



Statement on the Rise of Anti-Semitism and the Tree of Life Shooting (12/26/18)

Anti-Semitism is on the rise in our country and across the globe where public and private acts of hatred and bigotry against Jews are commonplace. InterFaith Works of Central New York continues to be shocked and saddened by the mass shooting of innocent Jewish people in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. We offer our heartfelt condolences to the many families whose loved ones died or were wounded at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Squirrel Hill.

Together with our Central New York Jewish neighbors, we participated in Shabbat services and community events immediately following this assault in support of the Jewish community and against anti-Semitism anywhere. The outpouring of community support, from many different faiths and peoples, is a testament to the support for Jews and for our community's solidarity.

This tragedy takes place in the broader context of a resurgence of gun violence, anti-immigration sentiments and white supremacy in our nation. These killings should serve as a call to all of us to work to eradicate anti-Semitism and all forms of hatred and violence.

Anti-Semitism is an affront to God and one another. As Martin Luther King, Jr. said during his eulogy for the young victims of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church Bombing in Alabama, "We must be concerned not merely about who murdered them, but about the system, the way of life, the philosophy which produced the murderers." This attack upon a Jewish community in a place of prayer and during a moment of celebration of their religious identity is an appalling violation of our shared humanity.

As an organization that is committed to affirming the dignity of all people and all faiths, InterFaith Works is grateful to our Board members, the Round Table of Faith Leaders and Faith Partners for their bold statements in the wake of this horrific event. We commend the many different faith communities that have committed themselves to stand with the congregations, Jewish leaders and Jews everywhere in solidarity and protection. We commit ourselves as InterFaith Works to work with our faith partners to deepen understanding, to seek peace and do our part to help our nation to boldly affirm that people with different beliefs, perspectives and backgrounds can come together to build a kind, strong and vibrant nation.

Shiu-Kai Chi, Chair of the Board
Madalyn Smith, Convener of the Round Table of Faith Leaders
Beth A. Broadway, President/CEO
InterFaith Works of Central New York