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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

## Delaware Anti-Violence Project Responds to Hate Crime at The Church of the Holy City

Wilmington, DE — The Delaware Anti-Violence Project (DAVP) is calling attention to a recent hate crime at The Church of the Holy City in Wilmington, where a Pride flag was violently cut in half. This disturbing act of violence and hate highlights the ongoing challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals in our community.

In response, the DAVP has issued a statement of solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community and with Rev. Shada at The Church of the Holy City, whose leadership and compassion have been a beacon for inclusion and acceptance. Over 85 elected officials, local organizations, and community leaders have come together in this show of solidarity.

DVAP member Enza Rocco states - “An attack on one of us is an attack on all of us. We will not allow hate to define our community. The Pride flag represents love, resilience, and the fight for equality—values that cannot be torn down by any act of violence. Today, we stand together, united in our commitment to a Delaware where every person is safe, valued, and respected.”

Leaders, legislators, and community members have come together to condemn the attack and show their unwavering support for the LGBTQ+ community. This united front sends a clear message that hate will not be tolerated in Delaware.

The Delaware Anti-Violence Project is committed to preventing violence against LGBTQ+ individuals and advocating for survivors in our state. We encourage everyone to join us in promoting love, respect, and equality for all.

For additional information or media inquiries, please contact David Mariner at [davp@sussexpride.org](mailto:davp@sussexpride.org) or (302) 265-4165. David can put you in touch with other Delaware Anti-Violence Project members or signatories as needed.

:: FULL STATEMENT ON FOLLOWING PAGE ::

We are deeply disturbed and saddened by the recent act of hate in Wilmington, DE, where a Pride flag was destroyed at The Church of the Holy City. The flag—proudly displayed outside the church—was cut into two pieces. This act is currently under investigation by the Wilmington Police Department and the Delaware Department of Justice as a potential hate crime.

We stand in full solidarity with Rev. Shada Sullivan, The Church of the Holy City, and the LGBTQIA+ community in Delaware. This act is not just an assault on the LGBTQIA+ community; it is an attack on the very American principles of respect, equality, and acceptance that define us as a society. Regardless of their identity, every person deserves to live in a world where they are embraced, not targeted.

This crime serves as a stark reminder of the work that remains to build a world free from discrimination, prejudice, and violence. Last week, federal policy changes attempted to narrow and redefine identity protections—especially concerning trans rights—and rolled back important Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives. These actions threaten years of progress that foster a sense of belonging and send a dangerous message of intolerance.

Delaware is home to thousands of LGBTQIA+ residents, and places like Rehoboth Beach have long been celebrated as beacons of pride and inclusion. Our state is often recognized as one of the most LGBTQ-friendly in the country, but this incident reminds us that the fight for equality is ongoing. We are committed to this fight and will not rest until every individual, regardless of their identity, can live without fear of discrimination or violence.

To our LGBTQIA+ friends, neighbors, and loved ones: you are not alone. We stand with you, united in love, strength, and unwavering support. We understand the fear, anger, and heartbreak this incident has caused, and we are here, standing together in solidarity, ready to support you in any way we can.

We will not—and cannot—remain silent in the face of hate. We will continue to speak out, amplify our voices, and fight for a future where everyone can live openly and proudly, free from fear. This is not just about a flag; it's about standing strong against hate and reminding the world that love, compassion, and acceptance will always triumph. We are committed to this fight, and we invite others to join us in speaking out against hate and standing up for what is right.

Delaware Anti-Violence Project

*Friends and allies of the Delaware Anti-Violence Project including:*

Lisa Allen

Mike Brickner, Executive Director, ACLU of Delaware

Rep. Stephanie Bolden

Michael Boyd

Claire van den Broek

Angela Burris

CAMP Rehoboth Community Center

Angela Colone

Jennifer Dawson

Delaware Pride

Max Dick

Peggy Geisler

Planned Parenthood Delaware

Rep. Mara Gorman

Healthy Communities Delaware

Lisa Hunt

Megan Kee

The Rev. Susan Loney, St. Stephen's

Lutheran Church

Patty Maloney, President, Speak Out

Against Hate

David Mariner

Megan McCormick

Jamie McKenna

Rep. Eric Morrison

Rep. Deshanna Neal

Orgullo Delaware

Kerriann Otaño

Coby J. Owens

Helen Owens

Kate Dupont Phillips

Rep. Sophie Phillips

Dr. Carol A. Pollio

Providenza Rocco

Carrie Ryan

Kelly Sheridan

Rep. Claire Snyder-Hall

Deborah Spring

Jacqueline Sterbach

Dr. Karen Sundquist

Sussex Pride

Councilman Brandon Toole

United Way of Delaware

Zach Workman

### **DELAWARE ANTI-VIOLENCE PROJECT**

Delaware Anti-Violence Project, a program of Sussex Pride, works to address violence against the LGBTQ+ community. The Delaware Anti-Violence Project is a proud member of the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs. ([www.sussexpride.org/antiviolence](http://www.sussexpride.org/antiviolence))

### **SUSSEX PRIDE**

Sussex Pride works to celebrate, strengthen, and support the LGBTQ+ community in Sussex County and the state of Delaware, working through a social justice lens. We focus on arts & culture, health & wellness, social and support groups, and advocacy for our community. ([www.sussexpride.org](http://www.sussexpride.org))

