26th March, 2018

To the Muslim Community in Luton

Dear friends,

We want to share with you our deep regret at the threatening and abusive call for a "Punish a Muslim Day" on 3rd April.

At our recent meeting of the Churches Together in Luton executive committee we talked at length about your letter and Peter's wider briefing on what is going on. We want you to know our condemnation of it, and the hatred and bigotry it represents, and our commitment to stand with you at this time. We have heard many people asking what can we do publicly to challenge this. At the same time we respect your desire for it to be a day like any other, and want to avoid anything that will draw more attention to it and multiply the hatred.

As we have done on many occasions over recent years we will work with you for the good of the whole Luton community. Some of us will be available should it be necessary that day for practical expressions of that solidarity locally, and to be a part of a challenge to hate messages on social media. We will of course also join with any community action to express our unity in the town.

Tuesday 3rd comes just two days after Easter Day, the high point of the Christian calendar and season in which we celebrate what as Christians we hold as the costly and sacrificial love of God extended to the world in Jesus Christ, and the victory of that love over death itself. That love calls us to oppose such hatred and all that divides. Our hope is that many of our churches on Easter Day will encourage our members to commit to practical acts of kindness to all their neighbours, colleagues and friends on that day.

We look forward in the coming months to find more opportunity to come together in our growing friendship and partnership for the good of the whole community.

In Peace

Michael Singleton, Chair of Churches Together in Luton
Rev Joe Piennar, Vicar St Hugh's Luton and Area Dean for Church of England
Monsignor Kevin McGinnell, Priest of Church of the Holy Ghost, Roman Catholic Area Dean
Rev Julie Bradshaw. Superintendent for Methodist Church in Luton and Dundtable
Rev David Fleming, Minister of Limbury Baptist Church
Rev Lloyd Denny, Minister, Restoration and Revival Fellowship, Luton
Sue Penn, secretary to Churches Together in Luton
Tony Thompson, leader of Hope Church Luton
Alan Smith, Leagrave Methodist Church
Lawrence Fagbayi, minister of The GP Ministries,
Lawrence Patterson, Wigmore United Reform Church
Peter Adams, Director St Marys Centre for Peace and Reconciliation

For Churches Together in Luton