

# **"SILENCE IS THE WELCOME MAT FOR HATE"**

## **2019 Synod of the Trinity Regional Connection for Partnership and Networking**



*A time for education, conversation  
and looking ahead.*

**“** *Silence is the welcome mat for hate, whether it's our silence when a hate group comes to town or whether it's our silence when a friend tells a racist joke. Our silence tells the perpetrators that we will tolerate their hate and it tells the victims of hate that we do not value them enough to speak up.*  
*Silence is the welcome mat for hate. Speak up.* **”**

**Ann Van Dyke,**

*retired civil rights investigator for the Commonwealth of PA  
and member of The Community Responders Network*

**We were in shock** after a shooting at an African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, SC, left nine African-Americans dead in June of 2015.

**We cringed** when we heard about a man who drove his car into a crowd of peaceful protesters in Charlottesville, VA, killing one and injuring 40 in August of 2017.

**We mourned** the loss of life when 11 were killed at the Tree of Life Synagogue in the Squirrel Hill neighborhood of Pittsburgh in October of 2018.

### **But did you know:**

- The KKK spread leaflets to residents in Carlisle, PA, and Morgantown, WV, in February and March of 2019.
- In 2017 in Luzerne County, PA, vandals broke into a Jewish family's home and painted "Go Away Jews" and a swastika in the garage.
- A West Virginia man was indicted in 2017 for making derogatory comments regarding a woman's actual and perceived sexual orientation and used a glass bottle to hit her multiple times in the head.
- After Election Day in 2016, a group of black freshmen at the University of Pennsylvania were the target of a social media calendar event that threatened a "daily lynching."

We invite you to come to the Regional Gathering in your area (or another) for this important conversation that involves all of us.

- **Come for** education and awareness raising.
- **Come for** theological reflection.
- **Come to get** serious about how we — together — might support and engage our congregations to be vital witnesses against hate both within and beyond their walls.

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, there are 36 hate-related groups in Pennsylvania, five in West Virginia and 36 in Ohio. They are a quantifiable presence in our Synod. But beyond the groups, hate behavior is growing across the country as it finds its way into public commentary and actions. It shows itself through these organized groups as well as through individuals – and even some in our pews.

How can we shine a light on these behaviors and raise awareness in our congregations that leads to engagement? Too often, we act as if not participating in “hate” is our best option for addressing the behavior. It is not.



**Who should attend?** We would like to see up to eight people from each presbytery. Synod Commissioners, Presbytery Moderators, Presbytery Leaders (Executives and/or Stated Clerks) and those who embrace the importance of this concern through work they already do are among those whom we would like to see. Use your best judgement. *Synod Commissioners are being asked to check in with their Presbytery Leader about getting this team together.*

**Dates and locations are:**

**East Region: Wednesday, June 5 (Register by Wednesday, May 29)**

Presbyteries of Donegal, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Philadelphia

*First Presbyterian Church | 3231 Tilghman Street, Allentown, PA 18104*

### **Daily Schedule**

The day will begin at 9:30 a.m. with registration and will conclude by 3 p.m. Lunch will be provided.

### **Registration**

Please contact the Presbytery for Donegal if interested.