

Westchester Interfaith Clergy Statement on Hate

February 28, 2017 • Final Version

“If you can’t see God in all, you can’t see God at all.” These are the words of Harbhajan Singh, a member of the Sikh religion from Pakistan. This message voices the universal declaration of all religions: We belong to one human family. When any of us experiences joy, all of us share in that joy. And when any of us experiences pain, all of us share in that pain.

Today, we are in pain. We, clergy of many different religions and denominations, good and true neighbors, affirm our common love for every man, woman and child on this planet. As one, we condemn the bomb threats which were made against two Jewish Community Center facilities in Westchester. While we are grateful that no one was hurt, we denounce the hatred that has been unleashed on our neighbors.

Sadly, this is only the most recent of aggressive, intolerant acts that have been perpetrated against different groups across our nation. In the polarized atmosphere that now pervades our country, we are not surprised such threats have arrived to Westchester. It was only a matter of time.

As a community of diverse houses of worship, we embrace the highest ideals of respect and consideration for everyone. We call upon our local and national leaders to renew America’s promise as a nation that was built by people from every conceivable land and ethnicity. We implore those who have the ears of this nation’s citizens to affirm that bigotry will never be permitted to blot out tolerance, understanding and goodwill.

America is so much better than this. We must all be better than this. How we treat those whose religion is different, whose skin color is different, whose nation of origin is different, whose sexual or gender identity is different — this will determine the stature of our humanity and our citizenship.

What we see is unacceptable and we pledge to work with each other and within our communities to create bonds that are based upon mutual respect and love.

America was founded on the principle that we could all build this nation together. Our shared religious perspective would put it this way: God wants us to reject intolerance. God longs for us to embrace each other. God waits for us to open our doors, and in one simple, loving gesture, to proclaim, “You will always be welcome here.”

Signed (in alphabetical order),

Rev. John F. Backe
Trinity Lutheran Church
White Plains NY

Rev. Dr. Deborah Blanks
Allen African Methodist Episcopal Church
White Plains, NY

The Rev. Tami L. Burks
St. Thomas Episcopal Church
Mamaroneck, NY

Chappaqua Interfaith Council
Chappaqua, NY

The Reverend Samuel T. Clover
The Reformed Church of Bronxville
Bronxville, NY

Rabbi Fredda Cohen
White Plains, NY

The Rev. Susan Copley
Christ Episcopal Church & San Marcos
Tarrytown, NY

Rev. Dr. William P. Crawford
Larchmont Avenue Church
Larchmont, NY

Rev. Doris K. Dalton, UMC Deacon
Westchester Martin Luther King, Jr.
Institute of Nonviolence
White Plains, NY

The Rev. Noelle Damico
United Church of Christ, Metro Association
White Plains, NY

Rabbi Julie Danan
Pleasantville Community Synagogue
Pleasantville, NY

Rev. Mashona Walston Davis
Reformed Church of Cortlandtown
Montrose, NY

Rabbi Billy Dreskin
Woodlands Community Temple
Greenburgh, NY

Cantor Ellen Dreskin
Ardsley, NY

The Rev. Lynn M. Dunn
White Plains Presbyterian Church
White Plains, NY

The Rev. Carol D. Gadsden
St. Thomas Episcopal Church
Mamaroneck, NY

The Rev. Jeffrey Gargano
Reformed Church of the Tarrytowns
Old Dutch Church of Sleepy Hollow
Tarrytown/Sleepy Hollow, NY

Rev. Meredith Garmon
Community Unitarian Universalist
Congregation
White Plains, NY

The Rev. Jeffrey A. Geary
White Plains Presbyterian Church
White Plains, NY

Cantor Margot E.B. Goldberg
Temple Beth Abraham
Tarrytown, NY

Cantor Jonathan Gordon
Woodlands Community Temple
Greenburgh, NY

Rev. Dr. Jane Ann Groom
All Souls Parish
Port Chester, NY

Rev. David R. Harkness
Irvington Presbyterian Church
Irvington, NY

The Rev. Sarah E. Henkel
White Plains Presbyterian Church
White Plains, NY

Rev. Robert P. Henry
St. Matthew & Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Hastings and Ardsley, NY

Cantor Randy Herman
Bet Torah
Mt Kisco, NY

Rev. Stephen Holton
St. James Episcopal Church
North Salem, NY

Rabbi David Holtz
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Tarrytown, NY

The Rev. Dr. Martha R. Jacobs
First Congregational Church
Chappaqua, NY

Rabbi Jonathan Jaffe
Temple Beth El of Northern Westchester
Chappaqua, NY

The Rev. Dr. Carole Johannsen, BCC
Phelps Hospital / Northwell Health
Sleepy Hollow, NY

Cantor Robin Joseph
Temple Beth Shalom
Hastings-on-Hudson, NY

Rabbi Steve Kane
Congregation Sons of Israel
Briarcliff Manor, NY

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First Church of Christ, Scientist
Tarrytown, NY

Rabbi Lori Koffman
Bet Torah
Mt Kisco, NY

The Rev. Richard Kunz
Grace/La Gracia Episcopal Church
White Plains, NY

Rev. Bruce Lamb
Ardsley United Methodist Church
Ardsley, NY

The Rev. Dr. Gawain de Leeuw, OA
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The Rev. Claire Lofgren
St. Joseph of Arimathea Episcopal Church
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Rabbi Shira Milgrom
Congregation Kol Ami
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Rabbi Bethie Miller
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Larchmont, NY

Rev. Ted Miller
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Salt Point, NY

The Rev. Canon Patricia Mitchell
Church of the Ascension
Church of Sts. John, Paul and Clement
Mt Vernon, NY

Pastor Linda Nealon
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Tarrytown, NY

Father Robert Norris
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church
Elmsford, NY

Rev. Drew Paton
South Presbyterian Church
Dobbs Ferry, NY

The Rev. Anna Pearson, D.Min.
Grace Episcopal Church
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The Reverend Yejide S. Peters
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Rev. Leroy Richards
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Pastor Torrey Robinson
First Baptist Church
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Ven. Tenku Ruff
Soto Zen Buddhist Priest
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