

Press Release
Network of Religious Communities of Western New York
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The Network of Religious Communities of Western New York deplores and condemns the recent republication in Denmark and other European countries of a satirical cartoon of the Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him. The cartoons are deeply disrespectful of the Muslim faith, and they unfairly and inaccurately suggest that terrorism is characteristic of Islam and all Muslims rather than of a limited group of extremists, some (though by no means all) of whom claim to be Muslim.

The Network of Religious Communities is a strong advocate of freedom of the press. However, the essential rights of any free society carry with them equally great responsibilities to use them wisely. We recognize that this republication was in response to an alleged threat to the life of the cartoonist. We condemn such threats. However, since this cartoon has already been published once, we consider that reprinting it is unnecessarily provocative. It offers no valid societal benefit that might conceivably justify its publication for a second time. Rather, its only effect is to cause pain and offense to the Muslim community and to all decent and caring people and to contribute to the already too widespread misunderstanding of one of the world's great religious traditions.

The Network of Religious Communities has a long history of working to build trust and understanding among the many diverse religious communities in our area. Our mission statement says that "the Network of Religious Communities respects the right (of each faith community) to be and celebrate who we are within our particular religious traditions," and we take seriously our responsibility to nurture that respect throughout Western New York. We work hard to educate ourselves and others about all of the various religions represented in this area, in order that by knowing one another better we may be better able to live in peace and harmony.