

## **R-1: Addressing Anti-Semitism in Lectionary Readings**

**WHEREAS**, anti-Semitic words, deeds, and attitudes do real harm to our Jewish neighbors, and

**WHEREAS**, the ELCA has repudiated anti-Semitism and expressed its desire to live in “love and respect for the Jewish people” (Declaration to the Jewish Community, 1994), and

**WHEREAS**, passages of the New Testament which can be interpreted as anti-Jewish or supersessionist (i.e. supporting the idea that God has rejected the Jews) are included in our lectionary, and

**WHEREAS**, in the time in which the New Testament was written, the word Ἰουδαῖοι (ee-oo-DIE-oy), was used as a marker of geographic and ethnic identity (that is, it denoted people from Judaea as distinct from Galilee, Samaria, or other parts of the world) and “Israelite” was used to identify the people who worshiped the God of Israel wherever they lived, that is the people whom we today would identify as “Jewish,” and

**WHEREAS**, the word “Jews” in the New Testament is usually an inaccurate translation of the Greek Ἰουδαῖοι, and

**WHEREAS**, the preferred translation used by Augsburg Fortress is the NRSV, which uses the inaccurate and potentially harmful translation “Jews” in almost every instance;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the preachers and teachers of the Northern Illinois Synod be encouraged to address the issues of anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish theology (such as the teaching that the Jewish people are responsible for the death of Jesus and/or the idea that God has rejected the Jews); and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the preachers, and teachers of the Northern Illinois Synod consider what is written in the texts that include Ἰουδαῖοι, what the texts meant when they were written, and what they have come to mean in relationship to anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish theology, and how they might be understood in ways that contribute to dismantling anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish theology in proclamation and teaching.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that preachers, teachers, and lectors of the Northern Illinois Synod be encouraged, when reading in public, to substitute a more appropriate translation of Ἰουδαῖοι where the English translation uses the word “Jews.” Examples include “Judaean,” “Religious Leaders,” and “locals;” and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Northern Illinois Synod Assembly direct the Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council’s Executive Committee for referral and disposition to the appropriate unit or office of the churchwide organization in accordance with the bylaws and continuing

resolutions of this church in order to address the issues of anti-Jewish language in our lectionary and teaching materials.

**Contact Person:** Rev. Brant Clements

**Submitted by:** Rev. Brant Clements, Rev. Andrew Kayes, Rev. Theresa Wilder, Rev. Carol Soderholm, Rev. Vicki Sauter, Rev. Roger Asplund, Rev. Susan Davenport, Rev. Jacob Gawlik, Rev. Scott Ralston, Rev. Josh Ehrler, Rev. Kathy Burkheimer, Rev. Makayla Dahleen and Rev. Bree Truax.