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## EMO celebrates ecumenism and leadership in Oregon

**Sing to the Lord a new song,  
his praise from the end of  
the earth! ISAIAH 42:10**

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's *Annual Community Awards & Celebration Dinner* is a joyful celebration of our shared commitment to compassion, justice and the goodness of God's creation.

On Wednesday, May 18, at the Portland Hilton, more than 400 faith and community leaders will gather in a spirit of hope and service. Together we will honor past successes, pledge ourselves to work for a healthy and equitable Oregon,

and applaud outstanding individuals and organizations who are guided by their faith to serve Oregonians in need.

This year will be an extra-special occasion, as we welcome EMO's own beloved Jan Musgrove Elfers into her new role as executive director of the organization.

**Community leaders honored**  
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon has the great privilege and pleasure to work with many outstanding community leaders throughout the year. This year, we are delighted to

honor the following extraordinary exemplars of faith in action.

*The Rev. Dr. Marilyn Sewell*, recipient of the Ecumenist of the Year Award, holds master's degrees in English literature, social work and divinity, and a doctorate in theology and literature. After careers as an English teacher, clinical social worker and television on-air personality, she served for 17 years as senior minister of the

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The Rev. Dr. Marilyn Sewell will receive the "Ecumenist of the Year" award.

## Jan Musgrove Elfers named EMO executive director

The board of directors of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) announced on Jan. 14, 2016, the appointment of Jan Musgrove Elfers as the organization's new executive director.

Elfers has served as EMO's interim executive director since June 2015. Her career at EMO spans 13 years and includes positions as director of public policy advocacy, director of member relations, and director of peace programs—reflecting her vision, passion and dedication to service to the Oregon community.

Elfers' appointment follows a six-month national search process led by a nine-member search committee that surfaced a large and diverse pool of candidates. This broad-based interest speaks highly of EMO's leadership role both statewide and nationally.

The Rev. Susan Kintner, president of EMO's board

*"I will give myself fully to this role and ask that you join me in helping this organization be the hands and heart of Christ in our world, seeking to meet the needs of the most vulnerable, and engaging more and more people to join us in this mission."*

of directors, said, "We are looking forward to our next chapter of justice and peace ministry in Oregon with Jan Elfers' leadership. Her passion for this organization and the people of our state will lead us in hope."

Following the announcement, Elfers spoke to EMO board and staff members, saying, "I am so grateful for the privilege to serve as executive director of EMO. This organization lives fully into God's call to love all of humanity. I will give myself fully to this role and ask that you join me in helping this organization be the hands and heart of Christ

in our world, seeking to meet the needs of the most vulnerable, and engaging more and more people to join us in this mission. As we stand with those who are suffering, we heal and are healed by one another."

Elfers has served on the board of directors of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture Action Fund and the Commission to End Racism at the Episcopal Diocese of Oregon. She is currently a board member of the Institute for Christian/Muslim Understanding. In 2009, she received the Friends of the Muslim Educational Trust Award.

Elfers has served on numerous panels and has led workshops and retreats regarding interfaith understanding and dialogue and contemplative practices.

Elfers earned a bachelor's in psychology at Lewis & Clark College. She completed a master's in theology at Marylhurst University in 2006, focusing on the role of interreligious dialogue in peacemaking. During her practicum experience at EMO, she wrote a peace resource guide. In 2015, she completed a two-year course of study at Fr. Richard Rohr's Living School for Action and Contemplation.

Elfers is a member of St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church in Portland. She and her husband Michael have been married for 32 years and have a daughter and son, ages 29 and 26. She is a third generation Oregonian, born and raised in Eugene.

## Confront hopelessness: Put your faith into action

**“For the Lord your God ... loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” DEUTERONOMY 10:18-19**

We are called to love the stranger. How do we do that here and now, in Oregon?

We are presented by the media with grim statistics: The world is facing an unprecedented number of people seeking refuge—60 million—more than at any point since World War II.

These displaced mothers, fathers and children are victims of human-made crises, fleeing violence and persecution in the hope of finding a new home of welcome and peace.

We are presented by the media with appalling, heart-wrenching images, such as a toddler boy drowned as his family tried to flee violence in Syria, washed facedown upon the beach. The daily news is often overwhelmingly tragic and can bring us to a place of hopelessness. And while we cannot change the past and bring back this precious life, the antidote to this hopelessness is faith put into action. We do believe that we can imagine and create a more hopeful future, for as Hebrews 11:1 states, “Faith is the assurance that what we hope for will come about and the certainty that what we cannot see exists.”

The suffering of refugees is personal to Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO). Archbishop Desmond Tutu stated, “Family isn’t about whose blood you have, it’s about who you care about.” Here in Oregon, EMO’s



Jan Musgrove Elfers  
Executive Director

Photo credit: Georkis Ramos Quintana

Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees (SOAR) has been caring deeply for refugees for over 40 years. Political unrest in countries over the decades has created resettlement needs for people around the globe—Vietnamese fleeing Communism and war in the 1970s, Soviet Jews and Christians leaving behind religious persecution in the former Soviet Union in the 1980s, Bosnians escaping genocide in the 1990s, Iraqis fleeing their war-torn country in the 2000s, and so many more. Now we are poised to welcome a wave of Syrian and other Middle Eastern refugees in the coming months.

What does EMO do to care for refugees? We greet weary families at the airport. We welcome them to a new home in a strange land and help them learn to navigate it. We find refugee families affordable housing. We furnish their apartments and stock their kitchens with food. We help them apply for medical and supplemental nutrition assistance. We sign them up for English classes, cultural orientation and pre-employment training. We help them apply for social security cards and Oregon IDs. We help them enroll in school and in support groups. Their needs are great. We are here to serve them.

Who are the refugees we serve? One example is a Burmese family with five children ages 16 and under. Due to ethnic persecution and civil war in Burma (Myanmar) since the 1980s, the family was forced to flee their country and enter a border refugee camp in Thailand, where they remained for several years. Upon arrival in the United States, the father was unable to read and had no work experience. SOAR staff and volunteers worked together to provide tremendous support for the family. As a result, the father was able to find a job in production three months after their arrival. Today, the family is thriving, they speak English, the children are enrolled in school, and they are

engaged in life in the United States.

