

April 15, 2019

Dear Friends,

We write to you jointly because of our friendship and collegiality of sixty years and also because of our love for our historic congregations and our commitment to their future and to the future of Reform Judaism in our beloved Baltimore.

We have been privileged to serve you, our members, and the community of Baltimore for most of our rabbinates. Honored to serve our historic congregations, we have been humbled to occupy the pulpits of our predecessors, giants of Judaism not only in Baltimore but nationally and internationally. We cherish our history.

At the same time we are excited by the prospects for the future of our community. The Jewish world, indeed the religious world, has been transformed enormously since first we met in Cincinnati some 60 years ago. Every denomination has changed and evolved since we became “friendly competitors” on Park Heights Avenue some 40 years ago. The synagogues of our time were far different from the synagogues of our founders. The synagogues of today are so much different from the synagogues we came here to serve. Continuing change is the constant to which Jews have always responded through our history in order to survive.

We, like you, shall never forget our past. More than 150 years ago our pioneering founders, following the example of our Biblical parents, Abraham and Sarah, boldly established their Jewish homes in Baltimore. They survived many crises but leaders, following the example of our teacher, Moses, found pathways, sometimes through what seemed like a desert, toward the future. And like the visionary prophets of old, they transformed our congregations and our community in ways their fathers could scarcely have imagined.

And now, it is our turn to build upon our history to create for tomorrow. What an exciting opportunity you have to create a 21st century synagogue for now, a sacred community for the future. We are certain that you will discover that our congregations have much more in common than those things on which we disagree. Just as the two of us have not always agreed on every issue, our friendship and our deep commitment to each other, to the

Jewish people and to this community have grown over the years.

Both of us are in full support of your efforts for our congregations to come together to forge a new and challenging future as we have done many times before since our historic foundings. Only now we will be doing it together. This is very exciting for both our communities. It stirs us with hope and inspiration for the future of our legacies.

We are impressed by those, from both congregations, who are leading this historic effort. We look forward to supporting them and all of you and, in time, to worshipping together, learning together and celebrating together as we have done for years, but now in our exciting and inspiring new congregation.

With affectionate blessing for all of you,

Your Rabbis Emeriti,

*Donald Berlin and Floyd Herman*