



THE PLAINVIEW-OLD BETHPAGE INTERFAITH CLERGY COUNCIL “UNITED BY FAITH”

June 3, 2020

Dearest Communities of Faith:

We are standing together, on the crest of a giant wave which is washing over our cities and towns. We are all here, sisters and brothers of every variety and variation, with one heart and one spirit, to declare that even after nearly 244 years we still have important work to accomplish as a nation which aspires to be a place “with liberty and justice for all.”

We are held together by fragile threads, like the shoots of young growth yearning to take root in the hearts and minds of anyone who will help nurture the core concepts of our sometimes-forsaken faiths.

A story is told that “Once when the Prophet (Peace be upon Him) was asked, “What is iman (belief/faith?” He (Peace be upon Him) replied: “Iman (faith) is patience and tolerance.”

From the tenth book of the New Testament, Ephesians 4:2-3, we read: “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace.”

From the Sikh Gurbani, we hear, “Don’t speak empty words; burn away your Taamas (inclination) with the Naam (meditation, singing) and gather the wealth of tolerance.” (sggs 1013)

From the Talmud, tractate Shabbat 31a, we read: “What is hateful to you, do not do to another. That is the entire Torah. All the rest is interpretation. Now go study.”

The consistent message that we are receiving from our Holy Texts is that we need to do better. We need to be able to see and hear the cries of people who demand to be seen and heard, for their pain is our pain and by prolonging this hurt we are ignoring the eroding of our own temples. We need to “seek peace and pursue it” and we need to remember that all human beings are fallible and deserve the chance to mend what they have broken when they demonstrate a desire to earnestly do so.

Therefore, we declare to all peoples of color: we hear you; we see you; we stand shoulder-to-shoulder in spirit until we can stand shoulder-to-shoulder in the streets and we are prepared to work to make things better. We cannot guarantee that everyone will listen, and we cannot say how long this work will take, but we are determined to see it done. The souls of our ancestors cry out the names of those wrongfully killed by citizen and those sworn to protect and defend, to uphold and defend, alike. We hear their names and know that “justice, justice shall [we] pursue” and we shall work with you- not simply for you. We need to meet you where you need to be met, and we need to act when it is both effective and appropriate.



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We take upon ourselves these tasks, both as a community and as individuals, to see a day when “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” truly does apply to all people, created equal with the same rights and freedoms and behold to the same Social Contract.

Respectfully and humbly signed:

The Members of the Plainview Old Bethpage Interfaith Clergy Council

Cantor Brad Hyman (Chairperson), Temple Chaverim of Plainview
Rabbi Elizabeth Zeller, Temple Chaverim of Plainview
Rabbi Debra Bennet, Temple Chaverim of Plainview
Father Valentine Rebello, Saint Pius X RCC
Reverend John Burkart, Saint Pius X RCC
Rabbi Neil Schuman, Manetto Hill Jewish Center
Reverend Cheri Kroon, Plainview Reformed Church
Pastor Eric Olsen, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Mufti Farhan Mughal, Masjid al Baqi
Syed Quadri, Masjid al Baqi
Bishop Victor Goepfert, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
Father Isais Ginson, Saint Margaret’s Episcopal Church
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