What can you do to participate in this important work? Put your faith into action by reaching out to immigrants in Oregon and letting them know you care. Attend events at a local mosque or community center. Join an interfaith dialogue group or book group. Contribute to EMO’s Refugee Rapid Response fund to assist families facing emergencies. Build friendships. Walk in love.

You can also put your faith into action by volunteering for a resettlement organization like SOAR. As a volunteer, your congregation or organization can meet families at the airport and welcome them. You can provide transportation, help set up an apartment, or teach English. You can organize a donation drive for furniture and household items and personal care supplies.

Just as importantly, you can put your faith into action by joining EMO in our mission to educate the public about our responsibility to “love the stranger.” Write your senators and representatives, your newspaper, your church newsletter. Remind people that refugees are people just like you and me who have found themselves in harm’s way, whether it be the result of war or political or religious persecution. Remind them that the United States has a moral obligation and a historic commitment to offer protection to persecuted individuals from around the world. Remind them that we are a nation of immigrants, and that immigrants add to, not detract from, our nation. Remind them that immigrants create a vibrant community and economy, and that we all are one.

Paul writes of the mark of the true Christian in Romans 12:13, “Extend hospitality to strangers.” I invite you to join EMO in its mission to love the stranger.

### EMO Annual Celebration

Continued from page 1

First Unitarian Church of Portland, growing the church from 600 to 1,500 members—the largest Unitarian Universalist church in the nation. Sewell communicates a bold view of God’s inclusive welcoming and compassion for all. She began her tenure at First Unitarian by wrapping the entire church block in red ribbon and declaring it a hate-free zone in response to a state ballot measure against gay rights.

In addition to being a compelling, deeply self-revealing speaker, Sewell is the accomplished author and editor of books of essays and poetry. Her memoir *Raw Faith* provides the back story to an award-winning documentary film about her life and work. She is a former board member of EMO and currently serves on EMO’s development committee. Today her justice work is focused on engaging faith communities in the call to address the urgent moral issue of climate change.

**Ron Means**, recipient of the Rodney Page Ecumenical Service Award, has devoted his life to ecumenical service, beginning with a transformative experience as a college student at Portland State University living in Koinonia

House, an intentional Christian community. He is a member of Living Savior Lutheran Church and has served as president of Christ the King Lutheran Congregation. He is a dedicated supporter of EMO’s community ministries—particularly the Northeast Emergency Food Program—with a commitment that goes beyond financial support to personal concern for staff, interest in operations, and passion for those who are poor, hungry, and powerless. Means has been the treasurer and a board member of EMO for five different terms since the 1970s. He serves so that EMO, in turn, can serve more effectively.

**Kelly Raths and Karuna Thompson**, recipients of The Two Pauls Award, are, respectively, Christian and Buddhist chaplains at the Oregon Department of Corrections in Salem. Together they initiated and carried out an interfaith chaplaincy approach to serve the diverse humanist, spiritual and religious needs of the incarcerated that has become a model for prisons across the United States and abroad. They have helped thousands of incarcerated men and women discover and develop meaningful beliefs that sustain them on the journey to restorative justice. They have also helped humanist and faith groups of every kind to use

their gifts and traditions as volunteers in the prison system to help victims and perpetrators overcome the disastrous impacts of crime.

**Climate Action Coalition (CAC)**, recipient of the Vollum Ecumenical Humanitarian Award, is an alliance of community-based organizations dedicated to confronting the causes and effects of climate change. Coalition members include 350pdx, First Unitarian Church of Portland’s Community for Earth, Heal Our Planet Earth (HOPE), Our Children’s Trust, PDX Bike Swarm, People of the Heart, Portland Rising Tide, Raging Grannies PDX, and Sustainable Energy and Economy Network. Collaborating with EMO, the CAC works to stop the building of new fossil fuel infrastructure in the Northwest and to prevent all fossil fuel from being shipped through the area. The CAC recognizes that global warming is a justice issue and a moral issue to which people of faith are called.

### Sponsors

This year’s event is generously underwritten by EMO’s partner in community health, premier sponsor Providence Health & Services, with support from silver sponsor the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde. Bronze sponsors

## Talking dirt: Exploring the connection between soil, food, faith and climate change at the *Earth Care Summit*

The seventh annual *Earth Care Summit*, “Renewing Creation from the Ground Up,” drew over 300 people on Jan. 31 to the University of Portland to talk about dirt: specifically, the connection between soil, food, and faith and their role in addressing climate change.

Twenty-seven sponsors from local churches, organizations and businesses participated in a resource fair to kick off the Summit, providing an opportunity for people to reflect with their communities and mingle with other faith leaders.

The Rev. Dr. Randy Woodley presented “The Land Speaks, but Do We Listen?” about his story of relationship to the land as a Keetowah Cherokee and as co-sustainer of Eloheh Farm in Newberg. Woodley is professor of faith and culture and director of intercultural and indigenous studies at George Fox Seminary, and he was co-moderator of EMO’s 2015 *Collins Lecture: Gospel of Conquest*.

In-depth workshop sessions followed. Dr. James Cassidy—former rock musician and soil scientist from Oregon State University—gave a dynamic presentation on the “Mystery and Science of Soil.” Representatives from Groundwork Portland led a session on “The Future of Food Justice,” including farming and food business opportunities for people of color in Oregon. A young-adult panel spoke their minds about climate change and the future for their generation. And a group of Catholic farmers—including Alejandro Tecum, an indigenous Guatemalan who now works for Adelante Mujeres in Forest Grove—reflected on Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’*.

At dinner, Portland Mayor Charlie Hales shared his experience as part of an international delegation of mayors who met with the Pope at the Vatican last year to discuss climate change

to date include the Archdiocese of Portland, Augustana Lutheran Church, Community of Christ Great Pacific Northwest, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Episcopal Diocese of Oregon, First Unitarian Church in Portland, Musgrove Mortuaries and Cemeteries, Neil Kelly Co., Rodney Page and Ron Means, Parkrose Community United Church of Christ, Rodney Reeves and Joan Kimoto, Marilyn Sewell and George Crandall, Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church, United Methodist Church Oregon-Idaho Conference, and USI Northwest. To learn more about becoming a sponsor, please contact Carla Starrett-Bigg or Lisa Westarp at (503) 221-1054.

