

Cantorial Message

September 2020

The Coronavirus has changed our lives in many ways over the last 5 months. Like you, I wear a mask whenever I go grocery shopping or into any place that I am around other people. I also make sure to keep my hands clean. I'm working from home and, like many of us, miss being at Temple Emanu-El with our extended T.E. family. At least we have been able to be outside during the warm weather, that's a positive! I try to get out and walk a few times a week and I'm looking to add bike riding to my list of things that make me feel good. If asked what I miss the most since this virus became a part of our lives, it would be hearing your voices at Shabbat Services and Shabbat hugs. Spending Shabbat with you virtually may not allow me to hear your beautiful voices singing, but what it does allow me to do is see your beautiful faces and brilliant smiles! I love hearing everyone wishing a Shabbat Shalom to each other before we begin services and doing the same as we say good-bye to one another and close the Zoom door for the evening.

Now we are getting ready for the High Holy Days to arrive and for the sake of keeping everyone in our T.E. family safe, we have decided to observe these Holy Day services from our homes. Though I will miss not being on the bimah, conducting the choir, hearing your voices, or seeing everyone in person, I look forward to seeing your faces on my screen.

How can you make the High Holy Days special in your home? Dress up, change the scenery, sing, sing, sing. It's tough singing alone, I feel that myself, but if I know that you are out there singing, it helps me feel more connected. Mindset also has a part to play as we enter our home sanctuary. How do we give these Days of Awe the attention and feeling that we get when we are in the sanctuary among our friends and family? Kavanah, the intention that we bring to the prayers we recite, can help with bringing the meaning of these Holy days. The Days of Awe should be a time when the words of these prayers help give us insight into ourselves. The question we ask every year? Have we been the best that we could have been this year? Did we miss the mark? Have we made amends with family and friends? With the opportunity to begin again with a "clean slate", we move forward into this new year on the path towards finding our better self. It isn't an easy task, nor should it be. We should be aware of our actions every minute of every day. The journey is what makes us better people. We are human and not perfect, and recommitting ourselves to being better human beings helps us to lead a more meaningful and peaceful life. I will leave you with the reading from our machzor, "Said Rabbi Levi Yizchak of Berditchev: In every action, we must regard our own body as the Holy of Holies, a part of the Supreme Power on earth - that is, as a manifestation of the Divine, Whenever we lift our hands to do a deed, let us consider them to be G*d's instruments." May this New Year, 5781, bring you peace, health, and a successful journey to finding your best self, as we move through these challenging times.

Looking forward to seeing you at our Zoom Shabbat Services and High Holy Day observances.

A big thank you to our Summer Service lay leaders! Loved working with all of you.

Shanah tova u'mitukah,

Sherry