

Congregation Dor Hadash: Messaging Guide (*Updated for two year mark*)

Framing:

These are the primary frames that should inform all messaging:

1. *As Reconstructionist Jews, we are proud of our commitment to being an inclusive, lay-led, community-oriented egalitarian congregation.*
2. *We are committed to building a more just and compassionate world for all of us.*
3. *This tragedy will forever be a part of our story, but it will not define us. We are rebuilding our congregation, and working toward rebuilding an equitable, just world in which all are welcome, and antisemitism and white supremacy are vanquished.*

Who is Dor Hadash?

- Dor Hadash is an inclusive, egalitarian, community-oriented member-led Reconstructionist Jewish congregation. We were one of three congregations housed in the Tree of Life building.
- The Reconstructionist Judaism movement is a politically and religiously progressive Jewish movement that approaches both life and Judaism with a deep consideration of the past and a desire to create and share new ways of being Jewish and practicing our faith in the present. We often say that the past has a vote but not a veto.
- We are an active, socially engaged, tight-knit congregation passionate about repairing the world (Tikkun Olam) and seeking justice for all.
- We are proud of our history of advocating for our vision of a shared society in which diversity is celebrated.
- Through community and social action, we strive to tear down the walls that divide us while seeking to build a more just, thriving, and inclusive world for all of us.
- Congregants are Jews by birth or by choice; they are single or part of family units; they include people of different races, places of birth, sexual orientations, and gender identities; and they live in households that are of the same or different faiths.
- Volunteerism and active participation are central to the religious, educational, and cultural life of Dor Hadash.

On the Shooting

- We continue to mourn the devastating losses caused by an armed white supremacist

domestic terrorist on the morning of October 27 in our shared sacred space.

- We are so grateful for the continued outpouring of support and assistance from a vast cross-section of communities and faiths, both here in Pittsburgh, and across the world.
- We are immensely grateful to the first responders who, with great bravery and professionalism, rushed to the aid of a synagogue under attack.
- We know that we were attacked because we are Jews. We recognize and condemn the white supremacist ideology that the perpetrator embraced – a toxic belief system that promotes antisemitism, demonizes non-white immigrants, refugees, Muslims, and people of color.
- While raising our voices in prayer and grief, we also raise our voices to call for the enactment and enforcement of reasonable gun laws throughout this country that would help prevent such tragedies. Increasingly easy access to powerful, military-grade assault weapons turns hate speech into violent action
- We call for an immediate end to a political environment in which antisemitism, white supremacy, and acts of hate are acceptable and permissible.

On Antisemitism

- We have witnessed a surge of blatant antisemitism operating in broad daylight—from neo-Nazis marching in Charlottesville, to swastikas spray-painted on playgrounds, to the flourishing of anti-Jewish hate speech on social media.
- For centuries, deep-rooted antisemitism has resulted in the targeting and scapegoating of Jews. But the danger has gravely escalated due to a political atmosphere that increasingly permits, normalizes, and even promotes far-right, antisemitic ideologies and conspiracy theories.
- As Reconstructionist Jews, we recognize that the stakes have never been higher, but neither have the possibilities for social change.

On Immigrants and Refugees

- We are proud of having participated in National Refugee Shabbat, and we will continue to advocate for our vision of a shared society in which diversity is celebrated.
- Our collective trauma will never deter us from our commitment to remember the stranger, to empathize with refugees, and to pursue immigration policies of generosity and compassion towards those who come to our borders seeking asylum or refuge.

On the Trial and the Death Penalty

- We were saddened and disappointed to learn that Attorney General Barr plans to

pursue a trial and seek the death penalty for the perpetrator of the attack.

- We sent a letter to Attorney General Barr requesting that both parties agree to a plea bargain for life without parole.
- A deal would have honored the memory of Dor Hadash congregant Dr. Jerry Rabinowitz, who was firmly and unequivocally opposed to the death penalty.
- It would have prevented the attacker from getting the attention and publicity that will inevitably come with a trial, and eliminated any possibility of further trauma that could result from a trial and protracted appeals.