

# Palouse churches offer support to Pullman mosque

**William L. Spence/Lewiston Tribune**

A handful of churches and humanist groups are offering their support to Palouse-area Muslims after the Pullman Islamic Center was labeled a "radical mosque" in a recent online post.

The label came from The Daily Caller, an online news organization co-founded by Neil Patel, a policy adviser to former Vice President Dick Cheney.

The Caller posted a story Saturday titled "Caution! You may live in the radical mosque zone." It included a list of about 80 "extremist" Islamic centers that allegedly want to implement Sharia law and "establish a global Islamic caliphate," according to the Clarion Project, an independently funded organization that created the list.

The Pullman Islamic Center, which opened in 1982, was added to the list because it's owned by the North American Islamic Trust, which the Clarion Project claims is affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood.

Sgt. Dan Dornes with the Pullman Police Department said no specific threats against the mosque have been identified. However, the department will make extra patrols near the center as a precaution.

After the Daily Caller story was posted, some churches and humanist groups came to the defense of area Muslims.

"Please know that we at St. James hold you in high regard as our neighbors and as fellow believers," noted a Facebook post from St. James Episcopal Church in Pullman. "Please let us know if we can offer specific support, whether personally accompanying (Islamic Center) members to the store or standing witness and guard around the mosque during times of prayer. In the meantime, know that we fight to resist the racist, Islamophobic remarks we encounter on a daily basis."

Elizabeth Stevens, pastor of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Palouse, also sent a message of support, as did Tyler Palmer, president of The Humanists of the Palouse.

"We want you to know we will always defend religious freedom and cultural diversity, and threats against these are threats against our very way of life," Palmer wrote. "We stand with you and offer our support."

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**William Spence** may be contacted at [bspence@lmtribune.com](mailto:bspence@lmtribune.com) or (208) 791-9168.