



October 29, 2018

Dear USC community,

This weekend, our nation experienced a horrific mass shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, which claimed the lives of eleven congregants gathered for Shabbat services. As we process this immense tragedy, our hearts and prayers remain with the victims and their families, and with the first responders injured in the line of duty.

In times of devastation and despair, it is critically important that we all come together as a global Trojan Family in order to support each other. I invite all of you to a candlelight vigil on **Tuesday, October 30 at 7:00 p.m.**, in the courtyard of the University Religious Center, that will be hosted by USC Hillel, Chabad@USC, and the USC Office of Religious Life.

Over the last several years, there has been a dramatic rise in anti-Semitic hate crimes across the nation, and Saturday's massacre was the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in American history. Accordingly, this has been a very difficult time for our Jewish community on campus, marked by significant concerns about bias and discrimination, as well as public safety and campus security. Please know that USC's Department of Public Safety, alongside the university's threat assessment team, will continue to work closely with the Los Angeles Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to ensure that everyone in our community is safe and secure.

USC is one of the most religiously diverse campuses in the nation in the heart of one of the most religiously diverse cities in the world. Our extraordinary religious diversity gives us the privilege and the responsibility to learn and grow with and through each other, while cultivating interfaith relationships and inter-religious experiences that empower us to tell new stories about ourselves and our world – stories that help us fulfill the prophetic Jewish aspiration of *tikkun olam* – of repairing our world. As we stand in solidarity and support with Jewish Americans during this heartbreaking time of loss and mourning, may we all vow to be repairers of our world so that we may move out of the darkness and into the light.

Sincerely,

Varun Soni
Dean of Religious Life

In the aftermath of this national tragedy, please keep the following campus resources in mind:

To report bias or discrimination on campus, please contact the Office of Equity and Diversity:
<https://equity.usc.edu/harassment-or-discrimination>

To report threats or threatening behavior, please contact USC's Chief Threat Assessment Officer,
Patrick Prince: princep@usc.edu

To schedule a confidential counseling session, please contact USC Student Health:
<https://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling>

To request confidential pastoral care and spiritual counseling, please contact Associate Dean
Jim Burklo: burklo@usc.edu

To request other support resources and accommodations, please contact Associate Vice Provost
Lynette Merriman: merriman@usc.edu