

We want to follow up on the letter you received that was signed by all of the Port Washington Rabbis and Cantors in response to the troubling events of last week in our community. In addition to our Jewish clergy partners, we have received support from some of our Christian colleagues as well. We are proud of and moved by the way the faith leaders of our community bonded together around the incident at Schreiber High School. We continue to address the larger issues of rising anti-Semitism, racist and homophobic incidents in America, both as a synagogue community and as part of the larger community in Port Washington.

In our religious school, we are continuously working with our students to be proudly Jewish, to find the courage to stand up for themselves and others, and to understand that our traditions teach us about respect for all people because they are created in the image of God. All of these lessons and conversations take place in age-appropriate ways with all our students, from preschoolers in the Early Childhood Center through those in *Kabbalat Torah* (Confirmation) in 12th Grade. In Shabbat Torah Study, MPOW (grades 7-8) and POWTY (9-12), our students engage in activities and discussions about current events. They are exposed to local and global issues and given appropriate information and skills to respond to them.

What can *you* do to help?

Engage in Conversation

It is important to help your children (or grandchildren) know that our people have often faced difficult times with a sense of unity and courage. Talk to them about the story of someone in your family who stood up for justice. Share stories of heroic Jewish figures who inspire you.

Some resources for talking to young people include:

1. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/14/books/review/children-violence-racism-charlottesville.html>
2. <https://www.jssa.org/tips-talking-children-anti-semitism/>

Join together in Prayer

In a recent article in *The Atlantic* Peter Beinart claims that “Thoughts and Prayers could be Exactly What America Needs.” He says, “... in many religious traditions, it (prayer) is designed to cultivate the spiritual and ethical qualities necessary for

righteous action.” We agree. As clergy, we encourage you to find spiritual guidance, comfort and hope during our worship services. And know you are not alone. The sense of community found in sharing prayer can be empowering as well as a source of consolation and solace during difficult times. The lessons of prayer help many find the resolve to engage in the acts of righteousness and to have hope for the future.

Be a Role Model and Make a Difference

There are several ways that you can partner with the Port Washington faith community this month in addressing this issue:

1. Join a community-based group called *Shamor* (“to keep guard”) recently formed to monitor and respond to anti-Semitism and bias in our community. The next *Shamor* meeting is [Tuesday, November 14 at 7:30 pm](#) at the Reconstructionist Synagogue of the North Shore (RSNS). Email shamoraction@gmail.com to get involved.
2. The annual Port Washington Interfaith Thanksgiving Service on Sunday, November 19th at 4:30. The service will take place at the Reconstructionist Synagogue of the North Shore.

Ask for Help or Support

Finally, always remember that you are never alone. Your synagogue family is here for you, and our doors are open. If you or your children have questions about what is happening in our community or country, or you are struggling with what to tell your children, please ask for our help, advice or support. Our synagogue community is strong and we are blessed to be part of the larger Jewish and Interfaith communities in Port Washington.

We remain optimistic and hopeful about the future. And we are a stronger, קהילה קדושה □□ *kehillah k’doshah* a more sacred community, when we are together.