

The following statement was prepared and read by Doctor Rodney Kennedy at the worship service at Upper Merion Baptist Church on October 28, 2018 in response to the tragedy at the synagogue in Pittsburgh on Saturday.

*The rising specter of anti-Semitism in the USA is an unspeakable travesty. Christians everywhere need to rise in opposition to the hatred that is spewing from Neo-Nazi and white nationalist groups. Christians need to remember our own theology. If God is not the God of the Jews, then our faith is in vain. Our God is a fleshly God whose body is the Jews. We are of the Jews, grafted into the body of God's people. There's an American heresy that claims Americans as God's new chosen people. There's no scriptural validation for this strange, false claim. God already has a chosen people – the Jews.*

*Many American Christians no longer believe that our salvation comes through the Jews. Yet, the flesh and blood carpenter of Nazareth was a Jew. To deny the incarnation is to embrace the default setting of much American Christianity – that ancient heresy of Gnosticism. Through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, we have been made part of God's life with the Jews.*

*I offer my prayers, support, love, and consolation to the Jewish community in Pittsburgh and around the world. My heart breaks from the tragedy of a people at worship, celebrating new life, were brutally, senselessly struck down. I wish so much that I could sit with my friend, David Sofian, rabbi emeritus at Temple Israel in Dayton, Ohio and talk and pray together.*