



Interfaith leaders in Portland are following in the path of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by forming a “Beloved Community of Oregon” organization to bring people together. Clergy from the group gathered last January for a silent march and meditation to respond to a new era of hate speech, hate crimes and racial profiling.

Bringing People Together

Interfaith group inspired by MLK

BY DANA LYNN BARBAR
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A group of local religious leaders of different faiths, known as the Beloved Community of Oregon, is now hosting monthly meetings for the public in an effort to bring people together. Influenced by the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who promoted love, respect, and justice, these forums are planned with a commitment to justice for all in mind.

The Beloved Community began in September 2001 when members of the United Church of Christ and the Muslim community decided to meet weekly over lunch in an effort to bridge divides.

The community grew to include members of other religious institutions, and they continued to meet weekly since then. This last spring, they

started monthly forums for the public in an effort to create dialogue an increasingly divided political climate and to foster more community engagement.

The purpose of the forums is to help people move past their fear of difference and deepen their community relationships while learning about and working towards a cause for the greater good.

Each monthly forum is held on the fourth Sunday of the month in a different location and takes on a certain issue or theme. Past forums have focused on gun violence, immigrant and refugee voices in public policy, and the history of how borders in Middle Eastern countries got drawn and how that impacted colonial dominance.

Guest speakers have in-

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