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Temple Israel

SAMUEL GLASNER, RABBI

119 East Fayette Street

UNIONTOWN, PA.

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May 17, 1939.

Temple Israel Congregation,
c/o Mr. L. Irving Silverman, Secretary
Uniontown, Pennsylvania.

Dear Friends:

In accordance with our annual custom, I am hereby making formal application for re-election as your rabbi during the coming year.

At the same time, I wish to tell you all again how much I have enjoyed living with you and working with you. I feel that in the past year we have come to be even better friends than we were before.

In my opinion, the gains which we made in the previous two years of our association have been consolidated this year; the progress which we achieved has been carried further. Several activities, which the Secretary of the congregation will no doubt have enumerated in his report, began the year most auspiciously. Due to the energetic interest of the President and the other officers and trustees, we saw a ten per cent increase in the membership of the congregation. The Sisterhood had probably the most successful year in its history, from the standpoint of membership, money raised, and interesting activities sponsored.

I believe it may be said without any false modesty that your rabbi likewise made considerable progress toward more effective service of the congregation. A closer personal relationship to the members, which naturally comes with time, enabled him better to interpret the congregation's wants and needs. His sermons likewise showed improvement and were better adapted to his audience's tastes, besides representing a greater maturity of thought and increased skill in organization and presentation. Attendance at services improved, although it still left much to be desired.

Your rabbi's influence was more definitely felt in the Jewish community, outside of the congregation, as well as in the non-Jewish community, where he was able to represent his people with greater prestige and to more telling effect. Several articles published in journals of national circulation and a paper delivered before his national rabbinical conference also reflected a certain amount of honor upon the congregation which makes it possible for him to carry on this type of work.

Ours remains probably the only congregation in the country whose rabbi edits, types and mimeographs his own Bulletin, which, according to reports, is read ever more faithfully and with greater interest by the members. It serves to keep the members in closer touch with their congregation and its activities. No doubt many of the members will be astonished to learn that approximately seventy-five letters per month, dealing more or less directly with congregational business, issue from the rabbi's study.

The religious school continued to function progressively, and to initiate certain educational experiments designed to better religious instruction throughout the country. Chief emphasis was placed this year upon the study of the Jewish holidays, as also the Jewish background of the American patriotic holidays, with an eye towards heightened emotional and intellectual appreciation of the beautiful customs surrounding them. It is regrettable, however, that insufficient interest on the

part of some of the parents necessitated the disbanding of the high school class, thus leaving without religious instruction or expression a group of children which actually needs it most and is really most promising of good results. It is also to be regretted that the enrollment of the school was so small, but that is no one's fault, being traceable to the deplorably low birth-rate in our Reform Jewish homes. Your rabbi has done what he himself could to remedy this sad situation, but better cooperation from the members is also necessary.

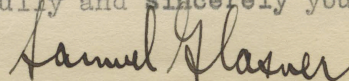
In this connection, your rabbi and his wife were deeply gratified by the cordial welcome which was extended their daughter, both by the Sisterhood and by the individual members. We cannot thank you all enough for your many thoughtful kindnesses.

At this point I should mention that in view of both the rabbi's increased family responsibilities and the more effective service which he has been able to render the congregation, a sizeable increase in the rabbi's salary would seem to be in order, especially considering the fact that an increase in the form of a bonus, which was promised him last year, was never forthcoming. An increase of six hundred dollars, making a salary of three thousand dollars per annum, should not be too much for this congregation to meet. To the members of the congregation it would represent an increase, on the average, of less than ten dollars per year per member, whereas to your rabbi it represents the difference between a decent standard of living and an ever-increasing indebtedness. I trust that you will give this matter your very serious attention and most favorable consideration.

Although the rabbi is generally not supposed to bother about the financial aspects of Temple management, I have frequently been embarrassed because there were insufficient funds in the treasury to pay my salary on time, and at the same time it has pained me greatly to see our loyal, devoted, and truly self-sacrificing officers turned into mere bill-collectors. Without any justification at all, they have been forced to chase around town in search of funds to meet current expenses and been subjected to personal humiliation in the endeavor to collect dues which were actually owing and should have been paid promptly upon presentation of the quarterly statement and without complaint. Although Mr. Axelrad was most generous with his time and effort, and the Sisterhood, with its money, a more fundamental approach to the problem is called for. Even to my non-business mind it yet seems apparent that some balance must be achieved between money spent and money actually collected in dues. To achieve this by cutting expenditures is inadvisable, because these are already ridiculously small for any congregation. The only alternative is to increase the amount of collected dues. How that is to be effected I leave to your own consciences, good will and common sense. But it seems to me that it must be achieved in some way or other, and it needs the cooperation of every single member.

In conclusion, I wish personally to thank Mr. Bortz, our President, for his guidance and assistance and for his loyalty to me personally and to the interests of the Temple. I am deeply grateful, too, to Mr. Irving Silverman, our Secretary-Treasurer, who has been a patient, pains-taking worker on a difficult, trying, and oft-times thankless job. The congregation could not have functioned one-tenth as well without his help. And I also appreciate greatly the work done by our other officers and trustees, including Mr. Morris Friedman, our thorough-going Building Superintendent, and Mr. Abe Axelrad, our hard-working Financial Secretary. But a word of special thanks is due the Sisterhood and its very capable president, Mrs. Louis Michael. They indeed have been "an ever-present help in time of trouble." And above all, I want to thank you, all of you, the members of this congregation, for having made my task here so easy and so pleasant. I hope and pray that, if it is your wish as it is mine, our relationship may continue as an ever-richer source of benefit and satisfaction both to you and to me.

Faithfully and sincerely yours,


Rabbi Samuel Glasner.