

For Release – 8-20-2010

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We as people of faith from a great variety of religious congregations in Gainesville stand together in affirmation of one another, especially our Muslim sisters and brothers in this time when threats against their holy scripture and their faith itself are made by The Dove World Outreach Center in this town. The news of their intent to burn the Quran on September 11 has been carried throughout the world.

In 1933 Berlin, Nazi minister of propaganda, Joseph Goebbels began a campaign of burning books by Jewish authors across the square from famous Humboldt University. Today, on that site, there is a plaque with the prophetic words of German poet Heinrich Heine written in 1820, “There, where they burn books, they will in the end burn people.”

We state clearly the act of burning the sacred scripture of Islam has no place in our faith, our religious communities, our town, or in our nation.

Congregations of Jews and Christians from many denominations are standing together in a variety of ways to say to those who espouse this hatred - not here, not now, not ever.

In common affirmation of one another, four interfaith activities are planned and others are emerging.

First, there is a call to all religious communities to join in the sharing common readings from the Quran, Hebrew Scripture, and Christian scripture at their worship services on September 11 and 12. Each will include these readings in their own places of worship at their own Sabbath services.

Second, an interfaith service of prayer and readings is planned for Wednesday, September 8 at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church at noon. .

Third, the Gainesville Interfaith Forum is holding a Gathering for Peace Understanding and Hope at Trinity United Methodist Church.

Fourth, the Hoda Islamic Center of Gainesville is planning an Iftar, break fast dinner at sunset followed by dinner for religious, civic and education leaders on September 4th, 7:30 PM, at Hoda Center. Contact Ismail Ibn Ali 305-322-6673 for more information on the Hoda Center. There will be an open house for all at the Hoda Center and Islamic Center September 17. The time will be announced.

The following clergy and congregations have already committed to one or more of these events. We invite all religious communities to add their names to this list that we may live the faith of love and care for all God’s children across the barriers that too often divide us. Contact any of the communities listed below to add your names to this list.

Rev. Larry Reimer, the United Church of Gainesville

Dr. Saaed ur Rehman Khan – Hoda Islamic Center

Ismail Ibn Ali, Islam on Campus;

Dr. Wajid Khuddus, Islamic Center of Gainesville

Ahmad El-Mahdawy, Hoda Center

Father Roland Julien, St Patrick’s Catholic Church

Pastor Greg Magruder, Parkview Baptist Church

Rabbi David Kaiman, B’Nai Israel Synagogue
Dennis Shuman and Renee Hoffinger, P’Nai Or Synagogue
Rabbi Michael Joseph, Temple Shir Shalom
Rev. Meredith Garmon, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Gainesville
Rev. Milford Griner, Pleasant Plain & Hall Chapel United Methodist Church
Rev. Jim Merritt, Trinity Metropolitan Community Church
Rev. Carl Romey, First United Methodist Church
Dr. Zoharah Simmons UF department of religion
Rev. Louanne Loch, Holy Trinity Episcopal Church
Rev. Eve McMaster, Mennonite Church
Gene Beardsley, clerk, Gainesville Friends Meeting (Quaker)
Rev. Martha McInnes, United Church of Christ
Rev. David Dean, Disciples Presbyterian Student Center
Rev. Tom Murphy, Episcopal Chapel of the Incarnation
Rev. Michael Collins, University Lutheran Church
Rev. Alisun Donovan, Presbyterian Church USA
Rev. Jack Donovan, Presbyterian Church USA