### Join us!

The Annual Community Awards & Celebration Dinner will be held on May 18 at the Hilton Hotel, 921 SW Sixth Ave., Portland. Checkin, silent auction and reception begin at 5 p.m. with dinner, a live auction and a festive awards presentation to follow at 6:30 p.m. The cost of the event is \$100 per person. All sponsorships include a table of ten. Reservations may be made securely online at [www.emoregon.org](http://www.emoregon.org), or you may call (503) 221-1054.



Guest speakers Mayor Charlie Hales (left) and Nana Firman (center) with Jenny Holmes (right), EMO Environmental Ministries director.

and human trafficking. Hales also shared how Portland’s local environmental accomplishments and leadership leverage change on a larger scale. He nodded to the *Earth Care Summit* as an event that also sends out wide ripples.

Nana Firman of the Green Mosque program—who had also visited the Vatican as part of an interfaith delegation—appealed to all faiths to work together to care for the Earth.

The evening before the *Summit*, a climate arts event took place with writer Kim Stafford, who shared his vibrant poetry on the beauty of Creation. Singer/songwriter and cellist Anna Fritz, one of the founders of the Portland Cello Project, shared her spiritually grounded and earth-inspired music. She also led a chant known well to climate change activists: *Coal, Oil, Gas, None of These Shall Pass*.

The annual *Earth Care Summit* is an effort of EMO’s Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns and Oregon Interfaith Power & Light. If you’re interested in helping plan or host the 2017 *Earth Care Summit*, contact Jenny Holmes at (503) 221-1054, ext. 214, or [jholmes@emoregon.org](mailto:jholmes@emoregon.org).

## Faith advocates help advance climate protection in the Oregon Legislature

**The measure passed by the Oregon Senate underscores a leadership role [and] ... makes Oregon the first state to eliminate coal by legislative action and places it among a handful of other states with renewable energy standards 50 percent or higher.**

—*New York Times*, March 2, 2016

Oregon Interfaith Power & Light (OIPL), a program of EMO, was busy in the 2016 Oregon Legislative Session educating, mobilizing and advocating for strong climate policies to advance the goals of the historic Paris Climate Conference of December 2015.

When the Session ended on March 4, Senate Bill 1547-B—otherwise known as the Clean Electricity and Coal Transition Plan—was approved and sent to Governor Brown to be signed into law.

The landmark bill will commit the state to eliminate its use of coal power by 2035 and double the amount of clean, renewable energy

servicing Oregonians by 2040. Analysis of the legislation’s expected impact has shown that the plan will reduce carbon pollution across the western states by 30 million metric tons—the equivalent of taking 6.4 million cars off the road. The legislation also includes provisions to keep electricity prices affordable and ensure reliable electric service for utility customers, as well as an opportunity for community solar and renewable energy for low-income housing.

In support of this legislative action, OIPL mobilized over 450 people of faith to call for a price and cap on climate pollution and delivered a letter signed by 75 faith leaders in support of the Clean Electricity Plan. OIPL also led a Prayer into Action gathering before the Feb. 3 *Healthy Climate Rally* of faith-based advocates in Salem. Among the inspirational speakers were The Rev. Dr. Marilyn Sewell, Rabbi Michael Cahna and The Rev. John Pitney. A video recording of the event is available at [emoregon.org/power\\_light.php](http://emoregon.org/power_light.php).

## Faith resources for climate action & reflection

Interfaith Power & Light’s annual program of climate-themed worship services includes a entire week of activities from April 15 to 24, 2016, in celebration of *Earth Day* (April 22). This also marks the date when the historic Paris Agreement to address climate change will be signed at the United Nations in New York by 195 countries.

The theme of *Faith Climate Action Week* is “Paris and Beyond.” Meeting the Paris Agreement’s goal of keeping global warming under two degrees Celsius will require participation from everyone. Many congregations will be signing the Paris Pledge to cut their own emissions.

Sign up at [FaithClimateActionWeek.org](http://FaithClimateActionWeek.org). The Oscar-nominated documentary *Racing Extinction* will be available on the site for screening. Joining the program will allow us to count you in with thousands of other climate-conscious faith communities and build the movement.



## EMO welcomes new leadership to our community ministries

**JESSE HERBACH: HIV Day Center program manager since May 2015**

*Tell us about your background.*

Since moving to Portland from Chicago eight years ago, I have primarily worked in programs that serve youth. I worked in a variety of youth transitional housing programs, as well as working at SMYRC



Jesse Herbach, HIV Services

(a drop in center for LGBTQ youth) for four years. I started working at EMO's HIV Services about two and a half years ago as the program assistant. I went to DePaul University for my undergrad, and double majored in theatre studies and gender studies with a minor in LGBTQ studies. I often joke that this educational background suits me well for a career working in drop-in centers—improvisation and social justice!

*Why did you choose to work for the Day Center?*

I am committed to drop-in center programming. I think that it is an incredible way to support people in a less formal setting, on their own terms. I feel strongly about the ways that peer community creates safety nets for struggling individuals. I had never heard of the HIV Day Center before finding the job listing and was thrilled to find that the program existed. After doing some research about EMO, I was impressed with the breadth of the work that we do.

*What is your vision for the Day Center?*

HIV in the United States has changed dramatically over the past 30 plus years and continues to do so, particularly with new medications and pre-exposure prophylaxis (a means of preventing infection in high-risk individuals). As the epidemic shifts, the Day Center has to as well. The medical and anti-stigma success that HIV communities have doesn't mean that the epidemic is anywhere near over, though. Often, those who are most at risk of becoming HIV-positive have other stigmatized identities as well. We have to figure out new ways to support and engage the individuals who need our services most—people who are aging with HIV and long-term survivors, people who have mental health and/or addiction issues, people who are chronically homeless, HIV-positive African Americans, transgender folks, people who have recently been incarcerated.

