will be accessible on your computer, phone, tablet or smart TV. Registration is \$10 (scholarships available).

Visit EMOOregon.org/event/2020-collins to register, or call the EMO office at (503) 221-1054.

For some, engagement might have to start inside one's own church culture, whereas for others this might mean organizing with new partners out in the public square. The Common Table will provide shared resources and shared relationships for each group to decide what God is calling them to do in its own setting, along with ongoing support for taking the appropriate next step.

Given a subject as nuanced as racial justice, there is much more to share and even more to learn. The Common Table invites groups who are interested to join in this process. While the first trimester of the cohort began in September and will conclude in December, new teams of four or more from a faith community, faith-based organization or denomination are welcome to join the second and third trimesters, which will conclude May 2021.

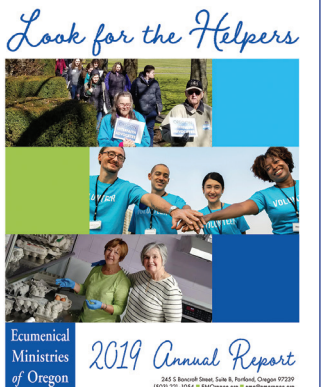
To learn more and to register, please go to the Common Table website at commontableoregon.org and click on "Reckoning with Racism Cohort."

Look for the Helpers annual report

In an effort to cut back on printing expenses and paper waste, EMO's 2019 *Annual Report: Look for the Helpers* is now available as a PDF. You may download the report at EMOOregon.org

(under "What We Do" drop-down menu). We also have a limited number of printed reports available.

If you wish to have a copy mailed to you, please contact the EMO office at (503) 221-1054 or emo@emoregon.org.



Voice

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

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Member Denominations

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EMO 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
Augustana Lutheran Church	NE Emergency Food Program
Bear Dog Group Fund	NE Emergency Food Program
CareOregon	Annual Fund
Catholic Legal Immigration Network	SOAR Immigration Legal Services
Central Lutheran Church	HIV Services, NE Emergency Food Program
Emily Georges Gottfried Fund	Annual Fund
First Presbyterian Church	NE Emergency Food Program
First Unitarian Church, Portland	Annual Fund
Franklin Conklin Foundation	Annual Fund
Harold and Arlene Schnitzer Care Foundation	Russian Oregon Social Services
The Holzman Foundation, Inc.	NE Emergency Food Program
Imago Dei Community	SOAR Immigration Legal Services
Jouris Family Foundation	Second Home
Juan Young Trust	Second Home
Lang-Svendgard Family Fund of OCF	NE Emergency Food Program
Luther Memorial Lutheran Church	NE Emergency Food Program
M.A.C. AIDS Fund	HIV Services
Maybelle Clark Macdonald Fund	Second Home
M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust	Common Table
Neighborhood Food Project	NE Emergency Food Program
Oregon Community Foundation	Annual Fund
Oregon Food Bank	NE Emergency Food Program
Oregon Law Foundation	SOAR Immigration Legal Services
Pride Foundation	HIV Services
Refugee Care Collective	Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees
The Reser Family Foundation	Second Home
Rose City Park Presbyterian Church	NE Emergency Food Program
St. James Lutheran Church	NE Emergency Food Program
St. Luke Lutheran Church	NE Emergency Food Program
St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church	NE Emergency Food Program
Sunriver Christian Fellowship	NE Emergency Food Program
Westminster Presbyterian Church	NE Emergency Food Program
Women’s Foundation of Oregon	Russian Oregon Social Services
Worksystems	SOAR Immigration Legal Services

The 2020 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) 2020 Annual Fund drive with a \$70,000 challenge grant. **New and increased donations made to EMO by Nov. 1 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.

There is still time to double your new or increased gift to EMO! Please use the form below or make a secure online donation at EMOoregon.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, 245 S Bancroft St., Suite B, Portland, OR 97239.
You may also make a secure online donation at EMOoregon.org/give.

Honor & Memorial Gifts

Gifts in Honor (March - August) Gifts in Memory (March - August)

