

9. Make common cause: The Jewish ethic of “tik kun olam” (repair of the world) and The Episcopal Church’s own statements on ecology and creating Beloved Community provide foundations by which Episcopalians and Jewish people can participate collaboratively in God’s mission: mitigating human need, challenging structural injustice, and caring for creation. By affirming this, Episcopalians may indeed work together with Jewish people in loving service to God and to humanity.



THE
Episcopal
CHURCH



CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONS

Theological and Practical Guidance for
Episcopalians (Abbreviated)



These guidelines are for Episcopalians seeking a resource for Episcopal teaching, preaching, daily Scripture-study, individual prayer, corporate worship, and lament for past mistakes when it comes to Jewish-Christian relations.

1. Openheartedness. Openheartedness toward Judaism and the Jewish people accords with the faith we proclaim through The Episcopal Church's baptismal covenant.
2. Obligation. The baptismal covenant promise to strive for justice and peace among all people obliges Episcopalians to treat Judaism and the Jewish people justly.
3. Acknowledgement. Because persistent unjust stereotyping of Jews by Christians continues to harm them in the present day (as it has for centuries), it is imperative to acknowledge that anti-Judaism is expressed in a wide array of present practices of The Episcopal Church.
4. Truthful witness. Given the scriptural mandate to witness truthfully, Episcopalians are obliged, in teaching, preaching, and informal communication, to present biblical and Rabbinic Judaism accurately.

5. Better practices. It is imperative that Episcopalians strive for practices that note, discontinue, and resist new iterations of stereotyping of Jewish people so they will be treated justly. Here are six recommendations:

- a. Be mindful of vocabulary. We can label harmful behavior accurately. We can use "anti-Jewish bigotry" or "antisemitism" (unhyphenated).
- b. Stress God's continuing covenant with the church and the Jewish people.
- c. Eschew supersessionism.
- d. Avoid teaching of contempt.
- e. Mitigate latent anti-Judaism in our hymnody.
- f. Appreciate; don't appropriate. Judaism, a living and continually developing religion with its own integrity, has many beautiful traditions. Episcopalians may be deeply appreciative; yet they should resist any inclination to transpose Jewish ritual and tradition into Christian liturgical contexts.

6. Respect our shared scripture. Jesus himself drew upon the collection of writings that are canonical for Judaism to this day.

- a. Just as second-century Christians resisted moves to set these writings aside, so too should we refrain from marginalizing them.
- b. While the term "Hebrew Bible" may seem to be a gesture of neutrality and inclusivity, it is inaccurate. Rather, consider context. When referring to this collection as Christian Scripture, call it "Old Testament"; when referring to it as Jewish Scripture explicitly, call it "Tanakh"; when speaking of it as a collection held in common by Christians and Jews, call it "Old Testament/Tanakh."
- c. When studying the Bible, guard against unintentional anti-Judaism by making good use of resources such as "The Jewish Annotated New Testament" edited by Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler, or Marilyn Salmon's "Preaching Without Contempt."

7. Embrace Christian-Jewish theological dialogue drawing simultaneously upon Scripture, tradition, and reason, listening carefully to a range of Jewish voices, and finding places of convergence and divergence in Jewish midrash and Christian contextual theology.

8. Israeli/Palestinian conflict: Attitudes toward the contemporary nation of Israel and responses to its actions are complicated by questions regarding the status of the Palestinian residents within its borders and in territories it occupies. These issues are complex and demand caution, mindful of our baptismal covenant promise to strive for justice and peace. The Episcopal Church's Office of Global Relations has worked on these matters for many decades, and thus has resources for use by dioceses and parishes.

- a. Episcopal participants in dialogue about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict must educate themselves about it and recognize that it presents issues that divide Christians and Jews intra-religiously as well as interreligiously.
- b. When framing critiques of policies of the nation-state of Israel, it is imperative to avoid tropes and stereotypes that have long been a part of Christian anti-Judaism.

