

Statement of Ventura County Religious Leaders in Response to the Executive Order Titled “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States”

As clergy and lay leaders representing a wide variety of faith traditions in Ventura County, we recognize our shared call to love our neighbor, welcome the stranger and offer all necessary support to those in need. We are also united in our unequivocal condemnation of all forms of terrorism as well as the scapegoating of Muslims in these times of anxiety and uncertainty.

Since its very founding, America has been a nation that welcomes those fleeing persecution. “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free...” 65 million people – the largest number in recorded history- are currently displaced because of war, conflict and persecution. We agree with our national and international religious leaders that the United States has an urgent moral responsibility to receive refugees and asylum seekers regardless of religion or nation of origin. We express our deep concern that President Trump’s recent Executive Order unnecessarily denies refuge to innocent families and individuals and perpetuates a culture of intolerance.

As people of faith and as citizens of the United States, we take seriously our responsibility to work locally to promote safety, compassion and justice in our community. To that end, we pledge to:

1. Collaborate to ensure that Ventura County is friendly and hospitable to refugees and immigrants;
2. Protect and stand up for those who are experiencing disrespect, bullying or violence;
3. Engage in constructive relationships with law enforcement officials, including reporting hate crimes and suspicious activity;
4. Defend the rights of all community members to freedom of religion, speech and assembly;
5. Increase our knowledge of each other’s spiritual traditions through education and conversation;
6. Reach out in friendship to neighbors and co-workers whose backgrounds and life experiences are different from our own;
7. Practice common courtesy and civil discussion with everyone, even those with whom we disagree;
8. Pray for the President of the United States and all who hold authority, that they may govern with wisdom and humility, serve justice and uphold the dignity and freedom of every person; and
9. Celebrate the acts of compassion and neighborliness that occur frequently in our community.

Respectfully signed,

The Rev. Susan Bek, Rector, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Ventura

Rabbi Lisa Bock, Community Rabbi, Conejo Valley

Carol Browning, Religious Society of Friends (Quaker)

The Rev. Alene Campbell-Langdell, Episcopal Priest

Rev. Melissa Campbell-Langdell, Rector, All Saints Episcopal Church/Iglesia Episcopal de Todos los Santos, Oxnard

Rev. Jennifer A. Chrien, pastor, Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, Simi Valley

Rev. Ronald Cox, ELCA

Janice Daurio, Ph.D.
Liza Diniakos, Conejo Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Katie Douglas, Lightshine Church, Westlake Village
Robert Douglas, Pastor (PCUSA), Lightshine Church, Westlake Village
Sheeba Dullo
Rev. Nica Eaton-Guinn, Conejo Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Pastor Lynn Enloe, Camarillo
Rev. Judy Fergus
Paul F. Ford, Ph.D.
Chaplain Peter Gelfer, Ojai
Desta Goehner, California Lutheran University
Pastor Erik Goehner, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Thousand Oaks
Teri Helton, Ventura County Interfaith Community
Dr. Tim Helton, Ventura County Interfaith Community
The Rev. Pat Hendrickson
Pastor Steve Herder, Ascension Lutheran Church, Thousand Oaks
Rabbi Lisa Hochberg-Miller, Temple Beth Torah, Ventura
The Rev. Nicole Janelle, Executive Director, The Abundant Table
Salma Kabli, Muslim Faith
The Rev. Canon Jerome E. Kahler
Rabbi Paul Kipnes, Congregation Or Ami, Calabasas
The Rev. Kate Lewis, BCC Chaplain, St. John's Hospitals, Oxnard and Camarillo
Rabbi Michael Lotker, Jewish Federation of Ventura County
Pamela Lopez, Social Action Director, Conejo Valley Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Rev. Michelle Magee, First UMC, Santa Paula
Julie Beth Martin, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Westlake Village
Rev. Erin Martinson
Rev. Melissa Maxwell-Doherty, California Lutheran University
Rev. Scott J. Maxwell-Doherty, California Lutheran University
Rev. Julie Morris, Episcopal Church, Camarillo
Fr. Patrick Mullen, Pastor, Padre Serra Parish, Camarillo
Rev. Elizabeth Nees, Mount Cross Lutheran Church, Camarillo
George Ochs, Simi Valley UCC
Rev. Sandra Ochs, Simi Valley UCC
Rev. James A. Oines, retired ELCA Lutheran pastor, Thousand Oaks
Imam Ahmed Patel, Islamic Center of Conejo Valley
Arash Payan, Baha'i Faith
Arnold Reyes, Deacon, Padre Serra Parish, Camarillo
Guillermo Rodriguez, Deacon, St. Paschal Baylon Catholic Church
Adil Salleh, Islamic Center of Conejo Valley
Abid Sayeedi, Thousand Oaks
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Cantor David Shukair, Temple Adat Elohim, Thousand Oaks
Rev. Steven Simpson, ELCA

Rev. Gifford Smith, United Church of Christ

Pastor John Soyster, Mount Cross Lutheran Church, Camarillo

Rabbi Andrew Straus

Rev. Charles Svendsen, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Westlake Village

Rev. Nancy Switzler, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church and Preschool, Oxnard

Catherine Valeriote, BCC, Chaplain for St. John's Regional Medical Center and Buena Vista Hospice

Pastor Ron White, retired clergy, ELCA

Alice Williams, The Baha'i Faith, Camarillo