



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

April 29, 2019

On Saturday, the last day of Passover, another shooting occurred at a synagogue — this time, Chabad of Poway, in California. The living had gathered to offer prayers to honor the dead and to close the Jewish festival of God's liberating promise. Once again, worship was interrupted by deadly violence.

We stand against this latest public act of anti-Semitism and domestic terrorism, and with the Jewish community. Together, with our ecumenical and inter-religious partners, we will continue to “oppose the deadly working of such bigotry, both within our own circles and in the society around us” (“Declaration of ELCA to Jewish Community,” 1994).

We grieve with the community of Poway, with the victims and their families, and with all those who are wounded in mind, body and spirit by this latest act of violence committed in a sacred space.

We continue to grieve the shooting six months ago at Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh; the mosque shootings six weeks ago in Christchurch, New Zealand; the arson one month ago of three historic Black churches in Louisiana; and the church bombings on Easter Sunday in Sri Lanka.

We find ourselves, like the psalmist, crying out to God that “the enemy has destroyed everything in the sanctuary” (Psalm 74:3b). We know that these incidents, together with others, are not isolated. They are linked through a tangled web of religious bigotry, violence, hatred and white supremacy that is meant to divide us — from each other and from God.

Therefore, our actions to address anti-Semitism must oppose *all* deadly workings in our midst. This is hard work but also holy work. An attack on one faith community is an attack on all. As a sign of God's liberating promise, let us stand against this scourge by standing together. May it be so.

In peace,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton

Presiding Bishop, ELCA