

Dear Editor,

As Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ this Christmas season, we reflect on the spirit of peace, reconciliation and goodwill that should be evident in all of our lives — not just at this time of year, but always.

This spirit has been challenged in recent weeks following the horrible attacks perpetrated in Paris, San Bernardino and other parts of the world. Acts of violence done by any person in the name of religion can never be justified. We continue to mourn and pray for the victims and their loved ones.

At the same time, we are saddened by politicians and those who unfairly seek to blame these horrendous acts on an entire religion. This isn't consistent with the values of religious freedom and welcoming newcomers that our nation stands for. People create opportunities, for themselves and for members of their community, when they learn about one another, extend hands of hospitality, and recognize every person's God-given human dignity, no matter their religion or cultural background.

We stand in solidarity, as sisters and brothers, who enrich our neighborhoods with our presence and contributions. We stand in support of each other, and look forward to continuing our work together as faith communities to tear down walls and build communities of acceptance and peace.