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New Light Congregation voices unanimous support for next steps on the memorial to 10.27.18 and new Tree of Life organizational plans

Congregants are encouraged by remembrance, rebuilding, and efforts to eradicate antisemitism

PITTSBURGH – May 3, 2022 – The Board of Directors of New Light Congregation, one of the three congregations whose members were killed on October 27, 2018, on the Tree of Life site, has voted unanimously in support of advancing plans for an official memorial commemorating that day. It also supports the formation of the new 501c3 called Tree of Life, which is dedicated to ending antisemitism and will include a museum, the memorial, and educational programming and outreach.

New Light Congregation is encouraged by the formation of the new organization and its important next steps for creating a memorial that will honor the memories of all eleven 2018 victims. During the past two years, family representatives of the deceased and the three congregations who lost members that day – New Light, Dor Hadash, and Tree of Life*Or L'Simcha (TOLOS) – have participated in intensive collaboration for memorial planning.

“We commend the creation of the new 501c3 organization and all those who’ve helped get us to this point. We call on the community to help create a lasting memorial to the victims and support Tree of Life’s efforts to eradicate antisemitism here and worldwide,” said Stephen Cohen, New Light Co-President.

Although New Light Congregation opted in 2020 not to return to its rented space on the Tree of Life site, its members remain deeply supportive of the new organization and all its initiatives.

“Thanks to the efforts of the Tree of Life*Or L’Simcha Congregation, a world-class architect, Daniel Libeskind, has been retained for the memorial design, and a robust and comprehensive national and international fundraising effort has been created,” added Stephen Cohen. “The Tree of Life*Or L’Simcha Board members are to be commended for their perseverance and foresight. They’ve put together a comprehensive package that commemorates and honors the victims; remembers that this was the worst antisemitic attack on U.S. soil, and creates programs to educate and help eradicate antisemitism.”

“While there are many museums dedicated to the study of the Holocaust, it should be noted that there is no museum in the U.S. dedicated to displaying the history and impact of antisemitism. Only by exposing the past – including the loss our congregation experienced – can we educate the public about the horrors and falsehoods ascribed to antisemitism and seek to eradicate it once and for all,” said Barbara Caplan, Co-President, New Light Congregation.

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About New Light Congregation

New Light Congregation is a Conservative synagogue situated in Squirrel Hill with a 100-year history of serving God as Jews and is often called the “most haimish shul in town.” New Light is building a Memorial Chapel at its Cemetery in Shaler Township dedicated to remembering and honoring the three New Light congregants whose lives were taken on October 27, 2018 - Richard Gottfried, Daniel Stein, and Melvin Wax. While overwhelmed with sorrow for the atrocities committed on October 27, 2018, its congregants are continuously encouraged by the compassion, kindness, and support from people throughout the world and of all religious faiths. Visit <https://newlightcongregation.org>.