Letter to the Purveyors of Hate

The purpose of this letter is to send a strong message of opposition to those who choose to engage in hate speech, intimidation, malicious harassment, physical harm or murder toward those to whom they direct their prejudice, bigotry, and hatred.

Over time we have witnessed many grievous acts against innocent individuals and communities based on their race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, creed, age, gender, disability and sexual orientation to name some of the categories.

In the Inland Northwest’s recent past, we have seen individuals and hate groups such as the Aryan Nations come to our beautiful region spewing hate gradually resulting in crimes of murder, bank robberies, counterfeiting currency, armed car robberies, cross burnings, physical threats, and malicious harassment.

Hate has manifested itself across America in such horrible crimes as the April 19, 1995 bombing of the Federal building in Oklahoma City killing 198 innocent individuals including children by white supremacist Timothy McVeigh; or the August 12, 2017 anti-government white nationalists, neo-Nazis, Ku Klux Klansmen, and other terrorists displaying Swastika and Confederate flags under the banner of “Unite the Right” march in Charlottesville, Virginia that resulted in the death of an innocent by-stander and injuries to others.

Let us be clear those historical campaigns and messages of vile hate most often lead to crimes by either members of the hate group or sympathizers.

The Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations for over 40 years has stood with other human rights groups, law enforcement and the courts to vigorously support criminal and civil actions when the line is crossed from free speech to illegal criminal behavior. We will continue to provide support to victims of hate crimes.

Let us be clear to any future visitors to our region that are purveyors of hate, you and your messages of hate will not find fertile ground and we will monitor your actions for any violations of the peoples’ rights.

Our mission is based on our commitment to the democratic principles of freedom, equality and justice for all people. Our support of equity and social justice are deeply embedded in those three democratic principles.

The belief that all humanity has a divine or natural law right to equal treatment is deeply enshrined in many political documents such as the United States Declaration of Independence, “We hold these truths to be self evident; that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”; the United States Constitution Preamble begins with “We the People…”; and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

The basic tenets of the major world religions are also antidotes to hate. Here are examples of how three major religions address the moral question as to how one must treat others:  
  
Judaism; “What is hateful to you do not to others”.  
Buddhism; “Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.”  
Christianity: “The second is this. ‘You shall love thy neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

We stand strong in support of human rights and against those forces that use prejudice, bigotry and hate in an attempt to deny others their freedoms and equal rights.

Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations

Join and Support By:   
  
Bonner County Human Rights Task Force  
Boundary County Human Rights Task Force  
Spokane County Human Rights Task Force

“As pastors in these communities, we support the spirit and the call of this letter”.  
Rev. Robert Albing, Luther Church of the Master, CdA  
Rev. Ken Bartie, ELCA ret.  
Rev. Matthew L. Erickson, Calvary Lutheran, Post Falls  
Rev. Terese Fandel, Community of the Holy Spirit, CdA  
Rev. Daniel Forsgren, Trinity Lutheran, CdA  
Rev. David Gortner, St. Lukes Episcopal, CdA  
Rev. Mike Grabenstein, ECLA ret  
Rev. Grant MacLean, PCUSA, ret.  
Rev. Seth Rumage, Our Savior Lutheran, Pinehurst  
Rev. Heather Seman, Community United Methodist, CdA