



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in Canada**
In Mission for Others

March 15, 2017

Dear members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada,

For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light—for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. — *Ephesians 5:8–11*

Grace and peace to you.

In recent weeks, I have heard about numerous attacks on Jewish community centres, synagogues and cemeteries in Canada. Many of these incidents have come in form of threats, including bomb threats, and/or damage to property. Such attacks generate fear, disrupt community and seek to divide people. They are a form of prejudice and promote prejudice.

Freedom of conscience and religion is named first among the fundamental rights of the people of this land in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Intimidation and threats against people of the Jewish faith—of any faith—is completely unacceptable. As Christians, we do not seek religious freedom that is denied to others. We support an inclusive society, open to all.

I call on the members of our church to stand up and speak out against all forms of racism, anti-Semitism and violence, and to stand in solidarity with anyone who is feeling unsafe, unwelcome or upset by these incidents.

In 2015, the ELCIC National Convention endorsed the document *Welcome the Stranger* (www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/Welcoming_the_Stranger.pdf). In this action, we affirm that our, “faith teaches that compassion, mercy, love and hospitality are for everyone: the native born and the foreign born, the member of my community and the newcomer.” We join with people of all faiths on a journey toward peace, respect and true community. We renew our commitment to seek greater understanding and cooperation between Lutheran Christians and the Jewish community in Canada.

Let us pray:

God of peace and God of hope, we pray for safety and respect for all people. Send your spirit of healing to all who feel violated and your spirit of courage to all who are afraid. Strengthen us to stand with the Jewish community across Canada and to speak out against all forms of anti-Semitism, intolerance and violence. In your holy name we pray. Amen.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Susan C. Johnson,
National Bishop,
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada