Statement on Freedom of/from Religion

The Grand Valley Interfaith Network (GVIN) is a community of diverse individuals and organizations dedicated to promoting religious understanding, respect, and cooperation. Our mission is to foster an environment where all people can practice their faith or non-religious conviction with dignity and freedom.

Our Core Principles:

- **Commitment to the First Amendment:** We uphold the foundational American principle that there shall be no state-established religion. This crucial protection ensures that our government remains neutral, allowing a multitude of faiths and secular traditions to flourish without fear of state imposition or exclusion.
- **The Sanctity of Conscience:** We assert that the right to worship, believe, and live according to one's conscience is an inalienable human right. Our nation's strength lies in our plurality; the vibrancy of our community is directly tied to the ability of our neighbors—whether they are Muslim, Latter-day Saint, Jewish, Christian, Unitarian Universalist, secular humanist, atheist, or of any other conviction—to live their truth safely and openly.
- **A Call for Mutual Respect:** We urge all individuals in the United States to recognize and protect the right of every neighbor to believe and worship as they see fit. Respect is not merely a passive state of tolerance; it is an active commitment to defend the dignity of those whose beliefs may differ from our own.

Statement of Support:

The Grand Valley Interfaith Network expresses its profound concern regarding increased efforts to promote a specific religious perspective that rejects the idea of religious freedom to justify oppression and hostility. We condemn any policy, rhetoric, or action that seeks to marginalize, dehumanize, or exclude members of any faith tradition from our collective life.

When any religious or belief group is targeted, the foundational freedom of every American is weakened. We stand in solidarity with those experiencing fear or vulnerability, and we call upon our fellow citizens and our leaders to reject hate speech and discriminatory practices. GVIN remains dedicated to the hard, essential work of dialogue, bridge-building, and advocating for a society where the inherent worth of every person is honored, and where religious liberty remains a reality for all, not just for some.