

# ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES *of* OREGON

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## *Media Release*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Dec. 15, 2015

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### **Press conference against Islamophobia**

As hatred and bigotry spread like wildfire, Portland faith and civic leaders will take a strong stand against Islamophobia and all forms of racism on **Wednesday, Dec. 16, at 10 a.m. at a press conference at Portland City Hall.**

The press conference will include a diverse group of leaders who have over many years courageously fought for human rights. Among them are Rabbi Joey Wolf of Havurah, Shalom Synagogue; Mary Jo Tully, chancellor of the Catholic Archdiocese of Portland; Wajdi Said, president of the Muslim Educational Trust; and Jan Musgrove Elfers, interim executive director of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. They will call on every one of us to show our support for Portland's Muslim community and do all we can to ensure that Islamophobia and other forms of racism have no place in our city.

The press conference will take place against the backdrop of the attacks in Paris and San Bernardino and their aftermath. These attacks have caused shock waves in our communities. They are being used by some as a pretext for instilling a frightening climate that turns every Muslim into a potential suspect. Many Muslim citizens in our community live in a heightened state of fear of verbal or physical attack.

“At times like these,” says Wajdi Said, “when many are sowing seeds of division and fear, it is heartening to know that there are good people in Portland taking a stand to uphold equal rights for all people.”

“The fight against Islamophobia is necessary to defend our democratic freedoms and human rights,” adds Kayse Jama, executive director of the Center for Intercultural Organizing. “We affirm the universality of the anti-racist struggle and, through it, equality in law, respect and dignity of all human beings.”

Following the press conference, the Portland City Council will meet at 2 p.m. at City Hall and is expected to pass a resolution condemning Islamophobia.

#### **MEMBER DENOMINATIONS**

African Methodist Episcopal Church ■ American Baptist Churches of Oregon ■ Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) ■ Christian Methodist Episcopal Church ■ Church of the Brethren ■ Community of Christ  
Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon ■ Episcopal Diocese of Oregon ■ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ■ Greek Orthodox Church ■ Presbyterian Church (USA)—Presbytery of the Cascades  
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) ■ Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland ■ United Church of Christ ■ United Methodist Church ■ Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

*Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a statewide association of Christian denominations, congregations, ecumenical organizations and interfaith partners working together to improve the lives of Oregonians through community ministry programs, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, environmental ministry and public policy advocacy.*