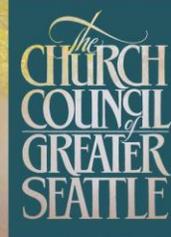


Grounded in faith.  
Working for justice.



October 27, 2018

### **Statement on Shooting at Tree of Life Congregation, Pittsburgh**

The Church Council of Greater Seattle condemns the horrific, murderous attack during worship at the synagogue, Tree of Life Congregation, in Pittsburgh. We offer all our prayers, love and support to the members of Tree of Life Congregation and to the Jewish community of Pittsburgh. We share our sorrow with the families of the people who have died and plead for those who have been wounded.

We deplore and decry this act of anti-Semitic violence. In a time of increased divisiveness and rhetoric of hate, we repeat once again our denunciation of all actions that target any religious, racial, ethnic or other group. Our God is one of love and compassion who knows no exclusions! Our God moves us to build up and plant bonds of community and solidarity, to stand in the “tragic gap” between how our broken world currently is and how we are called to be as a people, and to repair the breaches and break every yoke of oppression.

We stand in solidarity with the Jewish community in King and South Snohomish Counties and Washington State. Let it be the case and let us work together with all our minds, hearts and bodies that the message of George Washington to the Hebrew Congregation in Rhode Island as he stated in 1790 be remembered and fulfilled today:

“May the children of the stock of Abraham who dwell in this land continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitants – while everyone shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree and there shall be none to make them afraid.”

Our congregations join with people of all faiths and good will in commitment to being peacemakers, facilitators of dialogue, and promoters of equity and justice for all.

We note the tragic attack and murder of two people, who were African American, at a Kroger’s grocery store in Jeffersontown, Kentucky, this week. The perpetrator had tried to break into First Baptist Church, an African American congregation, with members inside, but was unable to enter. The church and the people of the congregation were apparently his first target. We deplore this racially-motivated violence as well.

We are motivated to do all we can to counter the narrative of hatred, violence, racism and dehumanization and replace it with one of compassion, love, justice and affirmation of the sacredness and dignity of every person. When this sacredness is violated for one, we have the response-ability to call out the injustice and to announce a love-in-justice God who is made manifest in the practice of love of neighbor as oneself.