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## Welcoming a new mosque in Somers

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We, the undersigned religious leaders from Kenosha County, would like to put out the welcome mat for a new mosque in Somers.

We were dismayed by the fear-mongering expressed at a May 8 meeting about the proposed mosque, to be built on Highway A. As faith leaders, we decry the expressions of prejudice, stereotyping and xenophobia shared at that meeting, as reported in the Kenosha News on May 9.

We are often afraid of that which we do not understand. Regrettably, out of ignorance, many Americans think that Islam's teachings and ideas are antithetical to their own. Nothing could be further from the truth. Islam is one of the great religions of the world and shares much in common with Christianity and Judaism.

As people of faith, we feel it is our duty to support other people of faith in their ability to pray freely in their own houses of worship. We are certain that the mosque will be a good neighbor and that all of us in Kenosha County will be warmed and enlightened by the good works that will shine forth from this new house of worship.

We pray that the Somers Planning Commission will give the green light when it next meets to consider the request of the mosque board for rezoning.

We call upon Commission members to rise above racism and fear, leading Somers residents toward openness and understanding and to living out the most fundamental teaching of the Bible: "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Lev. 19:18)

Signed,

Deacon Bob Bagley, St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

Rev. Jonathan Barker, Grace Lutheran Church

Pastor Kara Baylor, Carthage College

Rev. Bonnie Bell, Immanuel United Methodist Church

Rev. Matthew L. Buterbaugh, Rector, St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Dean, South Convocation, Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee

Rev. Dr. Grace Cajiuat, Wesley United Methodist Church

Rev. Erik David Carlson, Bradford Community Church Unitarian Universalist

Jane E. Davis, Unitarian Universalist Seminary

Rabbi Dena A. Feingold, Beth Hillel Temple

Rev. Kathleen K. Gloff, Somers Community United Church of Christ

Sr. Erica Jordan, OP

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Rev. Justin Elliott Lowe, First United Methodist Church

Mary Ann Mueninghoff, O.P. (Sinsinawa Dominican Sister-Kenosha)

Rev. Catherine A. Nea, BCC

Rev. Stacy Seger, Lord of Life Lutheran Church