My vision for the Day Center is about continuing to build a strong community of people who come through our doors and listening to the needs created by an ever-changing epidemic. We are lucky to work in a city that has an incredible amount of HIV service organizations. The HIV Day Center is unique within this continuum of programs, however, and I strive to find new and creative ways to work as a web to support clients.

*What do you find most rewarding / valuable / meaningful about your work?*

Every day that we are open, whether it is a busy day or a slow day, I get to look around the Day Center and see human connection. It is also a place where clients who have starkly dissimilar backgrounds—with only HIV as a shared experience—can connect and learn about differing life stories. Activity groups and recreational space such as our pool table serve as much more than just a place to relax. Personal prejudices are disrupted when clients engage in these social activities, meaning that the widely diverse population who attends the Day Center is effecting real, community change simply by allowing themselves to see and be seen by others.

*What can volunteers do to help your program?*

We often need assistance in our kitchen, since serving two meals a day, four days a week is a huge part of our program. If you have a particular skill or hobby that you'd like to share, we welcome volunteers who can provide wellness services or recreational activities. We seek drivers for our Daily Bread Express food delivery program, which operates on Wednesdays. If your congregation or group you are part of would like to be involved, we have a Friday Community Lunch Program, where groups bring meals on Fridays to help us cut down on ever-increasing food costs. As volunteers, no matter what you are doing, the ability to listen with an open heart and be present with people is vital. For inquiries about volunteering, contact Rain at (503) 460-3822 or [rschumacher@emoregon.org](mailto:rschumacher@emoregon.org).

**TRAVIS NIEMANN: Northeast Emergency Food Program manager since January 2016**

*Tell us about your background.*

Born and raised outside Washington, D.C., I was shaped by the multiculturalism and diversity of the area. I finished my bachelor's at Portland State University, where I majored in international studies with a focus on the Middle East and a minor in religious studies. Professionally, I have experience in retail management and the food service industry, especially as a cook. I bring with me a passion for both growing and cooking foods.

*Why did you choose to work for Northeast Emergency Food Program (NEFP)?*

I had previous experience with NEFP as both client and volunteer. When I was applying for the position of program assistant in 2013, I felt that it had all of my interests in one place: the global and the local, challenging inequity and injustice, helping others, growing food and building community.



Travis Niemann, NEFP

*What is your vision for NEFP?*

My vision is for NEFP to be a vibrant, abundant resource and community hub. Part of this involves continuing to build connections within NEFP's Cully neighborhood community. I also want to continue to find new sources for foods to distribute. I'd also like to continue the trend of offering overwhelming amounts of fresh produce, and limiting processed foods. Ultimately, I want to get more food to more people more frequently—and faster. Another integral part of my vision is to connect what is happening, and what can happen, here at NEFP to conversations about hunger at the state and national levels. There is a movement away from older models of charity to more engaged processes that address underlying causes, and seek to work with people and communities, not just with the food itself.

*What is most rewarding about your job?*

What I find most rewarding is how the food pantry helps not only the people who come to us to get food, but also how it changes the people who come to volunteer. We provide a place for people to give back, to help their fellow humans, to lift each other up. We are a place where one can be humbled, where the world feels a little less lonely, and you remember the power of food in our lives. I love to see when people come to us expecting just a few canned foods and some stale bread but instead find piles of fresh produce, dairy and fancy grocery items and a large array of meat and other proteins. I like to see people have their expectations exceeded, and that can happen frequently at NEFP.

*What can volunteers do to help?*

We need volunteers to interact face-to-face with our clients as they shop the pantry. This is a great time to practice your Spanish, Russian or Mandarin, or just to meet interesting and diverse people. We also need help in our backyard garden! The pantry garden has been very successful the past few years but could certainly use more dedicated volunteers. We also need help in our clothing center to sort and arrange clothing. Another really exciting idea is to have entertainers or specialists of any and all sorts come in on our busiest days and interact with clients in the waiting room. So, if you have a special skill you'd like to share with lovely people waiting to get food on a busy day, let us know! Volunteers can contact me at (503) 284-5470 or [tنيemann@emoregon.org](mailto:tنيemann@emoregon.org).

*Anything else?*

NEFP relies on individual donors for our continued operation. We encourage those who want to help to become a monthly sustaining partner. For just a few dollars a month you can help us feed 800 families. We are growing larger and the need is becoming greater. With rising housing costs, more and more parents are going hungry so that their kids can eat. More families turn to highly processed and inexpensive convenience foods that can lead to serious health consequences. At NEFP, we give out whole foods, fresh produce, dairy products and protein. These form the backbone of a healthy diet, which make for healthy communities.

*Continued on page 5*

**MARGARITA VEJO: Russian Oregon Social Services program manager since November 2015**

*Tell us about your background.*

I came to the United States in 1998 as a refugee from Volgograd, Russia. In Russia, I had earned a master's of science degree in chemistry and a PhD in biology, and I served on a medical research team in Volgograd



Margarita Vejo, ROSS

State Medical University's pharmacology department. Upon arriving in the United States, my professional life took a very different turn. My first job was as a librarian at Clark College in Vancouver, Wash. In 2001, I joined the staff of IRCO (Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization), where I worked with employees and clients from more than 35 countries around the world. During my 13-year tenure at IRCO, I had the privilege of assisting some 8,000 families from Afghanistan, Burma, Burundi, Bhutan, Cambodia, Chad, Congo, Cuba, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Haiti, Iran, Iraq, Lithuania, Kenya, Moldova, Nigeria, Russia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan as they began new lives in the United States—just as I had done not long before.

*Why did you choose to work for ROSS?*

With the goal of better assisting my clients, I earned a master's of science degree in education from Lewis & Clark College in 2014. Last fall, I was delighted to have the opportunity to put my personal, professional and academic experience to work serving and supporting Oregon's Russian speaking-community as program manager of ROSS.

