

ELCA Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations

ELCA Jewish Resources

December 18, 2008

I. Introduction:

For more than a decade the ELCA churchwide office Section for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations (formerly the Department for Ecumenical Affairs) and ELCA Global Mission have been raising awareness about Judaism and developing relationships with the Jewish community. In cooperation with synodical staff and faculty from numerous ELCA seminaries, colleges and universities, this church has worked methodically to nurture and sustain inter-religious relationships, which historically included specific attention to the Jewish community. Today, this work includes participation on the NCCC Interfaith Commission, the Christian-Jewish Dialogue Table, and through consistent contact with national and international Jewish colleagues.

Through the auspices of the ELCA Department for Ecumenical Affairs, the Consultative Panel on Lutheran-Jewish Relations was established in the early 1990's. The Panel is likewise heir to faithful work by Lutherans since the 1960's. In its earliest years, this panel worked to repudiate Luther's anti-Jewish and anti-Judaic writings. The efforts to address Luther's work have created strong working relationships with members of the Jewish community.

The protracted conflicts in Israel-Palestine have been a source of disagreement between ecumenical and Jewish partners. Disagreements remain over how to present these conflicts in ways that reveal equity and fairness. In the ELCA, it is essential to nurture the long-standing relationship with the ELCJHL while also "deepening and extending our ecumenical and interreligious relationships" in the U.S. and around the world. As a church we have an opportunity to work with Jewish partners in our synodical contexts toward greater awareness and meaningful relationships, while also strengthening our historical intra-Lutheran and ecumenical commitments.

Below are some of the pertinent educational resources currently available online:

II. ELCA Jewish-Christian Resources

Find at <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Ecumenical-and-Inter-Religious-Relations/Inter-Religious-Relations.aspx>

Windows for Understanding: Jewish-Muslim-Lutheran Relations – A 70-page downloadable guide to Lutheran-Jewish and Lutheran-Muslim relations developed by the ELCA Ecumenical and Inter-religious Relations Section. Besides detailed sections on Judaism and Islam, it contains an annotated reading list, an annotated list of films, links to related organizations, a detailed glossary, and short essays on such topics as Israel, Palestine, and terrorism.

In God's Name – a two-hour television program that features 12 of the "world's most influential religious leaders," including ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson. Click "find out more" for links to full description, downloadable study guide, and DVD trailer.

Talking Points: Topics in Christian-Jewish Relations

The [Talking Points](#) are comprised of eight topics for timely discussion on matters of interest to Jewish-Christian relations.

[Covenantal Conversations](#) – This text explores the shared theological framework, special historical relationship, and post-Holocaust developments and current trouble spots that situate the Jewish-Christian relationship today.

III. ELCA Statements on Jewish Relations

The Declaration of the ELCA to the Jewish Community

On April 18, 1994 the ELCA adopted the "[Declaration](#)," which repudiates Luther's anti-Jewish writings, expresses deep regret for their historical consequences, and reclaims the desire to live in "love and respect for Jewish people."

Guidelines for Lutheran-Jewish Relations

The ELCA adopted the "[Guidelines](#)" on November 16, 1998, which emphasize local and inter-religious cooperation.

IV. Ecumenical Partner Jewish-Christian Relations

On the ELCA Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations website, look to the right side bar in order to locate: [Ecumenical Partner Inter-Religious Resources](#)

- *The Episcopal Church*: [Interfaith Relations](#) and [Interfaith Education Initiative](#)
- *The United Methodist Church*: [Building New Bridges in Hope, Called to Be Neighbors and Witnesses](#), [The General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns](#) (GCCUIC), and [Guidelines for Interfaith Dialogue](#).
- *Presbyterian Church (USA)*: [Presbyterian Principles for Interfaith Dialogue](#), [Respectful Presence: An Understanding of Interfaith Prayer and Celebration from a Reformed Christian Perspective](#), [Building Community among Strangers](#), [Toward a Theological Understanding of the Relationship Between Christians and Jews](#), and [Tools for Understanding](#)
- *United Church of Christ*: [Relationship between the UCC and the Jewish Community](#), [A Study Resource on Interreligious Relations for the United Church of Christ](#), and [Middle East: Palestine/Israel](#)
- *Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*: [Encouraging Interreligious Engagement](#), a resolution adopted by the 2005 General Assembly and [Report Concerning Disciples of Christ and Interreligious Engagement](#)
- *Church of God: Is Christianity the Only Way?*, a denominational guide to the religions, 1975.
- *Mennonite Central Committee*: [Dividing Wall](#)
- *ELCA*: [Forbidden Family DVD](#)
- *The Reformed Church in America*: [Middle East](#)
- *National Council of the Churches of Christ*: [Interfaith Relations and the Churches](#)
- *Society for Pentecostal Studies*: [Neither Naïve Nor Narrow: A Balanced Pentecostal Approach to Christian Theology of Religions](#) by Dr. Tony Richie, February 2006.