To our Fellow Greater Cincinnatians,

We, the Greater Cincinnati Board of Rabbis, are profoundly disturbed by the hostage situation that unfolded over multiple hours of the Sabbath in the synagogue of Congregation Beth Israel of Colleyville, Texas yesterday.

For the third time in recent American Jewish history, we are faced with the disruption of Shabbat morning worship by an act of terror. We add our expression of gratitude to the FBI for their contribution to freeing the captives and to our colleague, Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker, who was ordained here in Cincinnati, and who demonstrated courageous leadership in the face of the unimaginable.

To our Cincinnati Jewish Community, your rabbis are here to process this trauma and move forward together.

We are keenly aware of the symbolism of anti-Semitism that is stirred by this having taken place at a house of Jewish worship. We urge our neighbors and fellow people of humanity to condemn with us this ancient and yet sadly modern reality. We are all vulnerable when one of us is vulnerable.

Also, we urge our community and all our allies to resist and condemn any anti-Muslim rhetoric that is floating in the atmosphere around us. We will not perpetuate hatred in any arena, at any time.

All of our religious siblings are hurting too, knowing that this could have been their community of faith.

On this Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. weekend of commemoration, we renew our commitment to Dr. King’s own words of wisdom: “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

And in the words of our own Jewish tradition’s morning prayers that we say with extra fervor today, Blessed are You, God, Who Frees the Captive.

The Greater Cincinnati Board of Rabbis