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The Gospel of Conquest: 2015 Collins Lecture will explore Native Americans, Christianity & the Doctrine of Discovery

This year's *Collins Lecture*, "The Gospel of Conquest," marks a departure from the traditional lecture format. Three visionary Native American scholars and spiritual leaders will guide us in an experiential exploration of the meaning of the Doctrine of Discovery—the 15th century basis for European Christian claims to the Americas—as it plays out today in relations among church, tribe and state.

Scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 19, at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Portland, the day-long seminar will be rich in music, ceremony, contemplation and spiritual growth, commencing with a traditional welcome from the

ancestral stewards of this land.

Legal expert Robert Miller will lay the groundwork for our journey, introducing us to the historical and legal background of the Doctrine of Discovery. Theologian George "Tink" Tinker will be our spiritual guide through the emotionally and intellectually charged topic of Christianity's role in displacing indigenous peoples, calling us into connectedness and supporting our journey forward. And cultural historian Kim Recalma-Clutesi will weave together the ritual and the academic dimensions of our inquiry, creating sacred space to open our hearts and minds



One of three Collins Lecturers will be the Rev. Dr. George "Tink" Tinker, professor of American Indian Cultures and Religious Traditions at the Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colo.

United Methodist News photo by Mike Dubois

to reflection and new ways of understanding our radical interdependence among one another and our shared Earth.

Throughout the day, all three presenters will

encourage questioning and foster thoughtful discussion among participants. Expect to be challenged, to think deeply and to respond creatively!

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Local and national faith leaders praise Pope Francis' historic encyclical *On Care for Our Common Home*

Leaders of diverse religious groups agree: addressing climate change is a moral imperative

Prominent faith leaders representing the world's major religions expressed enthusiastic support for Pope Francis' *Laudato Si' (Be Praised): On Care for Our Common Home*, an encyclical on stewardship of the environment and human ecology released on June 18, 2015. The pope's pastoral letter, the boldest

environmental signal to date from the Roman Catholic Church, calls on all people of conscience to take up climate change as a moral imperative.

The leaders of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's (EMO) Oregon Interfaith Power & Light (OIPL) praised Pope Francis for his leadership. As one of 40 Interfaith Power & Light (IPL) national affiliates advocating for climate change as a moral issue, OIPL awaited the issuance of Pope Francis' environmental encyclical

with great anticipation. OIPL urges all people of faith and goodwill to read and reflect on the letter.

Oregon Interfaith Power & Light is engaging in a variety of activities to deepen ecumenical and interfaith dialogue on environmental matters. "There are many starting points for congregations of all faiths that want to engage in climate action for the first time or deepen their work," said Jenny Holmes, director of EMO's Environmental

Ministries. "From doing energy efficiency upgrades, to study groups and climate advocacy or direct action, there are a wealth of resources available for congregations in the IPL network."

The Rev. Canon Sally G. Bingham, president and founder of IPL, said, "Reverence for the Earth is a tenet of all faiths. Religious people are called to be responsible stewards for God's creation. IPL has been working on this major

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The prophetic call

I am honored to be called to serve as Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's interim executive director at this time of transition and great promise for the organization. As I thought about this call, I thought about the ways in which EMO



Jan Musgrove Elfers,
Interim Executive Director

Photo credit: Georkis Ramos Quintana

calls us all to serve the Oregon community—especially the least, the lost, the last and the broken, those on the margins of society. What EMO does is radically countercultural. In a world driven by individual self-interest and the corporate profit motive, EMO's vision is one of generosity and deep interconnection. We reach out in compassion to serve all God's people. We literally transform people's lives, and we do this joyfully.

And we don't stop there. EMO amplifies our acts of mercy by calling our government and our society to a whole new social order—based on justice—in which all of God's creation can flourish. This is the prophetic call. It's a both/and proposition. Jesus both healed the outcast and challenged the system that would cast anyone aside. There is a powerful connection between a life grounded in love and compassion and in practicing justice. When we do both, we create change and we become something new. We become the beloved community.

At our recent staff gathering, I asked representatives of EMO's many programs to share stories of their work. I was struck by the sense that not only were these dedicated staff members helping others in very real ways, but that they were themselves transformed and energized by doing the work they do. That's living into the prophetic call. Walter Brueggeman in his timeless classic *The Prophetic Imagination* says that "the prophetic vision not only embraces the pain of the people but creates an energy and amazement based on the new thing that God is doing." We at EMO are filled with that energy and amazement.

