



A Statement in response to the anti-Jewish hate crimes in Lafayette, Sat., Oct. 31, 2020

October 27, 2020, marked the second anniversary of the killing of eleven Jews in the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA. The senselessness of such crimes not only breaks our hearts but calls us to be alert and responsive to the growing tide of antisemitism, racism, xenophobia and white nationalism.

We are alarmed at the vandalism that occurred on the eve of the Pittsburgh massacre in Lafayette, CA. A local residence was defaced with swastikas that also appeared on several overpasses with the name "Trump."

The Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County strongly condemns these vicious acts of hate as we stand in solidarity with the Jewish Community.

We are deeply concerned with the growing culture of hate and intolerance. We pledge to do all in our power to respond to this alarming situation in our outreach programs, educational seminars, and public statements.

We must recognize the growing influence white nationalism is having on our country. We must not allow extremist groups to co-opt the religious heritage of our nation. While it is true religion can and has been used for less than noble reasons, it is also true that the civil rights movement and the quest for the equality of all is based on our diverse religious heritage. Those of us committed to Interfaith respect and understanding must oppose any violence directed towards people because of their race, creed, or religion.

The Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County calls upon all people of goodwill to stand in solidarity with the Jewish Community as we witness to our common humanity. The violence, disrespect, and threats that endanger any of us compromise the well-being of everyone in our community and world. The time has come again to examine our own hearts seeking to confront our own prejudices, fears, and stereotypes, as we pledge to build a world, where all peoples can live in peace.

Our communities are stronger when individuals can flourish in their uniqueness, when families can bond in safety, when neighbors rejoice in the diversity that delights us all.

We take this occasion to thank the Jewish Community for blessing us with their faith, love, and concern for others. Let us begin anew to cherish one another.

"We will make peace only when we learn that God loves difference and so, at last, must we. God has created many cultures, civilizations and faiths but only one world in which to live together – and it is getting smaller all the time."

Rabbi Johnathan Sacks
The Dignity of Difference p. 23

Rev. Will McGarvey, Executive Director, on behalf of the
Governing Board of the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County