

## Part 1

L'shanah Tovah! Happy New Year! Rosh Hashanah is often called the birthday of the world. According to the rabbis, the world is 5780 years old. Of all the Jewish holidays, Rosh Hashanah is the most universal. It is not about us as Jews at all. But rather about all the world and how the passage of time affects all creation.

The passage of time is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, our previous year ended. For some of us we say hallelujah; it was a difficult year. We are glad it is over. For others, the conclusion of last year saddens us. It was an amazing experience. And for most of us, it was a year, filled with pain and excitement, fear and joy.

On the other hand, Rosh Hashanah is the beginning of a new year. In many ways, I think children understand Rosh Hashanah intuitively, a sense we lose as we get older. As a child almost every year brings a new experience. At about eighteen months we begin to talk. At five we start school; at six we begin getting our adult teeth; at age 13 we have a bar/bat mitzvah; at 15 we can get a driving permit, and at 16 we can get a driver's license. At 18 we can vote; at 21 we can drink. Almost every year brings excitement and adventures.

As an adult, our years start to blend together; we think of our life as a decade rather than a year-our 20s, 30s, 40s,...And here we are again at Rosh Hashanah, just one of the markers reminding us that we are getting older whether or not we still want to.

Recently, I went to the dermatologist because I discovered new bumps on my body. The doctor looked at them and said I had wisdom spots. I said, "You mean I have bumps because I am getting old." She said, "I prefer to think you are aging with grace." Wisdom spots. With new adventures like that to look forward to, who would want to celebrate a new year?

Did you know that I would guess about 60-70 percent of you who have been here before sit within 2-3 rows of the same section every year. Let's do an experiment - how many people try to sit in

the same area every year? Self-imposed assigned seats, allowing me to look out and see who is no longer here in **his or her** seat; Who is new to our community trying to find a new unassigned assigned seat; Who is coming to services alone this year for the first time; Who is here with new family members

- Wisdom spots.

Over the summer I found this card about how to use time....

Take time to work; it is the price of success

Take time to play; it is the secret of perpetual youth

Take the time to think; it is the source of power

Take the time to read; it is the fountain of wisdom

Take the time to pray; it is a conversation with Gd

Take time to laugh; it is the music of the soul

Take time to listen; it is the pathway to understanding

Take time to dream; it is hitching your wagon to a star

Take time to worship; it is the highway of reverence

Take time to love and be loved; it is the gift of Gd

May we use this coming year, this gift of time to work, play, think, read, pray, laugh, listen, dream, worship, love and be loved.

If you are able, please rise as we chant the Barachu on pp. 62

## Part Two

Since I arrived at CJC, I have listened to an ongoing mahkloket, sacred argument and sometimes not so sacred argument, about when CJC actually began. Since before I arrived at CJC, our original incorporation papers were lost. **We** had no way of verifying the answer. Until this summer - no more mystery, no more arguing, at least about this. Sheila Glanz was going through Milt Glanz's, of blessed memories, papers. She found our original incorporation documents as well as the document that announced our formation into a congregation. Although we were legally incorporated in 1972, we became a separate congregation called CJC in 1970. So now we know. CJC began in 1970 and became legal in 1972. Like Temple Isaiah and Beth Shalom, this is our 50<sup>th</sup> year. Happy Birthday CJC!

As part of Cantor Kintisch's arrival to CJC, Judy Vogel-Glaser updated our history, our understanding of who we are and how we got here, our histogram. She listened to many different congregants share their memories and then developed a summary of our history which you can find on our brand new website which Robin implemented this summer.

Often when pioneers share with you our history, there is an emphasis on how we have changed: no more self-generated prayer books for every bar/bat mitzvah, no more slide shows during Shabbat services, no more "old blue"-the congregational mahzor/high holy day prayer book. Rabbi Siegel had a covenant; I have a contract; Very few congregants, no not even you, Alan, know every member by sight. CJC has a small professional staff instead of being 100 percent lay-led. The grand musicals of "Fiddler on the Roof" or the celebration of Yiddish, have not been replicated in a long time. There is no longer one community school for all the Jewish children of Howard County. CJC is no longer an unaffiliated congregation. We are no longer who we were. The truth is if we did not change during the course of 50 years, we probably would no longer **exist!**

As I read the histogram, although these important differences exist, what jumps off the page at me is how similar we truly still are. Now CJC is part of a continuous chain founded on and nourished by all of you along the way, taking different turns and staying true to its core values.

From the very beginning, CJC was a grassroots congregation with a high level of congregant participation. And though in 1971 Rabbi Siegel was hired, followed by two interim rabbis and then me, CJC remains today, a lay-led, lay-controlled congregation. You determine our new initiatives and what we do. I like to think you appreciate Cantor Kintisch and my guidance. But everyone knows our clergy colleagues at other congregations have a lot more power than we will ever have. For as proud as I am to be your teacher and facilitator, I know I am not you. CJC is your congregation - the best of which has come to life because of your wisdom, your time and your effort. Take, for example, our klezmer band founded by Mike Kushner of blessed memory, and carried on by Steve Zurier; or our Shabbat Band founded by Steve Zurier; the film series proposed by Sylvia Block and shepherded by Tom Laufer; Chapter 2 created and guided by Charlene Levine; the second day of Rosh Hashanah co-led by clergy and lay leaders developed with Rabbi Ilyse Kramer's ideas based on the model of our monthly b'yachad service; the green team founded while I was on sabbatical by Dan Cohen and Bonnie Sorak today transformed into an OMI interfaith solar panel committee working to place solar panels on our roof; the Chevra Kaddisha founded and shepherded by David Zinner. The list goes on. CJC remains one of the most lay-led congregations with professional staff that I know of!

