



NEW HAMPSHIRE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Statement on the Tree of Life Synagogue Murders

The New Hampshire Council of Churches, comprised of ten member denominations and 500 individual congregations in the Granite State, “weeps with those who weep” (Romans 12:15) in the aftermath of the eleven murders at Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh on October 27, 2018.

Further, the New Hampshire Council of Churches reiterates the Biblical teaching that “all of you are one” (Galatians 3:28) and that all people are made in the image of our Creator God (Genesis 1:26). There is no place for anti-Semitism in any church that takes the name of Christian.

This act of evil is the worst anti-Semitic attack in our nation’s history and yet it echoes events that the NH Council of Churches has made past statements on. In particular:

1. In 2013, the *Joint Statement on Reducing Gun Violence* proclaimed that every person is “entitled to live in community free of the fear of gun violence and gun death.” We repeat our call for “our communities and governmental leaders to take measures...that will increase the assurance that human lives...are protected and free from the threat and reality of gun death.”

2. In the light of calls to arm houses of worship, that same statement affirms that “Scripture calls us to ‘beat our swords into plowshares’ (Isaiah 2:4, Joel 3:10); our faith teaches us that our ultimate safety and freedom lies in God. It is therefore idolatrous to imagine that guns, especially semi-automatic and automatic weapons, will protect us from harm.” In 2017 and 2018, the Council together with Blue-U Defense sponsored several self-defense courses for congregations that did not rely on increased use of guns.

3. Knowing that the murderer was in part motivated by anti-immigrant animus, we repeat that “our national history and our faith-based mandate to welcome the stranger commit us, the member denominations of the NH Council of Churches, to care for and stand with immigrants” (*2012 Immigration Statement*, Matthew 25:35, 43).

4. Finally, hearing already the call to extend the death penalty to the murderer, we repeat, “The use of capital punishment does not restore a broken society; it perpetuates the violence and injustice instead of condemning such intolerable acts” (*2012 Death Penalty Statement*).

The NH Council of Churches, drawing on our common Christian traditions and our own past statements, condemn the anti-Semitic attacks of October 27. We extend to the Jewish community of New Hampshire our support, love and shared mourning.

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