

Vigil in recognition of Tree of Life Synagogue shooting victims

Thursday, November 1

[AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY]

Good evening everyone. It's my honour to be here tonight representing the City of Sault Ste. Marie and City Council.

I want to begin by offering condolences on behalf of Sault Ste. Marie to all of the victims of the mass shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh.

The toll from this hateful crime was 11 people killed and six others wounded. Those killed were grandmothers and grandfathers, husbands and wives, fathers and daughters, friends and colleagues.

They were part of the fabric of their community and their country. And they were taken senselessly and much too soon.

As we are all very sadly aware, the victims were killed at their synagogue, their place of worship.

The perpetrator carried out this hateful act in a place where people come together to celebrate their faith, to be with one another, to reflect together and to further develop community.

This tragedy and the act that is at its foundation, is antithetical to the very reasons these people were gathered in the first place.

This tragedy has touched people across the world, including here in our own community.

As everyone gathered here tonight knows, the local Jewish community may not be large in number, but its impact on our community is very significant, positive and substantial.

From the establishment of this synagogue in 1945, to the local service clubs and institutions supported by volunteers who were and are members of the Jewish community to the several successful and long-standing businesses opened by Jewish business people: your contribution is exceptional. As your Mayor and on behalf of your community, I respect, recognize and thank you for it.

Tonight is simply another example of your outstanding leadership.

This vigil is one of many that have been held in the wake of the shooting, and they are important.

They are important because the good hearted people of the world must stand together against hatred. For every anti-semite, racist, bigot, or xenophobe there are hundreds and hundreds more of us who are tolerant, compassionate, and welcoming.

Our voices are louder, our will is stronger, and our collective might is much greater than anything the forces of hatred could ever hope to marshal.

Matched against us, the beliefs they espouse are not going to take hold and their attempts to sow fear and division are not going to succeed.

Together, people across the world stand with the victims of the shooting and in Sault Ste. Marie, just as we stand together arm-in-arm.

By coming together, we honour the memory of the lives lost and we send a message that the good in the world will not relent to the bad. The darkness will not outshine the light. The forces of division will not succeed in breaking us apart.

Together we will further the values of diversity, inclusivity, acceptance, respect and understanding.

We've seen countless people raise their voices and take action to show that they care; to show that they will not abide hatred happening in our midst. To be sure, there is more work to do here, just as there is more work to do everywhere but I am resolute in my conviction that the work will be done and that we, those of us gathered in this room, who have come together in a spirit of kindness and support, will succeed.

Thank you.