



As we celebrate the five-year anniversary of the Center for Loving Kindness, we take this opportunity to reiterate our initial declaration signed by over 250 faith leaders.

A Declaration of Religious Leaders Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania • August 28, 2017

Standing in the midst of Mr. Rogers' neighborhood, we seek to be good neighbors, to love our neighbors, and to work for justice alongside our neighbors. Gathering today on the anniversary of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, we too sense the "fierce urgency of now." As our nation's divisions become ever more visible, we reaffirm our calling to the tasks of religious leadership:

As religious leaders, we are called to interpret the scriptures.

In the Torah, we hear the commands "love your neighbor as yourself" and "do not stand idle while your neighbor bleeds." In the New Testament, we read, "love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you." In the Holy Qur'an, we hear, "Those who believe and do good deeds — the Gracious God will create love in their hearts."

Our sacred texts all agree: every human being is created and beloved by God. Every human being has worth and deserves dignity. From every minbar, bimah, and pulpit, we will continue to preach this message of love and compassion.

As religious leaders, we are called to speak moral truth.

This moment demands that we speak with clarity and courage. Together, we declare that white supremacy is evil. Anti-Semitism is evil. Islamophobia is evil. Racism is evil. We reject bigotry and intolerance of all kinds; we condemn all forms of hatred.

We call ourselves, our congregations, and our institutions to repent from our own historic and ongoing complicity in structures that oppress. With God's help, we recommit ourselves to the building of the beloved community: a world where all God's children know peace, hope, and joy.

As religious leaders, we are called to care for the vulnerable.

As tensions rise, we turn with compassion toward those in our midst who have the greatest cause for fear. We stand in solidarity with all marginalized and minority communities, especially those who have been targets of hate. We will work to strengthen the ties of friendship among us so that we can be even more effective advocates for one another in times of need.

As religious leaders, we are called to seek justice for the oppressed.

Our voices must not ring out in sanctuaries alone, but on the streets and in halls of power. We will work to make our values more visible in public life. Empowered by our faith, we will seek a just world for all.

We rely on one another for mutual support and admonition. Together, we rely on God's help that we might prove worthy of this high calling.