I consider it a great gift to be called to serve with you in working for the common good. As I look to the months ahead, I would like to share with you a few of EMO's new initiatives. This year's *Collins Lecture* takes a new direction into experiential learning with an exploration of the Doctrine of Discovery led by three visionary Native American scholar-activists. SOAR Immigration Legal Services is poised to assist a greatly expanded federal Deferred Action Program, providing administrative relief to as many as five million individuals—bringing them out of the shadows and preventing families from being separated. And our Second Home program has expanded to Gresham and Lincoln County to provide homes for unaccompanied high school students.

Every transition involves change. Pope Francis, in his second encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, challenges us with these words:
Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need

to change. We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone. This basic awareness would enable the development of new convictions, attitudes and forms of life. Ch. 6, p. 202.

May we heed the challenge to continue to be transformed, as we go about the work we are called to do in the world. And as an EMO committee member said recently, "Let us be bold as we envision our future together." Yes, let us be bold.

I am grateful for the opportunity to share the journey with you.

Jan Musgrove Elfers
Interim Executive Director

Northwest denominational annual gatherings

Oct. 16-18, Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon, The Dalles

Oct. 16-18, American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast, Gresham

Nov. 12-14, Episcopal Diocese of Oregon, Ashland/Medford

Nov. 12-14, Presbytery of the Cascades, Newport



Celebrate ecumenism during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2016* will take place Jan. 18 to 25. The chosen theme for 2016 is "Called to Proclaim the Mighty Acts of the Lord." The relationship between baptism and proclamation and the calling shared by all the baptized to proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord was inspired by two verses from the First Letter of St. Peter.

The Church Unity Octave, a forerunner of the *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*, was developed by Father Paul Wattson, SA, at Graymoor in Garrison, New York, and was first observed January 1908. Today, the *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity* invites the whole Christian community throughout the world to pray in communion with the prayer of Jesus "that they all may be one" (John 17:21).

Materials for the *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2016*—including daily scripture and prayer guide, ecumenical celebration of the word of God, prayer card, poster and worship bulletin cover—can be ordered from Graymoor Ecumenical & Interreligious Institute at GEII.org/Order.

The 2015 Collins Lecture: The Gospel of Conquest

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Guest speakers

Robert J. Miller is a professor of law at Arizona State University. His expertise includes federal Indian law, American Indians and international law, and American Indian economic development and natural resources. An enrolled citizen of the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, he is chief justice of the court of appeals for Oregon's Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde and sits as a judge for other tribes. His book *Native America, Discovered and Conquered* asserts that Thomas Jefferson used Discovery principles in conceiving the Lewis & Clark expedition to secure America's claim to the Pacific Northwest.



Kim Recalma-Clutesi

Kim Recalma-Clutesi received the Ecotrust Indigenous Leadership Award for her decades of work as an activist and political organizer, cross-cultural interpreter, ethnobotanist, reporter, photographer, videographer and historian. She has devoted her life to learning, teaching, interpreting and preserving the Kwagiulth/Pentlatch culture and history of her people. She is an expert on intellectual property rights and advocated for the revision of Canadian policies on repatriating sacred artifacts. She served as the elected chief to the Qualicum Band of Indians in British Columbia from 2002 to 2006 and served on dozens of Aboriginal NGOs, setting policy regarding Aboriginal rights-based issues.

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Robert J. Miller

Photo credit: Arizona State University

Restorative Justice Networking Nights launches with film screening of *Honor Totem*

Beginning this December, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon will host regular *Restorative Justice Networking Nights* for those involved in the restorative justice community or interested in learning more about it.

“Restorative justice lies at the heart of EMO’s Social Principles,” says Interim Executive Director Jan Musgrove Elfers. “It emphasizes accountability, recognition of the suffering caused by the wrong done, and taking concrete actions to make amends and to move towards the healing of all involved—the victim, the perpetrator, and the entire community, including family, friends, and neighbors.”

Audrey deCoursey, program manager of EMO’s Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA), adds, “We hope that our series of *Restorative Justice Networking Nights* over the coming year will help connect restorative justice practitioners and help ground the work of CoSA in this important movement.”

