

Dear Friends,

Our hearts are heavy with sorrow for the families and friends of those who were killed or injured at the Tree of Life synagogue. We wish to express our deep-felt condolences to the families and to the Pittsburgh community.

Deep sorrow is mixed with parts disbelief and shock that this violence could happen in a place of worship where families gather to share their faith. It can at times seem that hate knows no bounds.

I have had people ask, "what do you say when someone says something hateful?" I respond in the only way I know how. "Use your voice." We each have one. It can seem pointless (I won't change their opinion), too uncomfortable, or too difficult to respond to words of hate particularly if it's in the workplace or with family. But words matter. And words of hate cannot go uncontested. You can start by clearly saying, "I don't agree". The person next to you may need to know they are not alone to speak up. Words of love and peace can speak more loudly than those of hate. And our voices can be an instrument of change.

The Tree of Life synagogue brings to mind this proverb:

"Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a promise fulfilled is a tree of life." (Proverbs 13:12)

May the voices of peace raised together fulfill the promise of communities where violence and hate know no place.

We wish peace and comfort to those who are grieving in these difficult times,

Mary

Mary Studzinski
Executive Director

