

"A Statement on the Hamas Attack on Israel // We Stand with Those Who Grieve" (October 20, 2023)

On Saturday, October 7, 2023, Hamas launched an unprecedented surprise attack on Israel, sending missiles and militants across the border from the Gaza Strip, indiscriminately killing more than 1,300 people many of whom were civilians going about their daily lives waiting for the bus, dancing at a festival, doing morning chores, and hiding as best they could. These acts of terror are evil. We mourn the tragic loss of life and the lives that will inevitably be lost as Israel declares war and defends itself.

We stand with those who grieve.

The Franklin Interfaith Council is comprised of a variety of faith traditions that each understand war, and its necessity, differently. Some of us are staunch pacifists. Some of us believe war can only be waged in self-defense. And, still others, believe that war can be justified for reasons beyond self-defense. We hold many different beliefs yet, in our diversity, we all agree that war, justified or not, is always one atrocity after another. Our failure to fully comprehend the pain of war causes us to focus on the latest casualty, making it seem like the worst, diminishing or worse forgetting the loss that came before. In war, no atrocity is greater than any other. And so, we stand with those who grieve.

We look forward to the day when swords are beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, when "nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war anymore; but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid" (Micah 4:3b-4a). But, until that day, we stand with those who grieve.

We look with hope toward a day when peace and justice are not competing torrents, but flow down together like water, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream (c.f. Amos 5:24). But, until that day, we stand with those who grieve.

The Franklin Interfaith Council stands together and supports all in our community who are grieving, especially our friends and neighbors at Temple Etz Chaim.

"A Call to Our Community: LOVEfranklin" (October 28, 2021)

We are appalled by the recent lack of respect and civility shown to a Franklin High School senior and student representative to the Franklin School Committee, who spoke with courage at the October 26, 2021, Franklin School Committee meeting about the discrimination she and her friends experience on a regular basis. The interruption and attempt to silence this student by speaking over her cannot and should not be tolerated.

Over the last several months, [the Franklin Interfaith Council has] become acutely aware of an increase in hate-filled rhetoric and vandalism in our community. Hate speech and vandalism against members of the LGBTQIA+ community, racial slurs, and anti-Semitic graffiti cannot and should not be tolerated. We cannot allow ourselves to become numb to hate-filled language and actions no matter

how frequently they may occur in our community or elsewhere. We must speak out and act against hate to build a better community.

Each of our faith traditions calls us to love: to value the sacred worth of everyone, treating each person with dignity and respect. To be very specific, let us love Franklin. Let us create a beloved community where all persons regardless of their gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnic background, age, stature, ability, creed, or faith can find a home.

Therefore, we commit ourselves to love Franklin. And, we ask you to commit yourself to love Franklin too.

"Statement by the Franklin Interfaith Council on the Murder of George Floyd (June 5, 2020)

As religious leaders of diverse traditions we understand life to be the greatest and most sacred gift endowed by our Creator. Inherent in that gift is the inalienable right to live freely and without fear. The abhorrent killing of George Floyd, in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020, at the knee of a law enforcement official, sworn and entrusted to protect the public and keep the peace, is yet another stark reminder of humanity's blindness to the sacredness of that gift of life and society's failure, if not refusal, to act to ensure equal rights for all created beings. We lament the murder and death of George Floyd and pray for him, his family, loved ones and all in need of strength and comfort in this fragile time of grief. The overwhelming national response to George Floyd's death, manifested in peaceful protests, not only honors his life, but powerfully that we as Americans will no longer tolerate injustice, systematic racism and discrimination against people of color. This powerful resurgence of a long overdue civil rights movement will not be silenced until structural change is realized. We lift our voices and stand in unity and solidarity with our sisters and brothers of color in proclaiming that BLACK LIVES MATTER. (Adapted from a statement by the San Francisco Interfaith Council)