The inaugural *Restorative Justice Networking Night* will be held on Thursday, Dec. 10, from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Interchurch Center in Portland. We will screen the movie *Honor Totem*, followed by a community

conversation about resources, shared goals and successes. “We hope that by connecting the people involved in this work, we can learn from one another and become informed about the good work that is happening,” says deCoursey.

The poignant documentary *Honor Totem* chronicles the John T. Williams Memorial Totem Pole project as a catalyst for healing and justice. The community art project arose from the August 2010 fatal police shooting of Williams, a First Nations woodcarver. The shooting sparked an outcry that extended beyond the city of Seattle and the native community. The slain man’s older brother Rick Williams chose a peaceful response through an ambitious endeavor to carve a 34-foot totem pole in honor of the Williams family’s artistic legacy and the memory of one of its most talented carvers.

All are welcome to attend the inaugural Restorative Justice Networking Night. To RSVP or for more information about future events, please contact Audrey deCoursey at cosa@emoregon.org or (503) 988-8580. Restorative Justice Networking Nights are hosted by EMO’s CoSA project.



The John T. Williams honor totem was erected at Seattle Center in 2011.

Photo credit: Social Justice Film Festival

The 2015 Collins Lecture

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The Rev. Dr. George “Tink” Tinker is professor of American Indian Cultures and Religious Traditions at the Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colo. An enrolled member of the Osage Nation, he has been an activist and spiritual leader in urban American Indian communities for many years. His scholarly endeavors encompass both the liberation of the Indian peoples from their historic oppression as colonized communities and the liberation of White Americans from their role as oppressors. Tinker is the author of *Missionary Conquest: The Gospel and Native American Genocide* and co-author of *Native American Theology*. He is an ordained member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

About the Collins Lectures

The annual *Collins Lectures* have been a signature event of EMO and its predecessor organization the Portland Council of Churches since 1967. Sponsored by the Collins Foundation, the series explores contemporary issues related to religion, ethics and social justice. This year’s event is cosponsored by the Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oregon and Southwest Idaho, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon, First Unitarian Church in Portland, Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, Pacific University’s Center for Peace and Spirituality, and the Presbytery of the Cascades.

The cost to attend the *2015 Collins Lecture*, is \$60 (includes lunch and dinner). To attend the evening lecture only, the cost is \$25. Native Americans and students receive a half off discount. Learn more and register securely online at emoregon.org or call (503) 221-1054.

Be SMART about gun safety for kids

Every year at least 100 children under 17 die in unintentional shootings and over 400 die by suicide with a gun. As families and members of faith communities, we can prevent many of these deaths by educating ourselves and others about responsible gun storage.

This summer, Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America launched the Be SMART program to reduce the number of child gun deaths and injuries.

Be SMART teaches five easy steps that all of us—gun owners and non-gun owners alike—can take to help protect kids: Secure guns in homes and vehicles; Model responsible behavior; Ask about unsecured guns in other homes; Recognize the risks of teen suicide; and Tell your peers about Be SMART.

With trained volunteer presenters around the state, the Oregon Chapter of Moms Demand Action can bring the Be SMART program to your congregation or organization and help start the conversation about gun safety. While

policies and legislation around guns can be controversial, Be SMART is based on the belief that all of us want to keep children safe from unintentional shootings and suicide.

Oregon Chapter leader Anneliese Davis says, “This campaign is about taking responsibility and using good sense. Our volunteers are excited to bring Be SMART to congregations and work together to save lives. We can all do something to help prevent the senseless deaths and injuries caused by unsecured guns.”

You can learn more about the Be SMART campaign at www.besmartforkids.org and download fliers in English and Spanish. To schedule a presentation, send an email to oregon@momschapterleaders.org.

Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America is a nonpartisan grassroots movement of “mothers and others” fighting for public safety measures that respect the Second Amendment and protect people from gun violence.



A Be SMART trainer teaches adults how to prevent child injuries and deaths from unintentional shootings.

Photo credit: Moms Demand Action

Hope strings eternal: A young Cuban refugee receives a violin

When 17-year-old Evelyn Martinez left Cuba, she wondered if her budding musical career would be cut short. Evelyn needed only one more year to graduate from the Escuela Nacional de Arte (National School of Art) when she and her father, Emilio Martinez, left Cuba in April 2015 to join their family and start a new life in Portland, Ore.

After an arduous journey from Cuba, the father and daughter made their way to Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees (SOAR), EMO's refugee resettlement program, where they met Georkis Ramos, a case manager at SOAR. While applying for state refugee benefits, Evelyn talked about her love of music, especially the violin, and asked how she could keep playing in the United States.

