



HOLSTON UNITED METHODIST  
HOME FOR CHILDREN



Feb. 9, 2022

To Whom it May Concern:

Last week we visited Jewish institutions in Baltimore, MD, and met with rabbis and leaders serving in various Jewish communal fields. We shared coffee with the head of the Jewish Children's Adoption Network, and toured the pre-school of Talmudical Academy, a Jewish private school, together with its principal emeritus. We visited the Ner Israel Rabbinical College, one of the largest and most prestigious such schools in the country. We visited the office of the Star-K Kosher certification, to learn about Kosher food preparation, before sharing lunch in a sushi restaurant under its supervision.

We shared a great day exploring Jewish culture and beliefs, and developing our friendship. Without exception, the rabbis and Jewish leaders voiced their conviction that Jewish and Christian agencies had the right to only partner with those sharing their faith while serving children. They felt the pursuit of our mutual religious freedom was both reasonable and non-discriminatory, because each agency is thus permitted to serve while observing the tenets of its faith. One used the words said by Moses to Joshua (Deut. 31:7), *Chazak v'Ematz*—Be Strong and of Good Courage, to encourage continued pursuit of our shared interest in religious liberty.

The world can easily mistake religious disagreement for hostility and prejudice. Nothing could have been further from the truth, as we laughed and genuinely enjoyed our time together. We obviously have, and did not question, our deep theological disagreements, but focused instead upon our many shared interests. We both strongly agree that the Constitution of the United States aims to protect our religious freedoms, as well as those of other faiths, and we also agree that we are friends. We also, for that matter, both enjoy good sushi. May we all continue to differentiate between *disagreement* and *discrimination*, while respecting the religious convictions of those we meet.

Sincerely,

Reverend Bradley Williams  
CEO

Holston United Methodist Home for Children

Rabbi Yaakov Menken  
Managing Director

Coalition for Jewish Values