



The Albert & Ethel Herzstein Interfaith Center

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United Way of Greater Houston
A United Way Agency

March 21, 2019

The Right Honorable Jacinda Ardern
Prime Minister of New Zealand
Freepost PO Box 18 888
Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160

Dear Prime Minister Ardern,

For 50 years, Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston has relied upon our two mottos to lead the work that we do and the principles we value most: *Dialogue, Collaboration, and Service* and *The Strength of Shared Beliefs*. These principles have been our guides for five decades, and have led us on paths of service, compassion, and respect. We are a leading organization in feeding the hungry with our Meals on Wheels program that delivers over 4,000 meals daily, we welcome the stranger as a prominent refugee resettlement agency in the Houston area, and we build bridges of connection and understanding among our area's religious communities. Like New Zealand, the greater Houston area is a diverse and varied one, with people from all over the world calling the Bayou City home.

Drawing deeply upon these values, we offer our support to you and the people of New Zealand in these days following the horrific events of March 15th. We mourn with you and your people for the 50 lives lost and the wounded lives forever changed; we pray that their lives will be a blessing for us and a clear reminder of the work ahead to stop hate and build respect. We wish recovery and healing for physical wounds, and we pray for recovery from emotional and spiritual wounds as well. We join with you in working towards a more understanding world.

Besides my signature, you will see attached a list of names that include Interfaith Ministries' Board of Directors, Advisory Board, staff, and members our Multi-Faith Council. These individuals represent a tapestry of faiths from across the Greater Houston region. They are our friends, and they are yours as well. *Please know that you are not alone.* Know that we stand with you in support and solidarity.

Most Respectfully,

Martin B. Cominsky
President & CEO

enclosure



The following faith and community leaders offer their support and solidarity:

Nancy J. Agafitei
Interfaith Representative, Hosanna Lutheran Church, Houston

Ali Al Sudani
Chief of Staff, Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston

Lois and Sam Andrews
Northwoods Presbyterian Church

Rev. Kyra Baehr
Minister, Unity Bay Area Houston

Rev. Jim Bankston
United Methodist Clergy and previous Board Chair, Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston

Rev. David H. Barnes
Spring Interfaith Council

Shahzad Bashir
Founder and CEO, Morae Global Corporation

Rev. Bruce Beisner
Minister, Bay Area Unitarian Universalist Church

Rabbi Annie Belford
Temple Sinai, Houston

Rabbi Matthew Berger
Congregation Beth Shalom of The Woodlands

Jodi Bernstein
Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston

Rishi Bhutada
Member, Board of Directors, Hindu American Foundation

Rev. Nathan Lonsdale Bledsoe
Senior Pastor, St. Stephen's UMC, Houston

Joe Bradford
Scholar, Houston Muslim Community

David Bridges
Senior Pastor, Friendswood Friends Church



Dr. Moien Butt
CEO, Shifa USA

Father James Burkart
Pastor, Christ the Good Shepherd Catholic Community, Spring, TX

Acharya Harish Chandra
Arya Samaj Greater Houston

Nizar Charania
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Member, Shia Ismaili Muslim Community

Daniel Checkman,
President, Congregation Jewish Community North Men's Club

Charlene Chuang
Board of Directors, Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston

The Rev. Harvey Clemons, Jr.
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President, Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston

Andi Cook
Director of Public Affairs, Houston Coordinating Council
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Peter Cook
Member of the Advisory Board, Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston

Mary Davis
Plymouth United, United Church of Christ

Sharon Davis
Member, Bahá'í Local Spiritual Assembly
The Bahá'ís of Harris County Northwest

Rev. Ashley Dellagiacoma
Pastor, Kindred Lutheran Church

Mr. Kaemerz Dotiwala
Zoroastrian Association of Houston

Rev. Dr. Michael Dunn
Pastor, First Christian Church (Disciples)



Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange
Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church
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President of Klein Texas Stake
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Kelly Epstein
Christ the Good Shepherd Catholic Community

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President, Houston Rabbinical Association

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Archbishop Emeritus of Galveston-Houston

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Congregation Emanu El

Rabbi Sarah Fort
Congregation Beth Yeshurun

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Reverend Andy Gans
Senior Pastor, Pines Presbyterian Church

Rabbi Dan Gordon
Temple Beth Torah, Humble

The Rev. James M.L. Grace
Rector, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

Rev. Elizabeth Grasham
Solo Minister, Heights Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)



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Houston Congregation for Reform Judaism

Kayvon Haghpeykar
Bahá'í Community of Houston

The Rev. Gregory Han
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Jennifer Hales
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ELCA Intentional Interim Pastor

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General Presbyter + Stated Clerk for Administrative Process
Presbytery of New Covenant

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Venerable Hong-I
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Arya Samaj Greater Houston
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Spring Interfaith Dialogue

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Clear Lake Presbyterian Church

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First Congregational Church of Houston

Rev. Ann Marie Quigley-Swanson
Spring Interfaith Dialogue Council

Rev. Stephen D. Quill
TRUTH, Houston, and ADL Coalition for Mutual Respect

Bishop Michael Rinehart
Gulf Coast Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Rabbi David Rosen
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Member of the Advisory Board, Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston

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Religious Action Center-Texas

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Cantor Rollin Simmons
Congregation Emanu El, Houston

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The Rev. Kristy Vits and the Session
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Holy Comforter Episcopal Church, Spring, TX

Shaukat Zakaria
Chair of the Board of Directors, Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston

Organizational names are for identification purposes only.