



# *The InterFaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington (IFC)*

*“Advancing Justice, Building Community, Nurturing Understanding”*

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## **INTERFAITH CONFERENCE OF METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AUGUST 12 DECLARATION**

Last August, much of our nation responded with shock and sorrow as white supremacists massed on Charlottesville, Virginia for the “Unite the Right” rally, sowing fear, chaos, and tragically, the loss of innocent life. We grieve those events, and we honor the memory of Heather Heyer.

One year later, on Sunday August 12th, another “Unite the Right” rally is planned, this time at Lafayette Square across from the White House, to again promote messages of hateful bigotry.

As faith leaders in our nation’s capital, we speak with one voice and declare that we will not allow this hatred and divisiveness to consume our great city this coming weekend. Instead, the Interfaith Conference, in partnership with the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington and the Anti-Defamation League, proclaims that in our houses of worship throughout the District of Columbia, our voices will be raised in prayer, unity, and love.

- In a spirit of solidarity, we pledge to open the doors of our houses of worship to all who seek spiritual sustenance, the comfort of community, and the affirmation of respect and love for all people.
- We pledge this weekend during our services to pray, reflect, and reaffirm our collective refusal to succumb to the racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and other forms of bigotry that aim to tear our society apart.
- We encourage residents to seek out one of the interfaith prayer services that will take place throughout the city on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, or to simply worship in solidarity with another faith community. Let us ensure that our united voices, lifted in faith, hope, and dedication to fundamental human decency, drown out the ugly chants and slogans of hateful extremists.
- Not just this weekend but going forward, we pledge our commitment to fostering dialogue and respect among people of different backgrounds, combating all forms of hatred, and standing for the values of equal rights, pluralism, and democracy that define us as Americans. We urge our political leaders to reaffirm these values in a bipartisan voice, and to condemn the message of those who preach hatred, racism, and xenophobia.

Our belief in the ultimate dignity of human life requires that we stand together at this challenging time, in affirmation of the spiritual values we all hold in common.