

Excerpts from church leaders' responses to attack in Synagogue in Poway, California

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop, ELCA

"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)."

"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."

Bishop Doug Beacham
General Superintendent
International Pentecostal Holiness Church

"News and social media make it possible for us to know how ubiquitous is the spirit of lawlessness and violence in our world. From the rising tide of attacks against synagogues, mosques, and churches, to the personal violence today at the University of North Carolina Charlotte and the state violence in Venezuela, death and destruction leave their ugly marks.

Though mocked by some, calls for prayer are nonetheless significant. But without our own deep soul searching and repentance, calls for prayer seem shallow. Jesus has called us to be peacemakers in a world that rejects peacemakers. The "blessings" of peacemakers is to be called children of God (Matthew 5:9). Immediately afterward is the blessing upon those who are persecuted (5:10).

May the Holy Spirit give us the courage to accept both peacemaking and persecution with the kind of grace that enables us to love our enemies and surrender ourselves for God's righteous kingdom."

Rev. Dr. Lee B. Spitzer
General Secretary
American Baptist Churches USA

"In response, we "mourn with those who mourn" (Romans 12:15). As American Baptists, we stand in sincere sympathy with all people who suffer violence, injury and harm, regardless of religion, race, gender, culture or ethnicity. We oppose terrorism, violence and hateful ideologies. The Gospel of love surely shall triumph over evil.

Yet, as a committed follower of Jesus Christ, I confess that my heart feels troubled and unsatisfied with mere expressions of sympathy to those who have suffered loss of life, injury and heartache. My soul yearns for wisdom regarding how I as an individual, the Church as the body of Christ, and our wider society might creatively and constructively work to prevent future tragedies of the sort we have been experiencing. Recognizing that all violence will not be eradicated until the culmination of human history, we nevertheless remain committed to living out the virtues of the reign of God in prophetic anticipation of the coming Kingdom of Christ."

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo
President USCCB

“I, along with my brother bishops, am greatly saddened and deeply concerned over the news that another house of worship has been subjected to violence. This assault, which occurred on the last day of Passover, is the second shooting in a U.S. synagogue within six months. Our country should be better than this; our world should be beyond such acts of hatred and anti-Semitism. This attack joins an all too long list of attacks against innocent people, people of all faiths, who only want to gather and to pray. It is a contradiction, a perverting of their teachings to believe that Christianity, Judaism, or Islam would condone such violence. Unfortunately, both in the past and today, too many preach such hatred in the name of God. This cannot be abided; it must end.

Our prayers today are for the victims of this shooting, and for the Jewish community of Poway, California, placing our trust and our hope in “the Lord [who] is close to the brokenhearted, and saves those whose spirit is crushed” (Ps 34:19).