

The Islamic Society of Framingham

The Islamic Center of Boston, Wayland

Islamic Masumeem Center of New England, Hopkinton

To our Dear Neighbors in Faith,

To our utter horror we woke to the news, as you had, to the horrific killing and wounding of worshipers in houses of God in Christchurch in New Zealand. The hate that mustered these killings is sadly experienced in many places in the world today, including our own nation, the United States. They express themselves through the wounds of Islamophobia, antisemitism, overt racism, and xenophobia.

In recent months our own communities have not been immune to some form of this social hatred toward our neighbors and friends. As clergy of Holliston, we stand with you and for you in this most grievous time. We offer our prayer to God as he holds our grief and fear in these challenging times.

We also offer our hands and our hearts with the hope that together we can heal these wounds of hate in our own communities, and together with others, throughout our nation and world. We want to reach out to you in this difficult time and together say that we utterly condemn these murderous actions and pledge to work in bringing all of our religious and nonreligious communities together in dialogue and cooperation.

The use of social media as a tool of terrorism cannot be overlooked. The heinous nature of the original attack is only compounded by the use of social media to spread further fear and terror in its wake. The use of social media, and the connection to online hate speech groups, is a clear reminder to us that violent extremists of all stripes are using social media to spread hate speech, and incitement to violence. We must do more in our communities to combat online hate and religious bias.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of those killed and wounded in New Zealand, as we do so with you and your communities in the Metrowest area, and throughout the country. "Give glad tidings to those who patiently endure, who say when afflicted with a calamity: "To Allah we belong and to Him we return." They are those on whom (descend) blessings and mercy from their Lord, and they are the ones who receive guidance." (Surah Baqarah; 2:155-157)

Rev. Bonnie Steinroeder

Rev. Mark Peterson

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METROWEST INTERFAITH DIALOGUE PROJECT