**For Immediate Release**

Institute for Religious Tolerance, Peace, and Justice (IRTPJ)

**Multi-City Interfaith March planned to counteract religious violence**

LOS ANGELES — In the wake of acts of violence in places of worship, local religious leaders plan a showing of solidarity among people of diverse faith traditions.

The Interfaith March for Peace and Justice will take place on Sunday, September 22 in Los Angeles as “Interfaith Solidarity March Los Angeles”, as well as at least 25 cities nationwide and 10 cities abroad.

Loyola Marymount University Professor Arik Greenberg, founder of the Institute for Religious Tolerance, Peace and Justice, said he was encouraged by “what a group of passionate and committed people can do.”

The Interfaith March for Peace & Justice, founded in 2017 by a small group of organizers in Columbus, Ohio, was originally organized to affirm religious freedom and equal justice after an increase in hate crimes and acts of intimidation in the state of Ohio. Greg Davis, an interfaith leader from the Columbus, Ohio area, organized an interfaith march in Columbus in April 2017.

Organizers were subsequently able to expand the footprint of their event by coordinating with other cities in the United States and abroad. The second Interfaith March for Peace & Justice took place in nine US cities and four locations around the world during April 2018.

Organizers in Los Angeles had staged a similar event, an annual Interfaith Solidarity March – #InterfaithMarchLA – which was first held in March 2016. In 2018, organizers of the Los Angeles event began collaborating with leaders of the Columbus march as well as organizers of a similar event held in Philadelphia on the same day.

The organizers of the Ohio march and the Los Angeles-based IRTPJ recently agreed to pool resources and join forces to further promote similar marches across the United States and internationally.

“We are thrilled about this development,” said Davis, “since our goal is to expand partnerships and put up a big tent for people who care about the basic principles of religious freedom and equal justice for all people. We live in a time when powerful forces have been trying to undermine these principles. We need to stand up together right now to re-assert these principles and shore them up.”

IRTPJ President Greenberg expressed similar optimism and a similar sense of urgency. Greenberg’s group had already started the process of expansion, partnering with like-minded organizations in the nearby San Fernando Valley in 2017.

The growth potential of the March with emerging global partners has him feeling even more inspired. Discussing the merger with the Ohio-based interfaith march campaign, he said, “I felt as if our work had been rewarded and supported by a cosmic force — call it God, if you will — and it was fated that we should work together. Now that our own local LA-based march has become a part of a growing coalition of local marches, we’ve seen what a group of passionate and committed people can do.”

He said he felt “a little daunted by the task of being the organizing hub of nearly two dozen marches around the globe, but with the passion that Mr. Davis brought to the table in the first few years of his leadership of that march, I think we are off to a great start.”

Greenberg said that Interfaith March promoters are actively seeking like-minded partners who want to push back against extremism, violence, and intimidation while promoting the principles of equal justice and religious liberty for all.

Organizers issued a formal call for mini-grant proposals and would like potential partners to know that mini-grants of up to $750 can be awarded to groups who are facing march-related expenses related to security, logistics, and publicity.

“The Interfaith March for Peace & Justice is poised to become the largest coalition of interfaith marches in the world,” said Greenberg. He says, “It’s no longer enough for us to click like on Facebook or retweet things - though that’s important too. Now is the time for us to speak our minds in public or risk letting our civilization devolve into a barbarism of hatred or something worse.”

As of August 27th, the worldwide list of marches includes:

USA: California: **Grass Valley, Los Angeles, Ventura**; Idaho: **Boise**; Iowa: **Ames**; Illinois: **Chicago, Rock Valley**; Michigan: **Grand Rapids, Holland**; New Jersey: **Newark**; Ohio: **Columbus, Toledo, Zanesville**; Pennsylvania: **Pittsburgh**; South Carolina: **Columbia**; Virginia: **Charlottesville**; Wyoming: **Cheyenne**

International: India: **Jammu & Kashmir**; Israel/Palestine: **Tel Aviv/Bethlehem**; Malawi: **Lilongwe**, **Nkhudzi** **Bay**; Pakistan: **Faisalabad**; Uganda: **Gulu**

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