

Statement of the Rivertowns Clergy Association on the Recent Hate Incident in Sleepy Hollow

The members of the Rivertowns Clergy Association, representing people of faith in Tarrytown and Sleepy Hollow, stand united against hate speech and acts of violence and intimidation. The recent placement of hateful stickers throughout the community is an act which seeks to frighten us, and perhaps to even have us turn on one another. This is why we are so proud of the quick and unequivocal response of our community: **"Not in our town!"**

We appreciate the thoughtful response of Mayor Wray, the quick work of the Sleepy Hollow Police Department, and the tireless efforts of the volunteers who spent hours this weekend finding, cataloguing and removing the stickers. And we are heartened by the strong sentiments so many of you have expressed on-line, to your clergy and to one another: **"Hate has no place here!"**

Tarrytown and Sleepy Hollow make up a community that celebrates diversity and understands that we are better when we stand together, when we build bridges and seek to understand one another. We believe that differences enrich rather than impoverish.

We know that when times are difficult there are those whose fears lead them to act on their worst impulses. We wish them to know that in our community we believe that courage is always better than cowardice.

Finally, many of our religious traditions teach that all of the amazing variations in humanity began with just two people, created by God. Whether you believe this literally or not, the message behind it is a profound one: despite our different outward appearances and our differences in beliefs, we all ultimately come from the same source. Every human being contains a spark of holiness. Therefore, for any person of faith, racism, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance are unacceptable.

As community leaders, we pledge to continue to teach, to cultivate and to model the values of openness, diversity and tolerance which make this such a wonderful community.