

Lach L'Chai

By Rabbi Howard Mandell

October/November 2016

Dear Congregants and Friends:

One of the most meaningful aspects of the High Holy Day season is, to me, the way that the season tends to bring the community together. As I looked out from the bimah, I derived great joy, satisfaction, and meaning from seeing the faces of so many people who are important to me and to each other.



Rabbis, like myself, start preparing for the Hagim at least a month before The Holy Days actually arrive. Yet, as much work as a rabbi puts in to trying to make the services truly joyful and meaningful to the congregation, it requires the involvement and hard work of numerous other people to actually make this happen. I would, therefore, like to personally thank all those people, whose efforts coalesced to make the services the best they could be.

On the administrative side, I first want to thank our dedicated Administrator, Amy Sherr, who also starts her preparation for the holidays well in advance of Rosh HaShanah. I would also like to thank our Board President, Tanya Gould, for having arrived early each day, having stayed late, having made sure that there was an oneg and ‘break fast’ after each of the respective holidays, and having filled in whenever and wherever needed.

With the services being at the beautiful Andover Country Club, the Torot and the portable ark, along with the machzorim, etc. had to be transported to and from the CBI Sanctuary and storage. I want to thank Howard Spector and his staff, Jon Brody, Jeff Tye, and Roger Roy for making this happen.

With regard to the services, themselves, our Synagogue is truly blessed to have such an inspiring and talented Cantor, Judith Berkson, who many of us have come to know as a friend over the past decade since the merger. We are also truly blessed to have our own in-house cantor, Terry Fetters, who does such an outstanding job of leading the preliminary services each day.

With music being the “language of the soul”, I think we can all agree that the singing and the playing of instruments by a few members—Jeremy Finkle, Elaine Winic, Mike & Merle Roesler,

and Bob Moverman—beautifully augmented the chanting of Cantor Berkson, elevating the spiritual level of the services even higher.

One thing that some of us may be unaware of, and thus take for granted, is how well the services flowed, which is not an easy task, especially on a day like Yom Kippur when there are so many different services and so many honors being given. I want to sincerely thank Jeff Tye, the ‘general’ in charge of “command central”, along with Mark Lang, Jon Brody, and Elaine Winic, who made sure that people were made aware of when they were to fulfill their assigned honors, and Mark and Jon who also performed as gabbaim.

I also want to thank, moreover, all the people who leyned Torah and chanted Haftarah—Terry Fetters, Judy Mizner, Adelle Stavis, Ben Lang, Elaine Winic, Jeff Tye, Jeremy Finkle, Alan Friedman, Jon Brody, and Peter Edelstein—as well as all those who had English readings, opened and closed the Aron Chodesh, “the holy ark”, who lifted and dressed the Torot, and who served as ushers. And thank you to Emily Marget for polishing the silver Torah adornments. I also want to thank Robin Rose, who so eloquently delivered the President’s message on behalf of Tanya.

Two of the most important and vibrant committees at our Synagogue are CBI Cares and Social Justice, and I want to thank first the new Chair of the CBI Cares Committee, Leslie Silverstein, who spoke, and the Immediate Past Chair, Alan Friedman, and Amy Friedman Lee, Social Action Co-Chair, who spoke, and her Co-Chair, Susannah Abbott, for the invaluable roles they have played and are playing with their committees. I am hopeful that the other members of our Congregation will give due consideration to their invitations to serve on one or both of these committees.

The mitzvah, the responsibility, in our tradition during the High Holy Days is for us to listen to the powerful sound of the shofar. I want to thank David Tye & Ben Lang for, not only helping us fulfill this mitzvah, but for doing so in such a skilled and passionate way; and also to Mark Lang who called out the notes.

Finally, I want to thank everyone, who took the time just to attend and to actively participate in the services.

With my memory being somewhat challenged, I have likely left off the name of somebody, who also contributed to making the High Holy Days so joyful and meaningful to us. I am thus asking, in advance, for your forgiveness and understanding.

We have a wonderful synagogue community, and I pray that our High Holy Day experiences will serve as a reminder, during the coming year, of what we can accomplish together, when we combine our respective skills and talents.

May 5777 be a year filled with much joy, love, and blessing for your loved ones and you!

Rabbi Howard Mandell