

RALLYGOERS STAND AGAINST HATE

Hundreds gather in Centerport to condemn bias

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Long Island civil rights leaders, clergy and elected officials Thursday called for an end to acts of racial, religious and gender discrimination amid of a wave of recent high-profile acts of hate and bigotry.

Nearly 200 community members gathered at Centerport United Methodist Church to sign a proclamation against hate and to call for greater understanding in the community.

"There is a sickness among us," said Hempstead civil rights attorney Frederick Brewington. "One way to allow a sickness and fever to spread is to do nothing. But one way to combat a sickness, one way to combat a fever or a virus is you get the good medicine out to the people. The medicine of hope. The medicine of love."

The rally, hosted by Long Island Advocates for Police Accountability, comes weeks after members of the Proud Boys, a neo-facist group with ties to white nationalists,



Rep. Thomas Suozzi, left, and lawyer Fred Brewington speak at the Centerport United Methodist Church.

marched through Rockville Centre, some flashing white power hand signals.

Organizers also cited the recent arrest of a Bayport man for making threats to LGBTQ organizations and leaders, a noose discovered at a work site in Hewlett shared by PSEG Long Island and National Grid; an actor at a Northport theater being called the N-word in between

shows and several acts of anti-semitic or anti-Muslim vandalism.

"Hate and evil are exploding in our society and we are not going to stand for it," said Rep. Thomas Suozzi (D-Glen Cove), a gubernatorial candidate who cited social media and cable news as potential culprits for the uptick in hate. "We will fight against it. We will promote love because it's

the only thing that will ever work to bring us together."

The Rev. Duncan Burns of St. John's Episcopal Church in Huntington called for greater compassion during the holiday season.

"We need to do more for racial reconciliation," Burns said. "We need to do more in our neighborhoods to keep hate out. To keep all the love we have for one another."