Evelyn began playing violin in fourth grade in Cuba. She performed with various youth orchestras while studying in Havana. In 2013, she performed traditional Cuban music (Danzón) in Montreal, Quebec, at the *Mondial Loto Quebec Laval Festival*. She loves to play music from the Baroque and Romantic periods. Evelyn lists Bach, Handel, Wieniawski, Max Bruch, Dmitry Kabalevsky and Giovanni Viotti as her favorite composers. In addition to violin she also plays piano and the viola de gamba and is a vocalist.

Staff members at SOAR felt Evelyn's passion for music and recognized that playing the violin might ease her transition into a culture where so many refugees feel disoriented. So staff made some phone calls to inquire about finding a



Evelyn Martinez plays her donated violin at the 2015 World Refugee Day Celebration in June.

Photo credit: Georkis Ramos Quintana

free or donated violin for Evelyn—certainly a long shot. That outside chance paid off! A staff member spoke with Amelia Lukas, director of community engagement at All Classical 89.9 in Portland, who in turn contacted Steve Banchemo at the David Kerr Violin Shop. Banchemo revealed that their business donates used instruments to good causes and would look for a violin for Evelyn.

A few weeks passed before SOAR received a call from Banchemo. A violin had been donated, and Banchemo restored it, restringing it and had it ready for Evelyn to audition.

In Cuba, Evelyn had never owned a violin

of her own—she had to borrow violins from her school. Now, through a gift from her new community, Evelyn was ready to go to the music shop and try out a violin that would soon become her very own.

Evelyn touched the bow to the strings and soon sweet, clear notes danced through the audition room. Evelyn smiled. She would now be able to play the music she loves. And hopefully, that violin will help bridge the cultural gap, and Evelyn will feel a little more at home in the United States.

Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees, an affiliate of Church World Service, resettles hundreds of refugees like Evelyn and her father every year. SOAR links sponsors—congregations, friends or community organizations—with refugees before they arrive in the United States and helps sponsors welcome and assist the refugees in their adjustment to a new life in the Portland metro area.

You, your congregation, friends or community organization can help resettle an individual or family. Sponsors also help refugees find affordable housing, greet refugees at the airport, help with transportation, are friends in time of need and assist with other tasks necessary for a new life.

For more information about SOAR, call (503) 284-3002 or email soar@emoregon.org.

By Stephen Obold Eshleman, SOAR case manager.

Join us for upcoming fundraisers to support Community Ministries!

Our Community Ministry programs exist to serve communities in crisis and people in need. EMO's diverse programs provide hunger relief, social support, affordable housing, and refugee and immigration services. EMO's programs help people put their faith into action by giving them opportunities to address human needs in their communities throughout the state.

Several of our Community Ministry programs are hosting fundraising events and opportunities this fall. Show your support for and learn more about these vital programs by participating in one, or all, of the events!

Second Home's Fifth Anniversary Celebration

Wednesday, Oct. 14, from 7:20 to 8:30 a.m. at St. Andrew Lutheran Church, 12405 SW Butner Rd., Beaverton.

Join us as EMO's Second Home celebrates five years of providing housing for unaccompanied students in the Beaverton School District. We are eager to tell the story of how the Beaverton community has stepped up to support our youth during a crucial time in their lives, so they can graduate from high school and pursue their dreams and goals. Breakfast will be served, and all are welcome! There is no cost to attend; a free will offering will be taken.

To RSVP or for more information about the Second Home celebration, contact Jenny Pratt at jpratt@emoregon.org or (503) 221-1054.

World AIDS Day Fundraiser Luncheon for HIV Services

Wednesday, Dec. 2, 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. at Concordia University, Second Floor Hagen Center, 2811 NE Holman St., Portland.

As we close out 2015, please join EMO's HIV Services for World AIDS Day. This is an opportunity for us to honor and celebrate those in our communities who live daily with HIV/AIDS, and those who support the work we do at EMO's HIV Day Center and Daily Bread Express.

Many of the HIV Day Center's most compelling and meaningful moments happen over a shared meal, and we invite you to join us in a meal, sponsored by and held at our neighboring Concordia University.

Partners and supporters both new and old will have the chance to hear where this past year has taken HIV Services and where we are headed in 2016.