*What do you find most rewarding about your work?*

ROSS has given me the unique opportunity to serve as a liaison between the Russian-speaking community and English-speaking community. The two cultures should embrace and enrich each other. I've had the chance to create strategies that help immigrants become successful, self-sufficient and contributing members of our diverse society.

*What is your vision for ROSS?*

I plan to expand the variety of social services ROSS offers. I place special value on cross-cultural communication and trust and, to that end, aim to foster meaningful relationships among Russian immigrants and Oregon's society at large.

*What can volunteers do to help?*

Volunteers can help ROSS clients assimilate and integrate into the mainstream English-speaking society. They can tutor our clients in English, assist in resume writing and job searches, and help clients navigate the educational/vocational training system. Anyone interested in volunteering at ROSS may contact Liza Tkachenko at (503) 777-3437 or ltkachenko@emoregon.org.

## EMO Community Ministries by the numbers

Our **Food Services** prepared a total of 19,861 nutritious home-style meals last year for clients of the HIV Day Center and Daily Bread Express and residents of the Patton Home.

In 2015, **HIV Services** offered assistance for 282 people living with HIV/AIDS.

The **Northeast Emergency Food Program** gathered and distributed 839,733 pounds of food and approximately 40,000 articles of clothing to 22,506 people last year.

**Second Home** housed 17 homeless and unaccompanied Beaverton youth during 2015.

Last year, **Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees** provided resettlement for 488 refugees.

## On April 28: Dine out, fight AIDS!

Join EMO's HIV Services on Thursday, April 28, 2016, for Portland's eighth annual *Dining Out for Life*.

*Dining Out for Life* is an annual international event to raise funds for AIDS service organizations. When you dine out at a local participating restaurant, 20 to 30 percent of your bill will go directly to programs serving people with HIV/AIDS locally. The fundraiser is held in over 60 cities throughout the United States and Canada. In the Portland metro area, *Dining Out for Life* benefits EMO's HIV Services and OHSU's Partnership Project.

When asked why she thinks *Dining Out for Life's* mission to raise awareness is unique, Pam Grier, film and television star and *Dining Out for Life* spokesperson, said, "When you have the privilege of dining out, whether it's at a greasy spoon or at a five-star white tablecloth restaurant, you are nourishing yourself both physically and spiritually." She believes that when people feel good, they'll be compelled to do good for others.

*Dining Out for Life* provides the opportunity to nourish ourselves and directly contribute to the nourishment and support of others in need. At EMO's HIV Day Center, we provide hundreds of meals a month for low-income, HIV-positive clients, and support them in accessing critical medical resources such as medical case management at OHSU's Partnership Project. Through these resources, people living with HIV/AIDS in Portland can maintain medication adherence. Through adherence, people living with HIV/AIDS drastically increase their long-term health and decrease their viral loads, which studies show significantly decrease the potential for the virus to be spread.

Last year, over two dozen Portland restaurants participated in *Dining Out for Life* in every quadrant of the city. Diners also had



the opportunity to give personal donations that night. In total, over \$20,000 was raised for the two organizations.

Great Portland metro area restaurants are lined up again this year, including (but not limited to) Bazi Bierbrasserie, Gracie's, The Original, Red Star Tavern, Saraveza, Garden Bar in the Pearl and 17 McMenamins locations—and more restaurants are signing on daily. Dine out at one of these restaurants on April 28, and be sure to mention that you're there for "Dining Out for Life."

Visit [www.diningoutforlife.com/portland](http://www.diningoutforlife.com/portland) for more information and a full restaurant listing, or call Jesse Herbach, HIV Services program manager, at (503) 460-3822.

*Note—EMO and the HIV Day Center recognize that this year's Dining Out for Life event is happening during Pesach, which means many in our Jewish community cannot participate this year. As this is an annual, nation-wide event, we ultimately made the decision not to alter the date of our event. However, we appreciate our Jewish supporters and look forward to your continued participation in this fantastic event next year!*

## Voice

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

Publisher:

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon  
Jan Musgrove Elfers, executive director  
Michelle Bush, graphic designer, editor

telephone (503) 221-1054

fax (503) 223-7007

website [www.emoregon.org](http://www.emoregon.org)

email [emo@emoregon.org](mailto:emo@emoregon.org)

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### MEMBER DENOMINATIONS

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American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oregon and SW Idaho  
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church  
Church of the Brethren • Community of Christ  
Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon  
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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
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

## Dignity of work at center of 2016 Legislative Session

The search for solutions to lift up Oregon's most economically marginalized residents and to affirm the dignity of all work was at the center of the 2016 Legislative Session for both legislators and Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's (EMO) public policy advocacy team. As the most recent effort in this important undertaking, the Legislature passed and Governor Kate Brown signed into law a contentious and unprecedented three-tiered minimum wage plan.



EMO Executive Director Jan Musgrove Elfers (standing behind the governor) witnessed Governor Brown signing the minimum wage bill on March 2, 2016.

### The need for higher wages

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon believes in the inherent dignity of work, and that those who work should be able to support themselves and their families, regardless of the job they do. Low wages fail to honor the labor of the worker and fail to ensure each employee can afford the basics. The gaps in the budgets of thousands of households around the state undermine the economic foundations of these families, the businesses they frequent and the state's social services budget.

The need for a more sustainable and compassionate minimum wage is supported by sobering statistics and by the stories of the clients EMO programs serve every day. Nearly one in seven Oregonians did not have enough money to buy food at least one time in the past year. Indeed, EMO's Northeast Emergency Food Program provides food and clothing to over 2,000 people each month—40 percent of

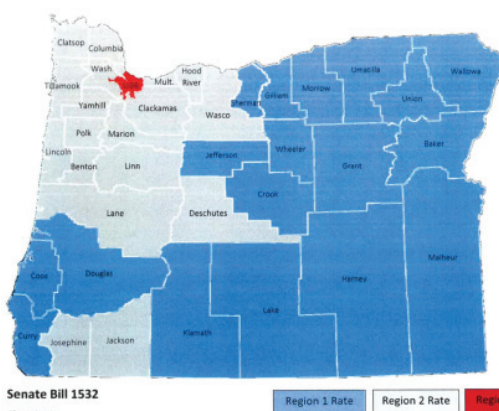
them children and many from households with a working adult.

