



Dear Touro Family,

Touro is a historic and sacred community. Our most important asset is, without doubt, all of you – our cherished members. As we have learned so poignantly in recent months, it is the involvement, love, and support of our membership that truly defines us. We have also been reminded in recent months of how much we treasure our majestic synagogue building. Not only is it one of the most sacred and consequential Jewish places in New Orleans and beyond, it is our family home. And like a family home, it houses our joys and sorrows and memories and learning and sacred moments. It too is a part of us, and we all look forward to the time when we can freely and regularly return home.

When we do, we will once again marvel at how carefully and lovingly maintained our structures are, and also acknowledge that they are in need of renewal. For example, our frequently repaired roofs have served us well beyond their expected lifespans and must be replaced in order to preserve the usability and beauty of our buildings. Our HVAC systems are likewise in need of modernization and replacement in coordination with the roof work. While we have recently improved accessibility with an outside lift to the sanctuary, and an inside lift to the bimah and staff and clergy offices, we are in need of an elevator for accessibility to our second and third floors of our education building. We hope to add gender-neutral family bathrooms on our main level, and to reconfigure our office space to better accommodate staff needs and offer a more welcoming environment for all who enter our facilities. Such improvements, among others, will ready our home for the next phase in the life of our wonderful congregational family, in keeping with our deep sense of connectedness to our history and the greater New Orleans community, and our ever-evolving vision and aspirations for the future.

While it has been quite a number of years since we have conducted a capital campaign, it is very likely that we will be doing so in the near future. In order to best prepare for this, Touro Synagogue has engaged the national nonprofit, Partners for Sacred Places, to conduct a feasibility study to measure and quantify the scope of a campaign to raise funds for our needs. Immediate Past President Teri Hunter will take the lead in working as our liaison with Partners on this effort. Partners for Sacred Places' mission is helping congregations like ours – congregations with a historic presence who make a true impact on their communities – by providing a realistic roadmap for a potential congregational and community-wide campaign. A letter of introduction from Partners is enclosed. Over the coming months, Partners will interview a range of congregants as well as other community stakeholders and leaders to gain an understanding of Touro's place in the city and our fundraising potential. Interviews will be brief, informal, and confidential. Most important, they will help provide us with critical insight as we work to preserve our legacy while continuously growing and evolving – both now and for future generations of the Touro family and the broader community. If you are called upon for an interview, we very much hope that you will agree to participate.

As we embark upon this feasibility study, we are thrilled to tell you that Touro has been awarded participation in the 2020 matching grant program from the National Fund for Sacred Places. The National Fund is a program of Partners for Sacred Places. Participation includes a matching grant and a package of customized planning grants, training and technical assistance through Partners for Sacred Places in collaboration with the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Touro was one of only a few sacred places to be awarded participation in the program this year, and the only Jewish one. We look forward to updating you with more information on this exciting news in the weeks to come.

With much gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lisa".

Lisa Gurk Herman, President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rabbi Katie Bauman".

Rabbi Katie Bauman



Partners for Sacred Places

AT THE INTERSECTION OF HERITAGE, FAITH, & COMMUNITY

October 15, 2020

To the members, neighbors, and community of Touro Synagogue,

It is with great pleasure that we write to introduce ourselves and our organization, Partners for Sacred Places. We are thrilled to have been selected by the leadership of Touro Synagogue to conduct a feasibility study to help plan and prepare for a potential capital campaign that would help it sustain and build its vital role in New Orleans.

Partners is a national, non-profit organization with expertise working with congregations to build capacity and raise funds to ensure that their historic buildings continue to play a vital role as civic assets. Founded in 1989, Partners is the nation's only organization dedicated to the sound stewardship and active community use of historic houses of worship.

Our approach to fundraising is holistic. We work with congregations to leverage donors from the congregation and the wider community. During the feasibility study, we will speak with members of the congregation, as well as community members, local stakeholders, and civic leaders to understand Touro Synagogue's importance and impact.

The feasibility study will gather information and insight through brief (about 45 minutes) and confidential interviews. These conversations will help us learn more about the role of Touro Synagogue and its building in the life of New Orleans. Our findings will inform a report that helps to establish realistic fundraising goals and timelines for a potential capital campaign, which will be shared with the congregational leadership and with all interviewees.

We very much look forward to working with the leadership and congregation of Touro Synagogue as well as its neighbors in New Orleans on this important project. As the steps are underway, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

We look forward to meeting and working with you,

Gianfranco Grande
Executive Vice President