

Pacific Lutheran University  
Department of Religion

**The Twelfth Annual Lutheran Studies Conference | September 29, 2022**  
Resisting an Ancient Hatred Today: Antisemitism in Church and Society

**Resisting Antisemitism in Congregational Life**  
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*The work of resisting Christian Antisemitism is the work of Christians*

“We're now at the point where we have nearly *triple* the number of antisemitic incidents today that we did in 2015. In the past year alone (2021), assaults increased 167 percent with examples of vandalism and harassment on the rise. So I think antisemitism really isn't just a Jewish problem. It's an American problem. It's typically the canary in the coal mine.”  
Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO, Anti-Defamation League, April 29, 2022, National Public Radio

**I. What are my experiences, assumptions, or learning about contemporary Jews and Judaism?**

Michael E. Harvey, *Let's Talk: A Rabbi Speaks to Christians* (Teach Me Judaism Press, 2022)  
Lawrence Kushner, *Jewish Spirituality: A Brief Introduction for Christians* (Jewish Lights, 2001)

\* Media shaping of religion and religious groups in North America

Pew Research Center, “Antisemitism and Jewish Views on Discrimination,” at  
<https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/05/11/anti-semitism-and-jewish-views-on-discrimination/>

\* Ecclesial shaping of religion and religious groups in North America

**2. “We love the stories of the O.T.”**

\* The Hebrew Scriptures are not modern Judaism

**3. Preaching, teaching, and singing that corrects Christian stereotypes about Jews and Judaism**

\* Jesus was a 1<sup>st</sup> c. Jew (not a European Christian; not a 21<sup>st</sup> c. American)

John Crossan, *Who Killed Jesus? Exposing the Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Gospel Story of the Death of Jesus* (Harper One, 1996)

K. C. Hanson and Douglas E. Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus: Social Structures and Social Conflicts*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Fortress, 2008)

Amy Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (Harper One, 2009)

Marilyn Salmon, *Preaching without Contempt: Overcoming Unintended Anti-Judaism* (Fortress, 2006)

Gerard Sloyan, *Why Jesus Died* (Fortress, 1995, 2004)

“Would there have been such anti-Semitism, would there have been so many pogroms, would there have been an Auschwitz, if every Christian church and every Christian home had focused its devotion on images of Mary, not only as the Mother of God and Queen of Heaven but also the Jewish maiden, and on icons of Christ not only as the Cosmic Christ but also as Rabbi Jesus of Nazareth, son of David?” Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus Through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture* (Yale, 1985)

#### 4. Preaching and teaching that tells the truth about the history of Jewish-Christian relations

\* A mixed history, mostly unsettling if not terrifying for Jews

James Carroll, *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews* (Houghton Mifflin, 2001)

Thomas Kaufmann, *Luther's Jews: A Journey into Anti-Semitism* (Oxford, 2017)

#### 5. Praying for the Jewish people, for their wellbeing, and faithfulness to the Covenant

*O God of Abraham and Sarah, we pray for Jewish communities throughout the world who mark the new year at sunset this Monday evening; we pray for the end of hate speech and crimes directed at our Jewish sisters and brothers; and we pray for Christians and Jews who work diligently toward greater understanding of our two ancient faiths.* (Christ Church Tacoma, Sunday, September 25, 2022)

*Almighty and eternal God, long ago you gave your promise to Abraham and your teaching to Moses. Hear our prayers that the people you called and elected as your own may receive the fulfillment of the covenant's promises* (ELW Good Friday Bidding Prayer, 2006)

#### 6. Safeguarding life: Responding to religious bigotry

\* ELW Affirmation of Baptism: “Will you serve all people following the example of Jesus?”

#### 7. Working together for *tikkun olam* (the healing a broken world)

\* ELW Affirmation of Baptism: “Will you strive for justice and peace in all the earth?”

ELCA “Declaration of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the Jewish Community”

ELCA “Guidelines for Lutheran-Jewish Relations”

<https://www.elca.org/Faith/Ecumenical-and-Inter-Religious-Relations/Inter-Religious-Relations/Jewish-Relations>

ELCA “A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment: A Policy Statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America”

<https://www.elca.org/Faith/Ecumenical-and-Inter-Religious-Relations/Inter-Religious-Relations/Policy-Statement>