

February 24, 2017

Dear Congregants,

It is with mixed emotions that I write to inform you that our beloved Senior Rabbi, Richard A. Block, has informed the Board of Trustees that he will be retiring from The Temple-Tifereth Israel on June 30, 2018, at which time he will become our Senior Rabbi Emeritus. Although our Congregation will sincerely miss Rabbi Block's daily presence upon his retirement, we will be very happy that he and his devoted wife, Susie, will have the opportunity to spend more time with each other and with their family and to do many of the things they simply have not had the time to do before. His letter to our Congregation is enclosed with mine.

Rabbi Block has served with distinction as our Senior Rabbi since May 1, 2001. As a congregational family, we are grateful to him on so many levels. In the nearly 16 years he has led our Temple, Rabbi Block has overseen the development and introduction of our Vision, which emphasizes and assures that we are a warm, welcoming synagogue family where each person matters. Under his leadership, The Temple has introduced inspirational and cutting edge programs, including Shabbaton, Rock My Soul Shabbat Services, The Temple Arts Program, and others too numerous to mention. He was instrumental in bringing Ganon Gil Preschool to The Temple. Rabbi Block spearheaded our role as a founding partner in the Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage, along with dedicated congregants, Milt and Tamar Maltz, and the Jewish Federation of Cleveland. Partnering with CWRU President Barbara Snyder, his efforts were essential to creating the Milton and Tamar Maltz Performing Arts Center at The Temple-Tifereth Israel. Together with our committed lay leaders, clergy, and staff, lead donor Mort Mandel, and many other generous congregants, the Rabbi played an integral part in The Temple Tomorrow Project, which brought about our expanded and magnificently remodeled Jack and Lilyan Mandel Building and increased significantly the size of the Temple Foundation Endowment, helping us continue to sustain our Temple programs, services and operations.

Rabbi Block has not only been our leader but also a leader in Cleveland's Jewish and general communities, the Reform Movement nationally and internationally, and the wider Jewish world. Recently, he completed his term as the President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the oldest and largest rabbinic organization in North America, an honored position held in previous generations by rabbis Moses Gries and Abba Hillel Silver.

We feel very fortunate that Rabbi Block will continue as our Senior Rabbi for the next 16 months, and we look forward to a warm, ongoing relationship with him as Senior Rabbi Emeritus for many years to come. Please be assured though that we will soon begin the process of searching for and selecting a new Senior Rabbi. A Search Committee is currently in formation and we fully expect that our next Senior Rabbi will be joining us on July 1, 2018. We will keep the congregation fully apprised of that process. Until that time, let us all enjoy the continued leadership and guidance of Rabbi Block.

Sincerely,



Donald S. Scherzer, President



Rabbi Richard A. Block

Rabbi Rosette Barron Haim

Rabbi Roger C. Klein

Rabbi Stacy Schlein

Cantor Kathryn Wolfe Sebo

Christie Yonkers
Executive Director

Donald S. Scherzer
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Beloved Congregants,

Psalm 90 observes that "the span of our life is seventy years..." While this constitutes neither a promise nor a term limit, Jewish tradition teaches that those who reach that milestone birthday, as I did recently, begin, as it were, a new lifetime. Upon the inception of my second life, I have decided the time has come to identify and announce another landmark date, that of my retirement.

Thus, I am writing to let you know that I intend to retire on June 30, 2018, my 36th year in the rabbinate and my 18th year as The Temple's Senior Rabbi. I selected that date to provide sufficient time to help ensure our new Executive Director, Christie Yonkers' successful transition, and for the congregation to undertake and complete the process of selecting my successor as Senior Rabbi.

My sixteen years of leadership and service at The Temple have been the most fruitful and gratifying period of my rabbinic career. I will forever be grateful for the privilege of teaching and learning from you, sharing precious occasions of joy, and offering comfort in times of sorrow. In partnership with devoted lay leaders, wonderful clergy and staff colleagues, and you, our supportive, generous congregants, we have reinvigorated our congregation, fashioned an inspiring vision for its future, optimized our facilities for the present and future generations, and advanced The Temple along the path toward financial strength. I will always cherish the sacred work we have accomplished and the relationships we have built.

In contemplating retirement, I pray that Susie and I will be blessed with good health and longevity, even as I recognize that such blessings are not to be presumed or taken for granted. Rabbi Gries resigned due to ill health and died a year later, at age 50. Neither Rabbi Abba, who died at 70, nor Rabbi Dan, who passed away tragically at 61, lived to reach retirement. Thus, God willing, we will establish a new paradigm. While the title "Senior Rabbi Emeritus" is honorific, it is one I anticipate with gratitude and humility, and Susie and I look forward to the next 16 months and a warm relationship with our beloved Temple family for many years to come.

L'shalom u'veracha – In peace and blessing,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard A. Block". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard A. Block
Senior Rabbi

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