We welcome all to this opportunity to give vital financial support to a beloved community resource. There is no cost to attend; a free will offering will be taken.

For information about attending the World AIDS Day event or hosting a table for your friends, family or congregation, contact Jesse Herbach, HIV Services program manager, at jherbach@emoregon.org or (503) 460-3822.

Give!Guide Campaign for Northeast Emergency Food Program (NEFP)

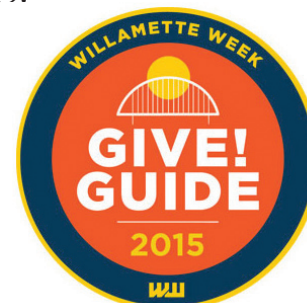
We are asking 1,500 friends—including 150 young people age 35 and under—to give at least \$15 each in 2015.

How can we hook young readers on the year-end giving tradition? That was the question that launched the *Willamette Week Give!Guide* over decade ago.

In the last three years, EMO's Northeast Emergency Food Program (NEFP) has been a recipient of this annual giving tradition, with a total of more than \$30,000 donated during that time.

In 2015, NEFP wants to get the most donors age 35 years and under who contribute to a Portland area nonprofit in the *Give!Guide*. Our goal is to reach 150 donors age 35 and under, in hopes of winning a cash prize that goes with this accomplishment. One way you can help us is by giving \$15 Christmas gifts to your family and friends under age 35 and asking them to donate that amount to NEFP through the *Give!Guide*.

Beginning Nov. 4, go to giveguide.org to make your donation—please designate Northeast Emergency Food Program, listed under the "Community" category. The deadline is Dec. 31.



Second Home: Providing homes, changing lives

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's Second Home—established in 2010 for homeless high school students in the Beaverton School District—has become a model program for other regions of Oregon. In partnership with local school districts and dispute resolution centers, Second Home matches homeless, unaccompanied students with home providers in their community. During the 2013-14 school year, Second Home provided 70 months of housing and over 6,000 meals for Beaverton students. The program was recognized for its accomplishments by the City of Beaverton with the 2014 Beaverton Human Rights Award.

Following this success in Beaverton, Second Home is expanding to Gresham-Barlow and Lincoln County School Districts and is recruiting volunteer home providers in all three regions.

“Providing a home for a student in our community is a lasting investment in his or her education and future,” says Jenny Pratt, Second Home program manager. “Stability and care create the opportunity for students to live into their potential; as they grow, they can more fully enjoy and contribute to society in rich and fulfilling ways.”

What can you expect as a home provider? After interviews and reference checks, youth and home providers are matched for a negotiated length of time—typically the remainder of the school year. With the assistance of volunteer mediators, they create a rental contract and house rules agreement.

Second Home supports both the home provider and student throughout their time together with services such as mentoring and conflict resolution. Home providers are not expected to take on the role of parent or guardian, although a lasting and meaningful connection often develops. By providing stable and safe housing, volunteers help youth to finish high school, establish a rental history and build positive relationships. Their generosity gives students a life-changing opportunity to discover their gifts and talents, and to pursue their goals and dreams.

Volunteer home providers Dan and Kendal McDonald said of their Second Home experience, “We were happy to contribute to our local community by providing a positive and safe home environment for our student, which in turn allowed him to focus on his high school education with less stress in his life.”



Photo credit: Addy Pratt

Second Home student Ruth Kim (left) celebrated her high school graduation this June with Second Home Program Manager Jenny Pratt.

To learn more about Second Home, including opportunities to become a home provider in Beaverton, Gresham-Barlow or Lincoln County School Districts, please contact Jenny Pratt, Second Home program manager, at (503) 221-1054, ext. 208, or visit emoregon.org/secondhome.php.

Job training provides experience & skills for a brighter future

Addressing the issue of unemployment in our community is one of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's (EMO) ministries. We do this directly by providing job training and job placement for individuals who have been unemployed, and we also do this by advocating for an improved social safety net on the state level.

“Two years ago, EMO developed the Service Learner Initiative in order to help those in need by providing permanent solutions beyond ‘just’ emergency food and clothing,” says Howard Kenyon, EMO director of Community Ministries. “In between expanding the macro help and getting actual food to those who are hungry, there is a need for assisting people one by one to find sustainable employment. SLI helps fill that gap.”

