

ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES *of* OREGON

Media Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Oct. 29, 2018

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EMO statement on Tree of Life Synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) stands with our Jewish sisters and brothers, as our country grieves the loss of eleven worshipers, murdered while attending Shabbat services at the Tree of Life Synagogue on Oct. 27. We fervently pray for healing in our nation.

Delivered during a memorial service for four children murdered in a bombing at a Birmingham church in 1963, The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s said in the eulogy, "We must be concerned not merely about who murdered them, but about the system, the way of life, the philosophy which produced the murderer." We lament the rapid deterioration of respectful dialogue in political discourse in our country and the demonization of those whom are deemed as "other." It is unconscionable to allow the United States to continue to be a place where violence is accepted as the norm, and where exclusion and hate are nurtured. It is up to us and all Americans of goodwill to counteract this trend in America, and to speak out and act together to restore our shared values of the human dignity of every person and our commitment to the common good.

We must not let the enormity of our grief daunt us from doing all we can to confront hate with love, for there is far too much hate in our world. In the midst of the darkness, remember that darkness and hope are not opposites. Darkness is often the very context in which hope can be found.

Let us be resolved to live into our moral responsibility to one another—to protect, to defend and to act courageously on the behalf of all those who are being threatened. To quote Rabbi Abraham Heschel, "Morally speaking, there is no limit to the concern one must feel for the suffering of human beings, that indifference to evil is worse than evil itself, that in a free society, some are guilty, but all are responsible."

We commit ourselves to work with our interreligious partners to deepen understanding, to seek peace, and to do our part to help our nation heal from this tragedy.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a statewide association of Christian denominations, congregations, ecumenical organizations and interfaith partners working together to improve the lives of Oregonians through community ministry programs, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, environmental ministry and public policy advocacy.