

RESOLUTION #4

ON ADDRESSING THE ANTI-SEMITIC IMPACT OF LECTIONARY READINGS FOR HOLY WEEK

The following resolution is proposed by the following members of the Clergy and Laity of parishes within the Episcopal Diocese of Washington:

Submitted by: The Reverend Michele Morgan, St. Mark's, DC; Ms. Josie Jordan, St. Mark's, DC; Mr. Randy Mark's, DC.

RESOLUTION

- 1 Resolved,
- 2 The Convention of the Diocese of Washington submits to the 80th General Convention of the Episcopal
- 3 Church the following resolution:
- 4 "Resolved,
- 5 The House of _____ concurring, that the 80th General Convention direct the Standing
- 6 Commission on Liturgy and Music to recommend revisions to the Church's appointed Lectionary readings
- 7 for Holy Week to remedy passages that use language that has been interpreted as anti-Semitic while maintaining
- 8 the meaning and intent of the original Greek texts, and that the Episcopal Church advocate that other
- 9 denominations using the Revised Common Lectionary consider the same changes."

EXPLANATION:

Annually, during Holy Week, the Episcopal Church requires us to hear language denigrating Jews in chapters 18 & 19 of John's Gospel. In 2006-2015, four General Conventions recognized that this language has been used to empower anti-Semitism and called on the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music (SCLM) to educate the Church by providing context for the language (https://episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution.pl?resolution=2006-C001, https://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution.pl?resolution=2009-A089, https://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution.pl?resolution=2012-A058, https://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution.pl?resolution=2015-A062). An example of the SCLM's actions is at: <https://standingcommissiononliturgyandmusic.org/2013/03/19/anti-judaism-issues-in-the-scriptures-for-holy-week-by-louis-weil/>.

This year Presiding Bishop Curry has proclaimed that the Church must stand against the rising tide of racism and anti-Semitism. (<https://episcopalchurch.org/library/article/presiding-bishop-joins-social-media-campaign-counter-anti-semitism-wake-attacks>) In the face of this rising tide, we need to do more than merely provide context and education because context does not stand on the same level as proclamation of Holy Scripture. The Cathedral's recent decision to remove windows with confederate flags stands as an example of recognizing when "context is not enough." In addition, there is no practical way to ensure that every church provides the necessary context. Bulletin notes and sermon explanations are not accessible to all, such as children.

This resolution instructs the SCML to develop recommended versions of Holy Week Lectionary readings that remedy their anti-Semitic impact. Revised readings of the Passion Narrative are in use throughout the church. An example of how minimal changes to John 18 & 19 allows the power of Jesus's Passion to shine through without imparting an anti-Semitic message is at https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/research_sites/cjl/sites/partners/cbaa_seminar/Johannine_PN.htm.