

# Cantorial Message

January 2020

What an amazing conference! About 5,000 Jews gathered in the Windy City, Chicago, to learn, pray, sing, dance, meet old friends and make new ones. The Plenary sessions had inspirational speakers, which included the Governor of Illinois, J.B. Pritzker, Dr. Andrew Rehfeld, President of HUC-JIR, Cantor Barbara Ostfeld, first woman ordained as Cantor, Rabbi Rick Jacobs, President of the URJ, Jodi Kantor, Pulitzer Prize-Winning Investigative Reporter/ Journalist of The New York Times. At our last Plenary, we were treated to the magnificent voices of Dr. Walt Whitman and the Soul Children of Chicago. The ruach in the room created by their singing and movement, filled the enormous room and everyone in it! As if that wasn't enough, members of The Second City comedy group kept us laughing as our time together drew to a close. Beyond all of the inspirational speakers, who instilled a deep pride of being Jewish, engaging and championing causes in our communities, supporting causes within Reform Judaism, and feeling like you are a part of something bigger, we had a multitude of classes to choose from. I chose to take classes in retaining our post B'nei Mitzvah students, designing congregational experiences through human centered design, engaging students in prayer, using music to create bridges, and involving our younger students and families in tikkun olam, being good stewards of our earth. Many of the T'filah Services were very moving and filled with beautiful music. I hung out for a while at the Jewish Rock Radio area, where I listened to Rabbi Josh Warshawsky, and Billy Jonas. I attended a band called So is Life, filled with people I admire, like Dan Nichols, Cantor Ellen Dreskin, Josh Nelson, Cantor Rosalie Will, with Elana Arian playing violin and mandolin. Rich Recht who performed at our Temple some years back, sat at our dinner table for a bit and said hello. Highlight, getting to talk to Dan Nichols, who I have admired for many years. Biennial is a great way to recharge your soul with spirituality, your mind with education, and your being with comradery. Looking forward to the 2021 Biennial in Washington, DC. You should join us! You would have an amazing experience!

CABARET CABARET CABARET!! Please let Armi or I know if you're going to be a part of our show!

Thank you to Rabbi Polly Berg, Merrill Mazzella, and Jo-el Fernandez for leading Shabbat Services while we were at Biennial.

Thank you to Pat Sher for chanting Torah!

B'shir,  
Sherry