

sharing our blessings

Tomorrow we will be gathering around tables with family and friends to offer our gratitude for the blessings of this land, an echo of the feast shared by the Pilgrims and Wampanoag nearly 400 years ago. That meal marked a spirit of cooperation between peoples of different backgrounds and, while it may not have been the Pilgrims' intended message, also showcased the openness with which people living in this land welcomed newcomers who were seeking refuge and opportunity.

Earlier this year, Or Hadash joined with HIAS (the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) as a Welcoming Congregation, upholding our commitment to help America be a nation that welcomes immigrants, recognizes our obligations toward refugees who flee to this country, and works to help all people living here recognize they have a place in our society. As we reaffirm these values tomorrow, I encourage you to consider signing on to HIAS' statement of welcome for immigrants and affirmation of the Jewish community's support in the face of hateful actions and the threat of discriminatory policy. I hope that all of us can take the opportunity around our Thanksgiving tables to feel grateful for the haven America has been for Jews and so many other immigrant groups and stand against those who seek to sow hatred, fear, and division.

In addition, the two weeks between the election and Thanksgiving, have seen a dramatic increase in hateful speech and actions, both in our region and across the country. Many of the attacks include anti-immigrant slurs but it should come as no surprise that those who spout hate against one marginalized group are targeting others as well. The past two weeks have seen more than 700 examples of hateful speech that is xenophobic, Islamophobic, homophobic, and anti-Semitic, including the recent alt-right convention held blocks from the White House that was full of vicious anti-Semitic messages and Nazi imagery. We of all people know that hate directed against any group in society tends to spread to all marginalized and vulnerable groups and that we have a moral duty to stand against hate in all its forms and against all its targets, not to stand silent when we ourselves are not being targeted.

The perpetrators of these actions seem intent on creating divisions within our country and pushing back against the ethos of tolerance and inclusion that has reflected our country at its best. I hope that all of us can take the opportunity around our Thanksgiving tables to reaffirm those core values in our society, to feel grateful for the haven America has been for Jews and so many other immigrant groups, and to recommit to standings against those who seek to sow hatred, fear, and division in this country we love.

L'shalom,

Rabbi Josh