- in honor of all workers at NEFP*
Lewis Sprunger
- in honor of your amazing volunteers*
Kathleen Van Winkle
- in honor of healthcare workers*
Eileen Marma
- in honor of all working to help with COVID-19 response*
Jonathan Tamez and Keith Walters,
Zachary Reuter
- in honor of Kristi Baack*, Joanne Deazley
- in honor of John Brousseau*
Joan and Laurence Brousseau
- in honor of their anniversary*
Joan and Laurence Brousseau
- in honor of Dan Bryant*
Cheryl and John Moore
- in honor of Nicole Caputo*
Kimberly Spangler
- in honor of Peggy Concillo*, Amy Silliman
- in honor of Antoinette Edwards*
Jesse Herbach
- in honor of John Elizalde & Paula Johnson*
Fraser and Lynn Rasmussen
- in honor of Zoe Flanagan*
Kristina Flanagan
- in honor of Don Frueh*
Nancy Blair Loudat, Barbara Nixon
- in honor of Bonny Groshong*
Marcia Kelley, Bruce Strade
- in honor of J.W. Matt Hennessee*
Ellen Singer
- in honor of Maripat & Jim Hensel*
Beth Brashear
- in honor of Adam Jenkins*, Terry Bain
- in honor of Howard Kenyon’s birthday*
Gaile and Don Baack, Josh Baldwin,
Gloria Cox, Esther Kenyon-Marcotte
and Ron Marcotte, Paul and Nina
Wendler
- in honor of Don Lambard*
John Kirsch and Kathy Allen-Kirsch
- in honor of Margaret Marcuson*
Hannah Marcuson
- in honor of Jeff Michel’s 65th birthday*
Claudia and Jeff Michel
- in honor of Kathleen Morkert*
Christine Grumm
- in honor of David Niederloh*
Ranata Niederloh
- in honor of Rodney Page*
Rodney Reeves and Joan Kimoto
- in honor of Michael Peschiera*
Barbara C. Peschiera
- in honor of David Plum*
Michelle Bush and Miguel Camacho
- in honor of John Schutte*, James Peterman
- in honor of Kevin Shields*
Nancy and David Scheele
- in honor of Diane Shiffer*
Susan and Michael Weedall
- in honor of Susan Van Winkle*
Jill Van Winkle
- in honor of Pat and Debbie Walsh*
Emily and Timothy Walsh
- in honor of Emily and Jesse Wiedenmann*
Luann Wiedenmann
- in honor of Allyn Williams*
Devri Donnelly, Etsuko Murozono
- in honor of Scott and Judy Willis*
Nancy and David Scheele
- in honor of Gary Withers*
Tony Leineweber
- in memory of Maurice and Jean Angland*
Nancy Rice
- in memory of Don and Betty Balmer*
Thomas Balmer & Mary Louise McClintock
- in memory of Don and Delvon Barrett*
Marsha Barrett Grosjean, Ronald Grosjean
- in memory of Trudy Bradley*, Dan Bradley
- in memory of Steve Buchert*
Keith Bachman, Sandra Bole, Gail &
William Carr, Penny & Phillip Carter,
Susan DeCrescente, Roberta Giovannini,
Nancy & Douglass Hamilton, Sue
Kennedy, Louise & Bruce Magun, Krista
& Ronald McKillip, Fred Neal & Mark
Haack, Noreen O’Connor, Lona & Robert
Olson, Sandra Page, Mary Petrjanos, Carl
& Susan Pettersson, James Rankin, Judith
Roumpf & Jerry Powell, Nora Stern,
Marianne Sweeney, Urban Tour Group,
Jane Ward, Laurie Farmer Whittemore
- in memory of John Casas*—Raymond Barnes
- in memory of Chuck Clark*
Randall Brooks Pratt
- in memory of John and Nancy Dennis*
Helen Dennis
- in memory of Rosamond Dewart*
Ann Crockett
- in memory of Rosemary Dodds*, Ruth Allen
- in memory of Helen and John Kuvallis*
Sophia Kremidas
- in memory of Mark Elliott*
Katherine Elliott and Robert Greaves
- in memory of George Geyer*
Susan and Michael Weedall
- in memory of Deborah Rachel Goldberg*
Marshall Goldberg
- in memory of Lois Grumm*, Maria Grumm
- in memory of Mia Hartmann*, Karen Faber
- in memory of Aryeh Hirschfield*
Compassionate Listening Oregon
- in memory of Marilyn Hodgson*
Robert and Gwen Elfers
- in memory of Betty Johnson*
Linda Chisholm
- in memory of Charles and Rita Knapp*
Kristan Knapp
- in memory of Henry and Dorothy Lambert*
Phyllis and Raymond Krueger
- in memory of Emily Lang*
Melody and William Lang
- in memory of Elena LaSpino*
Patricia and Sarah Leritz-Higgins
- in memory of Michael Laubach*
Edgar and Mary Louise Brandt
- in memory of Gregory Lindstedt and Robert Lindstedt* — Carol Lindstedt
- in memory of Gary Logsdon*
Audre Bratcher, Karen Logsdon
- in memory of Maurice Mesculan*
Amie and John Wexler
- in memory of Gary Morin*, Maria Mancuso
- in memory of Robert Oga*
Rosendo and Leslie Pont
- in memory of Louis Orcutt*
Rebecca Pepper, Myrna Zitek
- in memory of Greg P.*, Charles Cole
- in memory of Carol Rash*
Christina Adams-Brown
- in memory of John Rogers*, Charlene Rogers
- in memory of Ila May Rooks*, Judy Rooks
- in memory of Ann Schneider*
Stephen Schneider
- in memory of Robert Kuo-liang Wen*
Kristen Manos, Patricia Wen