STANDING
for Racial Justice

Dearest CJC,

Since 2020, when our *Standing for Racial Justice Committee* (SRJ) was formed, committee members have been studying our nation's long history of racial injustice, including patterns of oppressive indifference, unintentional insensitivity and the many race-based, discriminatory laws and policies chartered against Black, Indigenous, Hispanic and Asian Americans, including Jews of Color. Side-by-side with this learning, SRJ members have been reflecting upon and interrogating their own implicit biases. I have been proud of their learning and their evolution.

The committee members have taken on the sacred work of mobilizing our congregation to pursue a more socially just world through education, collaboration, and action as directed by the words of our Torah, "*love others as yourself*" [Leviticus 19:18] and "*justice, justice you shall pursue.*" [Devarim 16:20]

I write to you now, enthusiastically, to share an update on SRJ's work and to encourage you to participate in its next phase!

UPDATE:

With my whole-hearted support and with the recent endorsement of CJC's Board of Directors, SRJ members have been working to write and adopt a congregational statement publicly expressing our synagogue's commitment to pursue racial justice.

In the next few weeks, Judy Vogel, Co-Chair of SRJ, will invite you to participate in a Focus Group to express your thoughts on this statement. Then, guided by your ideas and proposed language, our SRJ committee will develop CJC's Racial Justice Statement.

The goal of creating this statement is to convey safety and care to all who wish to join the CJC community and to fulfill our existing tagline: "*Wherever you are in your journey, you are welcome here*."

REQUEST:

To accomplish this project, we are asking you to do the following:

1. Attend a Focus Group in person. Judy will announce dates in the next few weeks.
2. Volunteer to be a Focus Group Leader or Recorder. Judy will provide the agenda and guidelines for these roles.
3. Volunteer to help SRJ review the ideas that are contributed by the Focus Groups and select language that expresses our congregation's unique words of welcome.

When the statement is drafted, by spring, it will be reviewed by the Board and, we hope, endorsed. We will follow the endorsement with action within our greater Howard County community!

Meanwhile, I encourage you to check out two wonderful CJC resources:

- SRJ's Racial Justice Resource List - Interested in digging in deeper, yourself? SRJ has compiled a comprehensive Resource List to support congregants (of all ages) exploring the many facets of racial justice - through recommendations of books, articles, videos, and podcasts. These resources are grouped by topic and recommended age groups.
- The Weekly Update, which all members receive by email on Tuesdays, includes a short review of a highlighted item from the Resource List that SRJ members found especially interesting.

Our tradition tells us that it is through words that the universe was created. So too, through our carefully chosen words, we hope to bring more intentionality to our congregational racial justice work and an ever-growing consciousness to our incredible community.

May our words build, hold, and heal!

Please reach out to Judy Vogel (judy@vogelglaser.com) to volunteer for a Focus Group, ask questions about this project, or get more information about CJC's Standing for Racial Justice Committee.

לצדק/L'Tzedek/For Justice!

Rabbi Michael