In Oregon, according to a 2014 study by the University of Oregon Labor and Education Research Center, women make up more than half of the minimum wage workforce. This fact underscores the vital nature of programs like EMO's Russian Oregon Social Services, which helps domestic violence survivors obtain skills that enable economic self-sufficiency.

### The numbers

Currently, Oregon's minimum wage is \$9.25 an hour, two dollars above the federal minimum wage. Each January, the state's minimum wage is adjusted for inflation according to the U.S. City Average Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI). The minimum wage plan signed into law by Governor Brown on March 2, Senate Bill 1532 A, will send Oregon's minimum wage upward for the next six years at a rate above inflation.

These set raises mean that, come July 2022, the minimum wage for Region 1 (blue on map below) will rise to \$12.50, Region 2 to \$13.50 and Region 3 (red on map) to \$14.75 per hour. By contrast, the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis predicts that Oregon's CPI-adjusted minimum wage would only reach \$10.50 in 2022, had the law not changed.



Additionally, because lawmakers prescribed the first raise to take place this July instead of next January when the inflation adjustment would have been calculated, Oregon's 100,000 minimum wage workers will earn an extra \$250 or \$500 in 2016, depending on their wage region.

### Self-sufficiency for some

Still, the multi-year phase-in of significantly higher wages means that self-sufficiency is years off for some and nowhere on the horizon for others. According to a study by the North Star Civic Foundation, even in 2022 many minimum wage workers will still not be self-sufficient.

Today, in only 18 of Oregon's 36 counties can a full-time minimum wage worker without children earn enough to survive without public assistance or working a second job. In 2022, every such worker in every county will be self-sufficient with one minimum wage position.

Come 2022, however, many parents earning the minimum wage will still need help to make ends meet. At that time, in no county in the state will a single parent who has one or two children in preschool be able to cover those daycare costs plus their other expenses.

Meanwhile, a family living on two minimum wage incomes but with daycare costs will be self-sufficient in just 18 counties. And even if those two full-time minimum-wage earners support two school-aged children who don't attend daycare, such a family will be self-sufficient in just 27 of 36 counties.

While EMO fought for the passage of SB1532, this research and our own experience compels us to advocate for policies that will help close this self-sufficiency gap, and do so quickly. We will continue to engage with our supporters and partners in this work.

### More victories in the 2016 Legislative Session that EMO supported:

- Increase in Oregon's Earned Income Tax Credit for families with children under age three (HB 4110).
- Increase of a combined \$10 million over existing funding levels for the Emergency Housing Account and State Homeless Assistance Program (SB 5701).
- Requirement to end Oregonians' use of electricity from coal-fired power plants by 2030, and a requirement that the state get at least 50 percent of its electricity from renewables by 2040 (HB 4036).

Released by office of Sen. Brian Boquist

## EMO's public policy efforts driven by compassion and justice

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) works to align laws and government budgets with compassion and justice. We engage in policy debates where EMO's participation can improve the final policy product, or where our advocacy and voice can help just causes win the day. And we engage in policy discussions when laws and budgets under debate will impact those who depend on EMO's community ministries—from domestic violence survivors at Russian Oregon Social Services to recently arrived refugees at Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees to those who rely on the Northeast Emergency Food Program to feed their families.

Through the *Voice* newsletter, our e-newsletter *Peace & Justice*, public dialogue, discussions at member congregations, social media, and testimony to elected officials, we communicate EMO's public policy positions to EMO members and the larger community.

### EMO's public policy advocacy moves forward

With the 2016 Legislative Session complete, EMO has turned our public policy efforts to laying the groundwork for future change. First, our biennial *Guide to the Oregon Ballot Measures* for the fall 2016 General Election will be the product of outreach to our member congregations, thorough research, and discernment about how our faith informs today's public policy challenges.

Second, we continue to work with our coalition partners to prepare for the 2017 Legislative Session. For example, we are considering ways to improve and more fully fund TANF, which assists children in families facing crisis, protects children whose parents experience physical or mental health barriers to employment, and assists domestic violence survivors in entering the workforce. We are also advocating for more assistance to the hungry,

policies and enforcement that will end wage theft in Oregon, more affordable housing, smarter gun-violence prevention policies and improved approaches to safeguarding our environment.

And third, as a member of a coalition exploring how best to repeal the state's death penalty, EMO is working to help develop the communications, outreach, coalition-building, financing and political strategies for such an effort. In the near term, we will identify potential supporters in the faith community, hold discussions with elected officials, and engage in public education on this important issue.

For more information about EMO's advocacy efforts, contact Britt Conroy, EMO Public Policy Advocacy associate, at (503) 221-1054, ext. 207, or [bconroy@emoregon.org](mailto:bconroy@emoregon.org). To follow EMO's public policy efforts, sign up for our e-newsletter by sending a request to [mbush@emoregon.org](mailto:mbush@emoregon.org).

## Save the date for the 2016 *Collins Lecture* with The Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III

**“Many times God will bring out new colors when we experience the blues of a storm. We must allow the tears of God to beat across the canvas of our soul and God will paint a new picture in our spirit.” – Otis Moss III**

On Nov. 3, the 2016 *Collins Lecture* will address race, justice and reconciliation. The guest lecturer will be The Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III, senior pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago and an accomplished author, speaker and activist.

In the midst of growing polarization and divisiveness in our state and the nation, we feel an urgent need as people of faith to address issues of racism, injustice, inequality and discrimination. Divisions exist among races, faiths, socio economic classes, refugees, immigrants, natural-born citizens and naturalized citizens. It is time to redirect our cities, states and nation towards the goal of reconciliation and the Beloved Community.



The Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III will address race, justice and reconciliation at the 2016 *Collins Lecture*.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is planning the 2016 *Collins Lecture* in consultation with the Albina Ministerial Alliance and other organizations ready to meet this call.

