

# Columbia Jewish Congregation

## Kol Nidre



**9 Tishrei 5781 ★ September 27, 2020**



*Wherever you are in your journey, you are welcome here*

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## FROM RABBI SONYA STARR

To state the obvious, all the holy days of the month of Tishri (Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot and Simchat Torah) are going to look, sound and feel different this year. To be honest, different does not need to be less than. Sometimes we choose to do something different to shake ourselves out of a rut, to learn from our mistakes, to evolve into another level of spirituality. Plato said "Necessity is the mother of invention." We only hope that this year, necessity, will allow us to create experiences, that are spiritual, meaningful, profound, creative and life affirming. After all isn't that what the month of Tishri is about?

Before I explain the different choices we made in creating the High Holy Days, I want to first thank the religious practices committee (Bill Levine, Dan Shernicoff, Eliana Holgate, Evan Wasser, Roni Berkowitz) led by John Evans, and our Gabbai, Joe Bergstein. You all put in so much more time and effort than you ever signed up to do. You have been amazing, thoughtful, creative, wise and respectful partners during this difficult time. Thank you!

Since March, we have been balancing what was Jewish and Sacred with what was COVID-19 safe as applied to Shabbat services, holidays, b'nai mitzvah and yes high holy days. It has been a moving target as new information has arrived. In the end, the aspects of our life that were discussed the most were: social distancing, mask wearing, microphone usage, exposure from singing and shofar blowing, inside versus outside gatherings, amount of time on a computer screen, and what technology do we need to acquire, rent and/or use to reach out of our comfort zone to you. All the while remembering the mitzvah of Kiddush Hachayyim which I shared with you first in June, Kiddush Hachayyim reminds us that our job is to sanctify life. And so this year we transform our High Holy Days into another kind of experience in order to live to see another day when we hope we will be able to again safely meet in person.

In order to minimize your time sitting at your streaming device in one sitting, we have prerecorded birchot hashachar and pesuki d'zimra, an extended Drosh for second day Rosh Hashanah in the form of a round table discussion and the haftorot for Yom Kippur morning and afternoon. Please make the

time to benefit from what they too have to offer your spiritual experience.

Clearly the Torah service has been completely altered to meet the needs of COVID 19. There will be no marching the Torah around. The Aliyah will be given to the Torah reader, someone who lives in their house, or someone who will do the Aliyah from their seat in the congregation. The Torah readers will wear masks while chanting because they are sharing a microphone and chanting. Both are considered contagions. The person who dresses the Torah will be from the same family as the person who lifts it or the Torah will be placed on the table and the lifter will walk away so that someone else can come up to dress it. All those involved in the Torah service will wear washable gloves just for the Torah service.

And then there is the blowing of the shofar. The blowing into the air by far is the highest risks. There are synagogues that are not blowing the shofar at all this year. We are lucky our sanctuary has two outside doors in addition to the one that leads to the lobby. I will be standing outside the one door, Cantor Kintisch will be standing near the other one, and you will hear but not see the shofar blown. The mitzvah is to hear the shofar. Thank Gd you will fulfill that mitzvah.

Usually there are two places in the Rosh Hashanah service that we blow shofar. The first is by itself right after the Torah service. You will hear it then! The second is melded into the musaf/second Amidah. Because of the complexity of both honoring this Amidah and blowing shofar, we will not be blowing the shofar this second time.

Neilah, the last service at the end of the Yom Kippur day will be outside weather permitting to allow more people to appreciate this beautiful service. Like all of our outside services, you will bring your own chair, prayer book and mask. In order to not share microphones, we are asking that all contributions to this service be handed in ahead of time. Neilah will be on Zoom.

One of CJC's calling cards is our sincere attempt to get as many people involved in the service as possible. Due to our need to make sure there are never more than 50 people in the sanctuary socially distancing themselves and masked, we will be giving more honors to fewer people. Please know that we

appreciate everyone and all you give to our community. You are not taken for granted or less than.

The other calling card is the desire to have as many opportunities for you to have your spiritual needs met. For this reason, tot services, Jr. Congregation, teen hangouts, discussion groups and adult social time will be all on zoom allowing you to share your voice and experience with each other.

Thankfully, Tashlich and Sukkot are celebrated outside. We will continue to do so this year just without food.

Simchat Torah will honor the Torah through songs, poetry, and teachings. We will return to the dancing, klezmer band, unrolling the Torah and carmel apples b'ezrat Hashem, next year.

## FROM CANTOR BENJAMIN KINTISCH

### Together, Apart

I write to all of you with fondness in my heart, even as we experience the bittersweet feelings of this most unusual High Holiday season.

It has been a real joy for the past three years to serve as your Cantor. I have enjoyed singing, dancing, playing music, and celebrating with many of you. I have been honored to also support you during sad moments and through pastoral care.

High Holidays have always been a highlight of the year for me. It is the time of year when our choir shines brightest, and when many musicians play with the band or for solo opportunities. When we gather in a big room together, the sound of all of CJC singing as one community is splendid. Sadly, I won't be able to experience that particular joy this year, my final year serving as your Cantor.

This year, as we know all too well, will be very different. We won't have big crowds in a room. We won't have the choir singing together at all. Even our band has been minimized with safety considerations in mind.

And yet, despite these limitations, we will be **together, apart.**

I am sure there are other changes I forgot to explain. If you there is a choice we made that you disagree with or do not understand, please feel free to get in touch with me.