Now don't get me wrong, I am not ready to write myself out of a job. I like to think, and have been told, and do believe that the professional staff is crucial to facilitating, supporting, and contributing wisdom to all of these initiatives. It is truly our symbiotic relationship that creates our sacred spiritual community.

In the 70s when CJC blossomed into the congregation it was to become, it was radical for a congregation to be founded on equality as one of its core principles: equality between men and women, equality between different economic, racial and ethnic groups of people, to name a few. Our tag line written decades later codifies this equality in a theological realm - "Wherever you are on your spiritual journey you are welcome here."

It is written in our histogram that we combine traditional worship and contemporary additions into our worship services. Originally apparently, a lot of Beatles songs were sung. Today there is a wide variety of contemporary Jewish music, most recently Joe Buchanan and Rick Reicht to name a few. The poetry/readings added to the High Holy Day service and many Shabbats picked and, in some cases, written by congregants are meant to enhance our spiritual connection to our ancient received tradition.

From the beginning there was a strong emphasis on adult learning. The Chavurah Saturday morning service initiated by Avraham Forman and David Ruben was originally only a study group. The prayers were added years later to the service. Today adult education, co-led by Del Stanfield and Betty Silverglate, brings a wide and interesting array of Jewish teachers to our community. The men's club, co- led by Gary Toller and Alex Ross, augments our Jewish learning by sponsoring fascinating secular speakers. In addition, the best of our cultural changes have been launched with an adult education initiative like our new dues model initiated by Sheldon Gnatt, our volunteer committee chaired by Judy Vogel Glaser, our participation in the Howard County coalition for immigration justice with Anna Rubin and Roz Zinner as our liaisons, and our tikkun olam policy originally written by Dan Cohen and Sheldon Gnatt.

Since those beginning years we have grown. In order to know someone you must get up and introduce yourselves to them. We have affiliated with the Reconstructionist movement, placing us in the context of something bigger than we are by ourselves. We are embarking on new initiatives - like our engagement project chaired by Eileen Singleton for which many of you we hope will be interviewed; our

new social committee chaired by Jim Caffey; and our initiative, co-chaired by David Glaser, Marcy Quill and Gemma Holgate, to spend this year explaining what it means from a secular and Jewish point of view to be transgender or gender non-conforming. What an exciting way to honor our fifty years by creating and implementing new and exciting, dare I say, innovative ways to continue exploring our Jewish spirituality. I can't wait to see what next year brings!

From what I can tell, one thing we have consistently not been good at is advertising our unique gifts to the outside world. Like all congregations, different committees ebb and flow. Right now our membership committee is in bad need of a reboot. If you are interested in helping us get the word out into the community about how wonderful CJC truly is, please let Cantor Kintisch know.

Throughout this year we will be celebrating our fiftieth in many different ways. Please pick up the flier outside and join us as we explore our roots, our music, our rabbi and cantor emeriti, all culminating in a wonderful gala this spring. L'shanah Tovah/Happy 50<sup>th</sup> CJC

Part three

L'shanah Tovah! Happy Birthday world! Happy Birthday World! You think I have wisdom spots-our planet is definitely showing signs of wear and tear. Most recently the human fires set in the Amazon forest and the increase of horrific hurricanes due to climate change to name a few.

There is a wonderful quote by Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel "As civilization advances, the sense of wonder declines. Such decline is an alarming symptom of our state of mind. We [human beings] will not perish for want of information but only for want of appreciation." Isn't it time we as a world, as a country, as a state, as a county, as a congregation start taking care of our home before the heater stops heating the winters and the flooring starts to flood? It is no secret I love children's books. This summer on our praying on the paths service, I read a book, This House is Made of Mud by Ken Buchanon. This book reminds us that our home on earth is inhabited by so many different creatures and is filled with so many different challenges. The challenge is to find a just economically feasible way to live on while protecting our planet, our home. To constantly place the planet last in this very long list of ethical demands is short sighted to say the least. Even the rabbis know we had a moral responsibility to take care of our planet. In Kohelet Rabbah 7:13, the rabbis taught "When Gd created the first human being, Gd took Adam all around the trees of the Garden of Eden and said to Adam 'Look at my works, how beautiful and praiseworthy they are! And all that I have created, it was for you that I created it. Pay attention that you do not corrupt and destroy my world; if you corrupt it, there is no one to repair it after you.'"

While saying all of that is happening in the coming year, it is important to remember all the good people have done in the past. We have truly made progress. Locally 42% of the Chesapeake Bay has met water quality standards. That is the highest in 30 years. This is the first time in American history that more energy is derived from renewable resources than from coal. There has been a 25% increase in the number of wild mountain gorillas since 2010. The country of Columbia has created the largest

tropical rainforest park on the planet. In 2018, China banned the use of ivory (to name just a few successes. People have destroyed the earth. We can also save it. We have to. For our own Jewish tradition teaches us if we don't there is no one else who will.

The first tikkun olam initiative created at CJC during my tenure was our green team. Thanks to the hard work of our green team, we have rain gardens at Oakland Mills Interfaith Center, OMI, and added trees to our property. We are currently working with the other congregations and the OMI board to have solar panels placed on our roof. But sadly our green team has lost some of its most giving participants due to many different legitimate reasons. Our green team is waiting to be reactivated. It only takes your time and expertise. Send me an email or give me a call, if you are interested. What better way to celebrate the world's birthday by dedicating ourselves, each one of us to do one new thing to help take care of our planet?

L'shanah Tovah! Happy New Year world!