The Rev. Dr. Moss is part of a new generation of ministers committed to preaching prophetically that the messages of love and

justice are inseparable companions. He has a unique gift to communicate across generations: his creative Bible-based messages inspire young and old alike. He published his first book *Redemption in a Red Light District* in 1999 and coauthored *The Gospel Re-Mix: How to Reach the Hip-Hop Generation* in 2006.

Moss is an ordained minister in both the United Church of Christ and the Progressive National Baptist Convention. He is a life member of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, board member of *The Christian Century* magazine, and chaplain of the Children’s Defense Fund’s Samuel DeWitt Proctor Child Advocacy Conference. The work and legacy of The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the pastoral ministry of his father, The Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, Jr., have been integral to his spiritual formation.

*Details about the Collins Lecture will be posted at [www.emoregon.org](http://www.emoregon.org) as they become available.*

## Portland welcomes people of faith from around the world for denominational gatherings

This year, the United Methodist Church (UMC) will hold its General Conference from May 10 to 20, and the Presbyterian Church (USA) will hold its 222<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly from June 18 to 25. Both will take place at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland.

Thousands of United Methodist members and delegates from around the world will convene in Portland for two weeks of worship, fellowship and voting on new guidelines. The theme of the annual conference is “Therefore Go” from Matthew 28. A day of ecumenical observance will take place on May 17, beginning with worship led by The Rev. Dr. Ivan Abraham, general secretary of the World Methodist Council. Ecumenical representatives will be presented to the Conference, followed by a reception and luncheon.

The UMC General Conference is the top policy-making body of the denomination, which meets once every four years. The Conference can

revise church law, as well as adopt resolutions on current moral, social, public policy and economic issues. It also approves plans and budgets for church-wide programs.

During the Presbyterian General Assembly, commissioners and advisory delegates from all 171 presbyteries, along with other participants and observers from around the world, will converge for celebrations, deliberations and inspiration in support of the denomination’s biennial gathering. Hosted by the Presbytery of the Cascades and united under the theme “The Hope in Our Calling” from Ephesians 1:18, the General Assembly will include rich worship services, the election of the moderator and action on a plethora of overtures.

Meeting in Portland has historic significance, as the first Presbyterian General Assembly west of the Mississippi River was held at First Presbyterian Church in Portland in 1892.

### Other Northwest denominational gatherings in 2016

April 29-May 1: **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Oregon Synod**, Eugene

May 20-21: **Christian Church in Oregon & SW Idaho (Disciples of Christ)**, Springfield

June 22: **Unitarian General Assembly**, Portland

July 13-14: **Northwest Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends**, Spokane, Wash.

Sept. 23-25: **Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ**, Pendleton

Nov. 4-5: **Episcopal Diocese of Oregon**, Eugene



## New bishop elected at the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon

The Rev. Patrick Bell was elected the seventh bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon in December 2015. He replaces The Rt. Rev. Bavi Edna “Nedi” Rivera, who has served as elected provisional bishop of Eastern Oregon since May 2009.

Bell’s background lends itself to his new position—he is a seventh generation Eastern Washingtonian, hailing from a long farming tradition, and his first Episcopal parish was in Ontario, Ore. “Fr. Bell understands rural life in the Pacific Northwest,” said Kim McClain, president of the diocese’s standing committee. “We think he will make a really good bishop.”

Bell was raised Episcopalian and attended

Whitworth College, a Presbyterian school in Spokane. As a young adult, his faith turned toward Evangelical Christianity. He received a master’s of arts in theology from Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif., and served as a Pentecostal minister. In time, he returned to the Episcopal Church.

Bell did his Anglican studies at Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas, and completed coursework for a doctorate of ministry from Seabury-Western Theological Seminary in Evanston, Ill. He was ordained priest by Bishop Rustin Kimsey and installed at St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church in Ontario in 1989.

Bell said his experience with different

spiritual paths is one of the strengths he brings to his new position. “It broadened my spiritual understanding and my ability to work with Evangelical Christians—I have a deep appreciation for what they believe,” Bell said.

Bell’s vision for the diocese is to reinforce people’s confidence that they are loved. “The diocese is a stunning model to the Church and the world. In a sparse landscape we find the exact opposite in our communities,” he said.

The bishopric of Eastern Oregon is a half-time position; Bell will be in the diocese two weeks a month and maintain his residence in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho. He will be consecrated on April 16, 2016, at First Presbyterian in Bend.

## EMO celebrates 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 Immigration Lawyers Association	SOAR Immigration Legal Services
ANAC Portland Cascade Chapter	HIV Services
Autzen Foundation	Second Home
Broadway Cares Equity Fights AIDS	HIV Services
Central Drug Company	HIV Services
The Collins Foundation	Annual Fund
Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation	HIV Services
ESCO Foundation	NE Emergency Food Program
Grace in the Desert Episcopal	Annual Fund
Groundswell Group	HIV Services
Hart Family Foundation	NE Emergency Food Program
Irwin Foundation	NE Emergency Food Program
Juan Young Trust	Second Home
Leadership Beaverton	Second Home
M.A.C. AIDS Fund	HIV Services
McKenzie River Gathering Foundation, Fund of Carolyn & Martin Winch	Annual Fund
Nike Employee Charitable Giving Program	Second Home
Northwest Industrial and Foundry Supply Co., Inc.	NE Emergency Food Program
Oregon Community Foundation	NE Emergency Food Program
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)	Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns
Rose E. Tucker Charitable Trust	HIV Services
Joseph E. Weston Public Foundation	Annual Fund, Second Home
Wheeler Foundation	Annual Fund
Whole Foods Market	NE Emergency Food Program

## The Collins Match: A challenge worth taking

We are deeply grateful to the Collins Foundation for leading the way again in Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's (EMO) 2016 Annual Fund drive with a \$70,000 challenge grant. Your donation to EMO will be matched at 100 percent by the Collins Foundation.

As a supporter of EMO's Annual Fund, you partner with EMO in bringing together Oregonians for interfaith dialogue, peace work, direct service to those who need it most, and advocacy addressing the root causes of poverty and environmental degradation.

