

December 2015 Message from President Howie Hirsch

Religion and the Modern World

Being a lover of live music, I was appalled to see the massacre in Paris last week.

What upset me more than that venue, as well as the others in Paris, is how religion is being used in the worst possible way. My opinion of what makes religion great and why I am so involved in it is for religion to be able to help people get along with one another. I have been taught my whole life that there is one race of people on the planet, the human race. We need to be able to get along with people who look different from us, have different customs than we do, and have different belief systems. Judaism teaches me that when I see a wrong in the world, it is my responsibility to do what I can to right it.

As I prepare for Thanksgiving and the end of the secular year, I want to dedicate myself to making a difference in our community to foster peace between different religions in the area. In this area, I would like to give a special recognition to my wife Iris, who volunteers at the Methodist church in Hackettstown three days a week to assist in their thrift store and their food pantry. These are the types of activities that we can all do to help show the area that we Jews are normal people and that we are not separatists who want to be left alone, but want to be involved in our communities.

This month, I would like to ask each and every one of you, during the busy month of December, to take one day to allocate some time to do some good in your community. Food banks are in dire need of food, so help the Sisterhood's food drive on a weekly basis. Involve your children. Make sure they know that charity begins with us, and that we do not have to be part of the problem of religion separating people, but locally we can be a small part of the solution.

Happy Hanukkah,
Howie Hirsch

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