A CONVERSATION ON CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM: A PRESENT THREAT TO RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

SUNDAY, MARCH 12, 2023

An evening of dialogue and discussion facilitated by Rabbi Mitch Levine and humanist, freethinker (and former evangelical) Chris Highland. We will consider critical questions such as:

- **What is Christian Nationalism (CN)? What are some historical roots of CN?**
- **How is CN a threat to religion, specifically Judaism, and Christianity itself?**
- **How is CN a threat to the "Wall of Separation" between Religion and State?**
- **How can Jews, Christians, and other people of faith respond to CN?**
- **How can secular Americans respond?**

Our speakers

Chris Highland is a humanist celebrant who served as a minister and interfaith chaplain in the San Francisco Bay Area for many years. He has taught courses on Freethought, Humanism and Christian Nationalism at the Reuter Center (OLLI at UNCA) since 2016. Author of several dozen books, he writes the weekly "Highland Views" column for the *Asheville Citizen-Times*.

Rabbi Mitchell Levine joined the Asheville community as the rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel last year. He grew up in Raleigh, NC and earned his ordination from the Chief Rabbinate of the State of Israel. The fresh ideas, robust debate, and community dynamic implicit in the adage, "3 Jews=5 opinions" are what he loves most about being Jewish.

Our moderator

Amy Weiss retired from a 35-year academic career as a professor of speech-language pathology in 2020 and moved to Asheville, NC the following year. She has held faculty positions at universities in Colorado, Iowa, and Rhode Island where she was responsible for the clinical training of graduate students. During her many years volunteering with her national professional association as well as her academic responsibilities she moderated numerous meetings. At present, Amy is a member of the Jewish Secular Community of Asheville where she serves as an at-large member on its Board of Directors. She is also a member of the Jewish Community Center of Asheville.

SUGGESTED REFERENCES

Gorsky, P., & Perry, S. (2022). The flag and the cross: White Christian Nationalism and the threat to American democracy. NY, NY: Oxford University Press.

Maddow, R. (2022). https://rachel-maddow-presents-ultra.simplecast.com. (Podcast)

Seidel, A. (2022). American crusade: How the supreme court is weaponizing religious freedom. NY, NY: Union Square & Company.

Stewart, K. (2020). The power worshippers: Inside the dangerous rise of religious nationalism. London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing.