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Oregon faith leaders encourage COVID-19 vaccinations through EMO's "Faith and the Vaccine" website

PORTLAND, ORE., March 1, 2022—Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) announces the launch of a new website, faithandthevaccine.org, featuring short video testimonies from over 25 Oregon faith leaders in support of the COVID-19 vaccines, as the pandemic continues unabated.

Faith leaders give a wide variety of compelling reasons for vaccination. While their comments are as diverse as the leaders themselves, they share a deep concern for the common good. Some reasons include: *"Protection for myself, and for love of my family,"* The Rev. Andrew Bansemer. *"We have a responsibility to care for others,"* Rabbi David Kozak. *"To participate in public health and make sure I do my part to help the entire community be safe from the virus,"* The Rt. Rev. Diana Akiyama. *"I believe in science, and I believe god works through science,"* The Rev. Ernestine Flemister.

"The devastation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in families, local communities—the loss of loved ones, distress of the illness, risk of infection, especially as people gather in churches and other sacred space—prompted the urgency for this collation of commentaries," explains The Rev. Andrea Cano, EMO interim president. "Educating people about the safety and efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccines is an example of this organization's compassion and care for the Oregon community."

The website and videos grew out of a series of meetings EMO convened early in the pandemic with Governor Kate Brown, the Oregon Health Authority, and denominational leaders from around Oregon. Since then, EMO has provided informational resources about COVID prevention guidelines to faith communities and helped set up vaccination centers in traditionally marginalized communities.

The faithandthevaccine.org site also offers an FAQ page and links to relevant articles and resources. The website welcomes comments and questions at vaccine@emoregon.org.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a statewide association of faith partners working together to improve the lives of Oregonians through direct service programs, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, creation justice and public policy advocacy.