

LITANY OF CONFESSION

Based on the 1994 “Declaration of the ELCA to the Jewish Community”



O Holy Blessed One, we acknowledge before you that the treatment accorded the Jewish people on the part of Christian believers has been a tragic development in the long history of the Church. This includes the horrors of the Holocaust of the 20th century in places where Lutheran churches were strongly represented. With deep and abiding sorrow, we confess before you and one another, and in the presence of our Jewish neighbors, that we have too often been silent before, or complicit in, the sad contagion of anti-Semitism that continues to this day.

O Maker and Keeper of us all, reform our faith and our living to reflect more boldly your endless mercy.

In commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the “ELCA Declaration to the Jewish Community,” we remember again the legacy of the reformer Martin Luther. Honoring his name in our own, we recall his bold stand for truth, his earthy and sublime words of wisdom, and above all his witness to your saving Word. In his proclamation of the Gospel, Luther bid us to trust a grace sufficient to reach our deepest shames and most tragic truths. Renew in us the spirit of this truth-telling, that we who bear his name reaffirm and make public our repudiation of Luther’s anti-Judaic diatribes and of the violent recommendations in his later writings against the Jews.

O Maker and Keeper of us all, reform our faith and our living to reflect more boldly your endless truth.

In concert with the Lutheran World Federation, we particularly deplore the appropriation of Luther’s words by modern anti-Semites for the teaching of hatred toward Judaism or the Jewish people in any time or place. Help us to recognize in anti-Semitism a contradiction and an affront to the Gospel, a violation of our hope and calling. Empower us to be active witnesses to your far-reaching, unending love for all people and all creation.

O Maker and Keeper of us all, reform our faith and our living to reflect more boldly your endless love.

Grieving the complicity of our own tradition within this history of hatred, we whose lives are held captive by your Word ask your blessing upon our urgent desire to live out our faith in Jesus Christ with love and respect for our Jewish neighbors. Empower us to stand in solidarity with each other to oppose the deadly working of every kind of bigotry, both within our own circles and in the society around us.

O Maker and Keeper of us all, reform our faith and our living to reflect more boldly your endless peace.

Finally, we pray for your continued blessing and wisdom, empowerment and joy, O Holy One, upon the increasing cooperation and understanding between Lutheran Christians and the Jewish community, in every expression of our life together here and all around the world.

O Maker and Keeper of us all, reform our faith and our living to reflect more boldly your endless grace.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God’s work. Our hands.