



East Central Ontario Regional Council
of The United Church of Canada



Strengthened by God's grace and refreshed by the Spirit,
we follow the way of Jesus in healing our world

The East Central Ontario Regional Council of the United Church of Canada acknowledges that
its buildings and ministries are on traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples.

September 21st, 2026

Norman Weddum
President, Sons of Jacob Synagogue
211 Victoria Avenue
Belleville, ON, K8N 2C2

Dear Norman and the faith community at Sons of Jacob Synagogue,

I want to share the sadness and shock on behalf of the East Central Ontario Regional Council at the incident outside your synagogue today. While it hasn't yet been determined whether the synagogue was being targeted specifically, it must have been so frightening to those inside as events unfolded. It must have raised initial feelings of terror that your community was being targeted.

Antisemitism cuts at the very fabric of how we wish to live: in security, respect and openness. Violence of this nature closes us off from one another and imposes fear and anxiety.

We offer prayers for the congregation of Sons of Jacob, as you gather to celebrate Yom Kippur, a time of atonement and repentance. We also pray for the police officer who was also wounded in the exchange of gunfire outside your place of worship.

We share a common vision that God created us in love and declared that this creation was "very good." It is my belief that God is at work in the religious life of all humanity and that we are also called to love our neighbour. We do this by building respectful mutual relationships in our communities. By engaging in interfaith dialogue and action. And by calling out any form of racism.

If there is anything that we can do to help you, and to build the kind of world that God calls us to construct, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are eager to make God's dream for us a reality – across faiths, cultures and theologies.

Yours in solidarity,

Joyce Payne

Joyce Payne, Speaker, Council of Elders
East Central Ontario Regional Council, United Church of Canada
cc. Rev Eric Hebert Daly, Regional Executive Minister

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