Throughout the High Holy Day Period we ask Gd to have compassion on us, to forgive our missteps, to remember our intentions. This year I ask that of you.

But mostly I ask you to sing loudly, engage completely, think deeply, learn and teach Jewishly and feel intensely. For ultimately what is the month of Tishri about? It is about us as one community celebrating the gift of life, the community we cherish, and relationship we have with each other and Gd.

May we all be sealed in the book of life for good health, purpose, peace through justice, and compassion for ourselves and others. Amen

While we will not be in the same room, we will be **together, apart.**

While we cannot sing in one strong communal voice, we will sing from our respective homes, **together, apart.**

While we cannot pray in one voice, we will pray from our homes, **together, apart.**

So much of what makes synagogue life special is how we gather for the activities I listed above: celebrations, worship, community meals, learning, mourning and more.

We have found ways over the past six or seven months to creatively "meet" when we can via Zoom and using other technology, and that has been a wonderful thing. Nonetheless, I know that I miss seeing our fellow congregants in person – and that is hard.

My prayer is that this time of **together, apart** does not last too much longer. I hope and pray that the health crisis related to COVID-19 may be managed such that we can be in person together soon. Until then, I wish you and your family a beautiful and meaningful High Holiday season, even as we celebrate **together, apart**

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## Supplement 1 -- Candle Lighting

As we enter into Yom Kippur, we remember all those whose lives were cut short, who are unable to sit here with us. We remember all who died in the Holocaust, Jews, Gypsies, members of the LGBTQ community, people of color, people with special needs, political dissidents and righteous gentiles. As we honor those of the past we think of our role today in creating the just and peaceful world they were deprived of. Although this following reading is a collection of quotes, as a whole they become one reading reminding us to honor their memory by renewing our faith in our ability to become more than we were in the coming year.

“Look carefully and you will see we are all orchards hiding in seeds. You will see inside each of us is this Pharaoh. And inside every Pharaoh is a slave. And inside every slave is a Moses.” (Jacob the Baker by Noah ben Shea)

“The sword comes to the world on account of the delay of justice and perversion of justice.” (Pirke Avot 5:11)

“Justice, Justice shall you pursue. (Dt. 16:20)

“Thus said Adonai...Execute true justice; deal loyally and compassionately with one another. Do not defraud the widow, the orphan, the stranger and the poor; and do not plot evil against one another.” (Zechariah 7:9-10)

“The hope of a secure and livable world lies with the disciplined nonconformists who are dedicated to justice, peace and brotherhood.” (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr)

“You are educated. Your certification is in your degree. You may think of it as the ticket to the good life. Let me ask you to think of an alternative. Think of it as your ticket to change the world. “ (Tom Brokaw)

“One person alone was brought forth at the time of creation in order to teach us that one who destroys a single human soul is regarded as the destroyer of the whole world., while one who preserves a single human soul is regarded as the preserver of the whole world.” (Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5)

## Supplement 2 -- Gd of My Heart

Gd of my heart, give me vision to inspire me, that, working or resting, I may always think of You.

Gd of my heart, give me light to guide me, that at home or abroad, I may always walk in Your way.

Gd of my heart, give me wisdom to direct me, that, thinking or acting, I may always discern right from wrong.

Gd of my heart, give me courage to strengthen me, that amongst friends or enemies, I may always proclaim Your justice.

Gd of my heart, give me trust to console me, that hungry or well-fed, I may always rely on Your mercy.

Gd of my heart, save me from vain knowledge, that I may always study Your word.

Gd of my heart, save me from unhealthy pleasures, that I may always find joy in Your beautiful creation.

Gd of my heart, whatever may befall me, rule over my thoughts and feelings, my words and actions.

## Supplement 3 -- Come Home

-Devon Spier

To the daughter who does not visit her mother, we say:  
Come home.

To the mother whose family who has perished from old age or enmity, we say: Come home.

To the son whose father is unknown, we say: Come home.

And to the broken-hearted who has been bound by all of this or none of it, we say: Come home.

As you turn to us during these holy days

let us turn to you,

our souls walking toward each other

and welcoming each other,

on the long and mysterious walk home.

#### **Supplement 4 -- In 2020 I'm Saying Al Chet**

For the sins of silence,

For the sins of using the "I" voice of individualism when a "we" born of collective accountability was called for.

For the sins of failing to acknowledge our own and other's Power.

For the sins of judging others favorably and unfavorably without gaining proximity to their lived experience.

I am saying Al Chet

For the sins we have committed through conscious and unconscious racial bias.

For the sins we have committed through hardening our hearts to the need for change.

For the sins we have committed through insisting on urgency and perfectionism as a measure of human value.

I am saying Al Chet

For the sins we have committed through the denial of the tzelem Elohim (the divine spark) within Black bodies.

For the sins we have committed in deceiving others by not teaching our children the worth, value and contributions of Black people.

For the sins we have committed in not honoring and protecting the journeys of Black elders and Black children.

For the sins we have committed through confessing our commitments to ending racism insincerely.

For the sins we have committed that desecrate the divine name by allowing White Supremacy habits to shape/determine our practice of Judaism.

For all these, we seek pardon, forgiveness and atonement.

May all of us be written and inscribed in the Book of Life. May joy and blessing follow our reflection, our atonement and our commitments to living truth, reconciliation and repair in our time...