

Beth Shalom Congregation
Columbia, MD 21044



Dear Susan,

It is my personal pleasure to join the voices honoring you for 25 years of dedicated service to Beth Shalom Congregation.

As one of the first women to be ordained by the Conservative Movement, you have been a true trailblazer, modelling for future generations what inspired female rabbinic leadership looks like. Through your teaching, mentoring, and spiritual leadership, you have enriched your congregation immeasurably. And through your scholarship, you were an important early voice in lifting up the experiences of Jewish women through your co-edited volume *Daughters of the King*, a work I have happily included in my teaching at JTS. As you begin this next chapter, we honor you and your success in transforming Beth Shalom Congregation into the center for Conservative Jewish life in Howard County, Maryland.

JTS has also benefited from your leadership in numerous ways since you were ordained and earned a doctorate in Ancient Judaism. As a JTS member of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards (CJLS), you helped shape the evolution of Jewish law, particularly on issues that pertain to Jewish women. Your *teshuvot* permitting partial-birth abortion, allowing women to serve as witnesses and judges for religious matters, and clarifying the role of mikveh in modern Judaism – established you as one of the Conservative Movement's foremost Jewish *halakhic* voices and demonstrated the vital importance of bringing a gendered lens to the creation of responsa literature.

A passionate champion of the ideals and institutions of the Conservative Movement, you have inspired your congregants to engage more fully in Jewish life. You have also mentored numerous talented young people to pursue careers in the rabbinate, cantorate, and Jewish education. All can link their success directly to you – for seeing in them the Jewish leaders they were destined to become.

Please accept my heartfelt *yasher koah*, on behalf of your friends and colleagues at JTS, on your outstanding career of service to the Jewish people.

We at JTS are so proud and honored to call you an alumna.

Warmly,

Dr. Shuly Rubin Schwartz
Chancellor