

# ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES *of* OREGON

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## *Media Release*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Oct. 29, 2007

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### **Northeast Emergency Food Program will expand services in new location**

Luther Memorial Lutheran Church and Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's (EMO) Northeast Emergency Food Program (NEFP) have joined forces to create a combined food and clothing program when the 20-year old food program moves to the church in November. Called "Northeast Emergency Food Program at Luther Memorial," the center will be open for service on Nov. 5. At its old location, NEFP serves more than 1,400 people each month, providing a three- to five-day supply of nutritious groceries to northeast Portland neighbors in crisis. NEFP's work is grounded in the belief that nutritious food is a basic human need and a building block for a healthy life of possibility.

After nearly 20 years at Redeemer Lutheran Church, the program lost its lease when Redeemer sold the food house building, land and parking lot to a housing developer. The program then agreed to join forces with Luther Memorial, at the corner of NE 72<sup>nd</sup> and Wygant in the Cully neighborhood.

"While the move is challenging, locating NEFP in the Cully neighborhood provides a unique opportunity for us to serve people living in an area of Portland with great need and to partner with a congregation engaged in community ministry," said David Leslie, EMO executive director. "We are grateful for the support that Redeemer Lutheran has provided to NEFP and look forward to developing new ministry opportunities."

The new location is over 50 blocks away from the historic NEFP neighborhood. There are plans in the works to purchase a van and make shuttle runs into inner northeast Portland to continue to serve people in the current service area. Not surprisingly, most people currently coming to NEFP live nearby and would be greatly inconvenienced by the new location. The van would allow for transportation back and forth as a means to mitigate the distance issues.

The expanded program will offer a shopping-style pantry, allowing people to "shop" for groceries according to the quantities consistent with NEFP standards based on family size. As well as giving more choice to food recipients, the model will reduce waste and returns.

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#### MEMBER DENOMINATIONS

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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

The clothing program will be new for NEFP and allow expansion of the current Luther Memorial program. John Elizalde, NEFP program manager, hopes to use the kitchen for cooking classes to help food box recipients learn about tasty ways to prepare foods available at the program. “We’ll need trained volunteers for this work, but it sure seems like a great opportunity,” Elizalde said.

The space available could provide a social services resource and referral area, where people could use the Internet to access social services, or at least find out what services are available and how to gain access. “There are just lots of possibilities, and we are very lucky to have this opportunity to expand our offerings to people,” commented Elizalde.

An open house to celebrate the grand reopening of the NEFP at Luther Memorial will be held on Sunday, Nov. 4, from 12 to 3 p.m. The event will include tours of the new site, refreshments and guest speakers including State Senator Avel Gordly, the pastor of Luther Memorial Rev. Greg Ames, and a representative of the Cully Association of Neighbors. All are welcome to attend at no charge. For more information about the event, please call (503) 221-1054.

*Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a statewide association of Christian denominations—including Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox bodies—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.*