

BELIEFS Values

Convocation atones for Luther's anti-Semitism

By **RENA FULKA**
SPECIAL WRITER

While members of Cong. Shir Tikvah are celebrating the groundbreaking of their first synagogue in Troy, another significant event will be occurring less than two miles away in the very facility where the Reform congregation initially gathered for worship 14 years ago.

Jewish diatribes.

The Chicago suburb of River Forest was among the first communities nationwide to host a similar event.

Martin Luther was a German-born monk who left the Roman Catholic Church in 1517 to become a forerunner in the Protestant Reformation. This year marks the 450th anniversary of his death.

of our hope and calling, and we pledge this church to oppose the deadly working of such bigotry, both within our own circles and in the society around us."

Arnold Michlin of Farmington Hills is involved with the convocation as Interreligious Chair of the Bloomfield Hills-based Michigan Area American Jewish Committee.

On Sunday, Oct. 20, Lutheran Church of the Master will host, "The Declaration of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the Jewish Community."

"It's a commemoration of the specific statement adopted by the ELCA that stands as a profound atonement for the legacy of Luther's anti-Semitism," said Sharona Shapiro of West Bloomfield Area Director of the American Jewish Committee.

While the resolution adopted by the Lutheran World Federation and the ELCA recalls Luther's "bold stand for truth, his earthy and sublime works of wisdom and above all his witness to God's saving word," it also goes on to apologize for Luther's later hostility toward Jews.

"As did many of Luther's own companions in the 16th century, we reject this violent invective, and yet more do we express our deep and abiding sorrow over its tragic effects on subsequent generations," the statement reads.

Michlin's ongoing work with interfaith relations includes the founding of the Detroit-based American Arabic and Jewish Friends and involvement with the Southfield-based Ecumenical Institute for Jewish-Christian Studies as a board member and past president.

"Evangelical Lutherans have been so courageous and brave to come out with a statement literally evoking (Martin Luther's) anti-Semitism," said Michlin. "I'm 76 years old, and I expected to live to see the state of Israel. I expected to see peace in the Middle East."

The Oakland County event, which is expected to draw 200 to 400 individuals, has been in the planning stages since the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopted a resolution in 1994 acknowledging and apologizing for Martin Luther's anti-

The Holocaust of the 20th century was among catastrophes suffered by Jews in places where Lutheran churches proliferated.

The declaration goes on to state, "We recognize in anti-Semitism a contradiction and an affront to the Gospel, a violation

Leading the 4 p.m. convocation will be Rabbi James Rudin, New York-based National Director for Interreligious Affairs, American Jewish Committee, and Profes-



Going public: Arnold Michlin, left, the Rev. Gustav Kopka, Jr., the Rev. Paul William Schmidt and Sharona Shapiro gather at Lutheran Church of the Master in Troy to plan for Michigan's first convocation between the ELCA and the Jewish community addressing Martin Luther's anti-Semitism.

Birmingham First Baptist hosts mix of jazz, worship

B'Jazz Vespers begins on Sunday, Oct. 20, 6-8 p.m., in the gothic sanctuary of downtown's historic First Baptist church. The Vespers is for the general public and is free. Casual attire is encouraged. An offering will be taken for the musicians.

Different jazz groups from the metropolitan area will perform throughout the year — the third Sunday of each month.

On Sunday, Oct. 20, the Andrew Bishop Jazz Quartet will perform. Bishop performed at Art in the Park in September in downtown Birmingham and is an accomplished saxophonist.

The worship interlude, between the musician's sets, will include 20 minutes of celebrative, reflective worship. Dr. Stephen Jones, pastor of First Baptist Church, will briefly

reflect on the theme, "Strangers in Common."

"One primary reason for B'Jazz Vespers is to bring together unlikely people and an unlikely combination of secular jazz and worship," Jones said.

The worship will be non-sectarian and inclusive.

"The goal of B'Jazz Vespers is to be as celebrative and uplifting as possible. Downtown Birmingham

is becoming an exciting entertainment district, and jazz is already associated here," said Mary Ann Martin, a member of the planning team.

Free parking is available for two hours in the adjacent city lot. The church is between the two Jacobson's Department Stores, at Willis and Bates. For more information, call (810) 644-0500.

See CONVOCATION, B15

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