The Service Learner Initiative (SLI) partners with several organizations including Jobs Plus, a subsidized work program administered by the State of Oregon's Department of Human Services (DHS). Through Jobs Plus, individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) can be placed for up to six months with private or public employers, such as EMO, who pay the employee directly and are reimbursed by DHS. Jobs Plus workers receive a paycheck in lieu of public benefits and gain valuable work experience that can lead to long-term employment.

In the past two years, more than 20 people have completed or are currently participating in EMO's SLI program, gaining valuable job training and skills. Two of those people are Summer Larios and Anna Caesar.

Summer Larios, Food Services

Larios was a single mother of three at age 19 and worked hard as a food service employee and as a medical aide to provide for her family. But health and personal issues led to an

extended period of unemployment. During that time, Larios volunteered for Meals on Wheels and rediscovered her passion and talent for cooking. She resolved to someday open a restaurant of her own, and a Service Learner opportunity as a kitchen assistant with EMO's Food Services was the perfect fit.

“This job has helped me have more income to take care of my family. It also gives me a sense of pride, since I know I'm working for a living,” says Larios. “The experience I'm getting here will help me continue to provide my kids with everything they need, which is what is most important in my life.”

“Service Learner Initiative participants help EMO programs that are truly in need of extra support,” says Russ Miller, EMO Food Services manager. “Summer joined us in the kitchen in early July and has been a true gift to the program.” Larios adds, “Russ is an awesome boss and cook, and he goes out of his way to teach me important skills!”

Anna Caesar, SOAR Immigration Legal

As a Service Learner participant, Caesar made such a significant contribution to EMO's SOAR Immigration Legal Services that Refugee and Immigrant Ministries Director Caroline van der Harten offered her a permanent job as a legal assistant.

“I really enjoy working at SOAR Legal,



Summer Larios

helping refugees and immigrants adjust to their new life in America,” says Caesar. “I feel rewarded when I see happy clients passing their citizenship tests or when their family members arrive to join them in the United States.”

Herself an immigrant, Caesar is originally from Russia and grew up in the former Soviet republic of Kazakhstan. After becoming a U.S. citizen, Caesar earned an associate's degree in paralegal studies from Portland Community College. While unemployed, she found out about an SLI opportunity at SOAR Legal from her DHS case worker.

“I was very fortunate to be hired as an employee after my service learning program ended,” Caesar adds. “I think that it's a great program that gives people the opportunity to gain working experience. It is like a door opener for opportunities and knowledge.”

Get involved with SLI

Business owners in your faith community are invited to partner with SLI in providing training and job opportunities. People in need of job training are welcome to contact EMO about available opportunities.

For more information, contact Howard Kenyon at hkenyon@emoregon.org or (503) 221-1054.

By Lisa Westarp, EMO Communications intern



Anna Caesar

Photo credit: Georkis Ramos Quintana

Faith & Fossil Fuels: Field trip to the Columbia Gorge

By Liz Wendell, OIPL environmental justice intern from Wellesley College

On July 31, 2015, EMO's Oregon Interfaith Power & Light (OIPL) organized a field trip to the Columbia River Gorge for faith leaders. The purpose of the trip was to learn from people with frontline experience about the impacts of fossil fuel exports.

This trip was eye-opening for me in many ways. As a native Midwesterner, I had never been to the Gorge—it was breathtaking! As I surveyed the landscape for the first time during the field trip, I clearly saw the many dangers it faces from fossil fuel exports and climate change, and how necessary the work to protect it truly is.

Our first stop was at a tribal treaty fishing site along the Columbia River, where we spoke with members of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC). They spoke of the need for an environmental justice approach to earth care that centers on how environmental issues disproportionately impact those already facing marginalization, especially indigenous people, people of color and the poor.

In the short time we spent with CRITFC, two full mile-long coal trains went by. It was easy to see how catastrophic an accident would

be to local livelihoods, as well as other treaty fishing sites.

Participants next met with community organizers from Friends of the Gorge at Drano Lake, where we were able to see how the coal trains are already disrupting the environment—in between the rocks and grass on the side of the tracks, the ground was coated with coal dust. We learned that from 645 pounds up to a ton of coal dust can escape from a train on a 400-mile journey. When coal dust accumulates in between the ballast beneath the tracks, it can destabilize the track bed, leading to derailments.