*To double your gift to EMO, please use the form below or make a secure donation at [www.emoregon.org](http://www.emoregon.org). For more information, call (503) 221-1054.*

**Help EMO reach the goal of raising \$70,000 for the Collins Foundation 2016 challenge grant. Double your gift today!**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make tax-deductible check payable to EMO or pay by:

Visa  MasterCard  American Express

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Code \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_

Amount:  \$1,000  \$500  \$250  \$100  \$50  Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send your gift to:**

EMO, 0245 SW Bancroft St., Suite B, Portland, OR 97239.

You may also make a secure online donation at [www.emoregon.org](http://www.emoregon.org).

## Honor & Memorial Gifts

September 2015 to February 2016

### Gifts in Honor

*In honor of Kristi Baack*  
Eric Baack, Gaile Baack

*In honor of Gaile Baack*  
Patricia Jane Eby

*In honor of the wedding of Felix Bautista & Rob Stoltz*—Kayla Carruth, Eloise & Walter Gibson, John-Mark Gilhousen, Kathleen Greene, Walter & Linda Myers, Rodney & Sandra Page, Johanna Rayman, Edward Rouffy, Frances & Douglas Stearns, Lyn Stoltz, Rob Stoltz, Marilyn Watts, Rebecca Wirkkala

*In honor of Peter Bayley*  
Michelle & Robert Bayley

*In honor of Phil Bernstein*—Janelle Lee

*In honor of Eleonora Bunch*  
Ralph Bunch

*In honor of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority*  
Marian Gilmore

*In honor of John Dennis*  
Helen Dennis

*In honor of Henry Smart Denson & Ezra*—Nancy Johns

*In honor of Jan, Carla, Jenny & Michelle*—Steve & Sandra Cahill

*In honor of Jan Elfers*  
Jeffrey & Sharon Musgrove, Matthew & Carla Starrett-Bigg

*In honor of Jenny Holmes*  
Vernon & Betty Groves

*In honor of Twila Jordahl*  
Eric Jordahl

*In honor of Anne Kayser*  
Barbara Brooks & Michael Pratt

*In honor of Howard Kenyon*  
Elizabeth Kenyon, Stephen Kenyon, Esther Kenyon-Marcotte, Matthew & Carla Starrett-Bigg

*In honor of David Leslie*  
James Jandacek

*In honor of Anthony London*  
Reed & Holly Fowler

*In honor of Jeanne Meyer*  
Versie Meyer

*In honor of Russ Miller*  
David & Theo Roche

*In honor of Jim Moiso & Lea Laurence-Moiso*  
Aimee Moiso & Nolan Huzienga

*In honor of Travis Niemann*  
Alaine Duncan, John Elizalde

*In honor of Rodney Page*—Fred Neal III

*In honor of Jim Peters*—Julia Brown

*In honor of Piedmont Rose Connection*  
Marian Gilmore

*In honor of Richard Rumble & Arlene Rumble*—Kathy Rumble

*In honor of David Rutiezer*  
Joseph Soldati

*In honor of Alicia Speidel*  
Arthur Coolidge

*In honor of Strength for the Journey Camp*—Loretta Higgins

*In honor of An Ton-That*  
Sandra Dickson

*In honor of Kathleen Ugolini*  
Marcia Kahn, Howard Rosenbaum

*In honor of Susan Van Winkle*  
Jill Van Winkle

*In honor of Dan Wilson-Fey*  
Deborah Maria

### Gifts in Memory

*In memory of John Anderson*  
Margaret Anderson

*In memory of Delvon Barrett and Donald Barrett*  
Ronald & Marsha Barrett Grosjean

*In memory of Trudy Bradley*—Dan Bradley

*In memory of Virginia Cain*  
Leonard Cain

*In memory of John Casas*  
Raymond Barnes

*In memory of Rosemary & Verne Cooperrider*  
Edgar & Mary Louise Brandt

*In memory of George Curran*  
Domenica Gonzales

*In memory of Rodney Demoss*  
Jamie Christianson

*In memory of George Eggers*  
Mary Karas

*In memory of Norm Gores*  
Darlene Gores

*In memory of Helloise Hill*  
Shawn & David Looney

*In memory of Anne Hutchinson*  
Patricia Hutchinson

*In memory of Joey*  
Gail Sanford, Laurie Smith

*In memory of Mitch Kincanny*  
Lauren Nathe

*In memory of Marilyn Kirvin*  
Diane Lax

*In memory of Margaretta Dunn Kruse*  
Suzanne Cerddeu

*In memory of Helen Lee*—Bernard Lee

*In memory of James Livers*—Marian Livers

*In memory of Patrick Loomis*  
Michael Prendergast

*In memory of Stan MacNeil*  
Julia MacNeil

*In memory of Dixie Parker*—Corliss Marsh

*In memory of Robert*—Andrew Gardner

*In memory of Ross Robson*—Barbara Adams, Anchors Mariners, Phyllis Bottomly, Eugene & Julia Brown, Frances Cormack, Charlotte Cresswell, Rufus & Karen Day, Lena Forsythe, Laura Good, Herman & Helen Guichelaar, Alice Gustafson, Leonard & Dorothy Hare, Marilyn Horton, Margaret Johnson, Gary & Nancy Kasper, Lee Kilbourn, Peter & Mary Kirschner, Gary & Jerrie Lovre, David & Darnell Mandelblatt, Lois Manookian, Prakash & Sandy Mathew, Jean Matsumoto & Alice Ando, Chlois McCarter, Oliver & Mary Norville, Jeanne & David Pace, George & Billie Pitzer, Janet Plog, Jane Rabe, Sue Redman, Arno Reifenberg & Doris Marks, Robbie & Ginny Robertson, Isabel Sheridan, Frank & Sherrell Snell, Donald & Barbara Thompson, Robert Thompson, Norma Watson, Corrinne Williams

*In memory of James Sampson*—Linda Parry

*In memory of Jack Takayanagi*  
Jean Bucciarelli

*In memory of Barbara Thompson*  
Robert Thompson

*In memory of Carleen VanDemarr*  
Charles Jannsen

*In memory of Teresa Whipple*  
Lloyd & Genevieve Johnson

*In memory of Paul Wirth*—Kim Toews