

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Interfaith Council of Metropolitan Washington Responds to
Hostage Crisis at Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas**

We at the Interfaith Council of Metropolitan Washington (IFCMW) were horrified by the hostage situation at Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas on January 15. Our hearts remain heavy in sorrow at this attack against the Jewish community, even as we are grateful that all those taken hostage are alive. Sadly, this was merely the latest incident in an increasing number of antisemitic attacks in the United States in recent years.

Our eleven faith traditions stand united in solidarity with one another, reaffirming that all people of faith have the right to worship freely in this country and to feel safe in doing so. In addition to the Jewish community, our member traditions include Protestant Christians, Hindu communities, Muslims, Roman Catholics, Zoroastrians, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, the Baha'i community, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We offer prayers and healing energy to the Jewish community throughout the world, including here in the Capital Area, and we stand ready to take action to reaffirm our commitment to a community in our region that celebrates religious diversity and inclusivity.

Antisemitism has no place in the Capital Area, in the United States, or anywhere else. We call on people of all faiths (and of no particular faith) to stand in solidarity with the Jewish community – not just when these incidents occur, but every day. Religiously-based hate and bias crimes are on the rise in the United States, and antisemitic crimes far outpace all other crimes against communities of faith in the United States. The Jewish community in particular needs and deserves support right now, and we ask all people of goodwill to offer prayers, outreach, and more.

People of all faiths can help to prevent such attacks by working together to promote respect for all religious traditions. In our families, schools, businesses, houses of worship, neighborhoods and more, each and everyone of us has opportunities to affirm the dignity of all people. We encourage you to learn more about antisemitism and to talk about it, including in your houses of worship. If you're not sure where to go to learn more about antisemitism, we are happy to guide you to resources that will help (find us online at www.ifcmw.org).

We at the Interfaith Council believe that people of all faiths deserve to feel welcomed, respected, and appreciated for the values they share and the distinctions that make them each unique. Until that inclusive vision is realized in the Capital Area, we have more work to do. We remain committed to working to achieve that vision, and we invite you to join us in doing so.

Sincerely,
Rev. Dr. David B. Lindsey
Executive Director
Interfaith Council of Metropolitan Washington