Speakers from the Columbia Gorge Climate Action Network described the challenges of community opposition to climate justice efforts. They spoke about inviting people into movements, practicing radical hospitality with people of different viewpoints, and being open to whatever works to bring people on board.

We learned from Brett VandenHeuvel, executive director of Columbia Riverkeeper, about the immediate danger facing the river's fish. The drought and lack of snowpack for cooling, coupled with record high temperatures this summer, heated the river beyond what

many fish can survive, forcing them to take refuge in areas where cool water enters the river. Scientists estimate that 80 percent of the Idaho bound sockeye salmon run is not returning home due to high temperatures in the Columbia River, undoing years of work to recover this run.

Climate change sometimes seems like a far-off danger, but this is a real and immediate threat to ecosystems and fishers' livelihoods.

This summer was my first time in Portland, and I was thrown directly into the conflict over fossil fuel exports. I learned quickly about climate justice efforts in Oregon, and interacting with people who are at the forefront of these issues was especially powerful. Being physically present in the places that are under threat was a stark reminder of what's at stake, and how important it is to protect those places.



Photo credit: Liz Wendell

During the faith leaders' field trip to the Columbia River Gorge, two mile-long trains full of coal went by.



Photo credit: Liz Wendell

Accumulation of coal dust was visible along the train tracks through the Gorge.

Fossil Fuels Initiative

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's Oregon Interfaith Power & Light (OIPL) has created the Fossil Fuels Initiative.

This fall, we are working on ways to engage the faith community in preventing the Pacific Northwest from becoming a "carbon corridor" to transport oil, gas and coal overseas.

To get involved and learn more about OIPL's Faith and Fossil Fuels Initiative and to download our *2015 Climate Action Guide* for individuals and congregations, go to emoregon.org/power_light.php or call Jenny Holmes at (503) 221-1054.

THE SEVENTH ANNUAL EARTH CARE SUMMIT



Planning is in full swing for the 2016 *Earth Care Summit*, to be held Sunday, Jan. 31. The theme for the summit will be "Renewing Creation from the Ground Up." After the success of the 2015 *Earth Care Summit* at the University of Portland earlier this year, we will once again hold the summit at the university for the 2016 event.

The upcoming *Earth Care Summit* will explore the connections among soil, food, agriculture and climate. Workshops will focus on the ways new approaches to food and agriculture and stewardship of land and soil can protect the climate and enhance biodiversity, while bringing justice and dignity to human communities.

The event is sponsored by EMO's Oregon Interfaith Power & Light and Interfaith Food & Farms Partnership along with the University of Portland. Cosponsorships are essential to making this event possible. Please consider sponsoring a table of eight for \$280, or becoming a congregation or organization co-sponsor. Download a cosponsorship form at emoregon.org. Secure online registration will be available this fall at emoregon.org.

For more information about the 2016 *Earth Care Summit*, call (503) 221-1054, ext. 214, or email oipl@emoregon.org.

Voice

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

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One River, Ethics Matter Conference: Supporting legal tribal rights in the renewal of the Columbia River Treaty

Following Pope Francis' historic address to Congress on ecological and social justice, the University of Portland will host a timely *One River, Ethics Matter Conference*—part of a series of community conferences being held throughout the United States and Canada.

Based on ethical principles of stewardship and justice, the conference aims to build support for a new model in resolving international water conflicts. The event will begin at 8 a.m. on Saturday, Oct. 24, in the Buckley Center Auditorium at the university.

The conference will explore the history of the Columbia River and its human and natural ecology, the ethical implications of the river's treatment from various faith and tribal perspectives, an examination of the Columbia River Treaty, and action steps for updating a new treaty with environmental and social justice.

The Columbia River Treaty is a 1964 agreement between Canada and the

United States for the cooperative development and operation of the water resources of the Columbia River Basin for the benefit of both countries. While the current treaty governs hydropower and flood control on the 1,200-mile river, according to the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC), the treaty “does not consider the needs of fish, a healthy river, or the treaty fishing rights and cultural resources that are now fully protected under modern laws.”

September 2014 marked the 50th anniversary of the ratification of the Columbia River Treaty and the opening of a short window to change the treaty by the end of its jurisdiction in 2024.

One River, Ethics Matter will conclude on Sunday, Oct. 25, with a field trip to Delta Park—the former site of Vanport. Built on the floodplain of the Columbia River, Vanport was destroyed by a flood in 1948; at that time, it was the largest public housing project in the

United States. Due to this disaster, the 1964 treaty included flood control measures, and it illustrates the complexity of ecological and social ethics that will be examined at the conference.

Speakers and presenters will include: Paul Lumley, CRITFC executive director; Mary Wood, University of Oregon law professor; Bishop William Skylstad, Catholic Diocese of Spokane and contributor to the Columbia River Pastoral Letter; and Steve Kolmes, director of the Environmental Studies program and professor of biology, University of Portland.

One River, Ethics Matter is organized by the Center for Environmental Law and Policy's Ethics and Treaty Project, and Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a co-sponsor.

For more information and to register for One River, Ethics Matter, please visit the Center for Environmental Law and Policy's website at celp.org/ethics-portland.

Pope Francis' encyclical

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moral challenge for 15 years, and Pope Francis' guidance could be the game-changer that encourages everyone to step up and care for those suffering in the wake of human induced climate change.”

Some prominent global warming deniers are challenging the Pope's motivations and dismissing his authority on the issue. But many religious leaders say it is wrong to dismiss Pope Francis' message on political grounds.

“Leaders of all faiths have witnessed the devastating effects climate change has on our less fortunate brothers and sisters,” said the Rev. Dr. Gerald L. Durley, former president of the Concerned Black Clergy of Metropolitan Atlanta. “I've heard politicians say the pope should hold his tongue, but what we have on our hands transcends science and politics. Climate change harms the most impoverished and marginalized members of society—it's both a human rights issue and a civil rights issue. And if we take Pope Francis' message to heart, we can, must and will make a difference.”

Pope Francis' encyclical is the first in history to specifically address humanity's relationship with the environment. In his letter to all the bishops of the Catholic Church, and indeed to all people, the pontiff cites the effects a warming planet has on the world's most vulnerable populations.

“Caring for each other, ‘every living thing’ as the Bible says, should take priority over debating the science of climate change or who has the right to an opinion,” said the Rev. Richard Cizik, former vice president for governmental affairs of the National Association of Evangelicals. “People of faith should not let politics harden their hearts to a message from a leader of their faith, and no religious leader should be criticized for speaking out on an issue of moral concern—it's our responsibility.”

The encyclical explores the relationship between creation care, sustainability of the environment and concern for the poor—all foundational themes for the great religions

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of the world.

“Every sacred tradition insists that we defend ‘the least among us,’ and it's a central shared feature in Jewish and Catholic thought,” said Rabbi Fred Scherlinder Dobb, committee chair for the Coalition for the Environment and Jewish Life. “May government and industry leaders note the religious unity around this issue. If the world's religions can agree, surely the nations of the world can do the same, and then the real work on climate change can begin.”

“When we think with our hearts and not our politics, the truth is plain to see,” said Imam Dr. Mohamed Abdul-Azeez, founder of Tarbiya Institute. “Our respective faiths guide us toward giving our time, energy and succor to those in need. We are united in our concern and willingness to take action. I encourage everyone, regardless of their religion, to personally consider Pope Francis' message.”

Added the Rev. Canon Bingham, “The impact of today's message is clear: if you are a person of faith, you have a responsibility to address climate change. It's as simple as that.”

Laudato Si' resources

The following are multiple resources available for helping your faith community fully embrace the encyclical.

The national branch of **Interfaith Power & Light**, in collaboration with **Catholic Climate Covenant**, has an interfaith climate action kit, in English and Spanish, which will be mailed to you free after a sign-up. Visit interfaithpowerandlight.org; under “Resources” select “Pope Francis' encyclical resources.”

Presbyterian Peace Fellowship has published a *Study Guide for Laudato Si'*, currently highlighted at presbypeacefellowship.org.

For those interested in the Catholic perspective, the **U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops** has discussion guides, bulletin inserts, and brief introductions to the encyclical and environmental justice in English and Spanish at usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/.

Franciscans for Ecology, francis35.org, has a *Study Guide for Laudato Si'* currently available in English, with other languages to follow; downloadable to iPhone, Kindle, low- and high-end printing.

The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life has developed the *Guide to Jewish-Catholic Dialogue and the Environment*, which includes materials on interfaith relations, Jewish teachings on climate change, and a synopsis of the pope's new work at coejl.org.

The National Religious Partnership for the Environment has collected a list of statements from various faiths on the encyclical available at nrpe.org/papal-encyclical.html.

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