

**YOM KIPPUR MORNING ADDRESS**  
**Ed Zaval, TBS President \* 2014/5775**

Good morning. *Shabbat Shalom! L'Shana Tovah!*

My name is Ed Zaval and I am proud to serve as the President of Temple Beth Shalom. I wish all of you and your families a wonderful new year!

My wife, Janet, and I joined the Temple in 1993. We did so, so that our two daughters, Lisa and Shara, could have a strong Jewish education and for our family to grow within a strong Jewish community. In a very short time, we discovered the remarkable warmth and spirit of a thriving congregation. For us, the transition to a more active and meaningful relationship with this community, and with our clergy and staff, evolved over time --- something that grew steadily stronger and more mature as we ourselves matured. Today, I am happy and proud to be part of the lay leadership of TBS, helping us to fulfill our mission and live out the traditions of what has truly become *our second home*.

As you may know, we are blessed by the leadership of an active Board and Leadership Council, as well as the countless volunteers who help shape the work of our Committees, of Brotherhood and Sisterhood, of Garden Club, of Three Score and More, and of our Youth program. We are a remarkable *and involved* community.

***We are also a growing community.*** In the past 10 years, our community has grown from just under 500 households to approximately 800 today. Our learning programs -- pre-K through 12 -- include over 600 children. At the very same time, approximately *40% of our community* does not have children living at home. Among our newest members each year are adults who have discovered in TBS a spiritual home that speaks to their hearts, minds, and lives.

***We are a learning community.*** Hundreds of adult learners participated last year in our many classes, seminars, and programs. In addition, our educators have created an environment and a curriculum that makes Jewish learning for our children engaging, vibrant, and fun.

***We are a caring community.*** Together, we touch the lives of countless individuals and families through acts of loving kindness, by providing comfort, and practicing inclusion.

***And...We are a spiritual community.*** Together, we engage in a vibrant spiritual life through prayer, song, meditation, and sharing.

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We gather this morning to reflect upon the New Year ahead. During this past summer, our Board and senior professionals also gathered -- in partnership with one another -- to consider our community's 'key initiatives' for the coming year.

We enthusiastically reaffirmed our commitment to *Mikdash*. In the months ahead, our *Mikdash* Leadership Team, together with our Building and Community Campaign Teams, will be taking the 'next steps' necessary to break ground in November of 2015. This effort will include carrying out our community campaign, securing town approvals, completing details of our relocation, and finalizing our construction plans. On behalf of the entire temple leadership, we look forward to working with all of you to make our *Mikdash* project a reality!

Also, during the coming year, we will continue to build the spirit of community that we experience together through Temple Beth Shalom. We will be doing this by strengthening our encounters with Jewish tradition -- *and also with each other*. Initiatives, such as our new “*Connector*” program, our successful “*Share Shabbat*” dinner program, and our engagement in Social Justice are just a few examples of how we are working to make this happen.

And we will be seeking other opportunities to bring us together. Last spring, our pilot program, “*Empty Nesters*”, drew many congregants who had shared that they were looking for new meaning and connection to this community now that their children were no longer at home.

Truly, we have much to offer each other at *every* age of our life’s journey.

To guide all of this important work, our leadership is learning together. We have been reading an outstanding book by Dr. Ron Wolfson, entitled Relational Judaism. In it, Dr. Wolfson describes the importance of a community-focused approach to congregational life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

And lastly...and joyfully...we continue to bring strength to the leadership of our congregation. This year, we will celebrate through ritual Rabbi Todd’s recent ascent to *Senior* Rabbi – as he and Rabbi Jay work together in sacred partnership.

As I look out, I see so many faces. But I also see one face – the face of a healthy and caring congregation. One that embraces the present and is dedicated to building an exciting future. I thank every one of you, for helping to make our vibrant Temple community all that it is.

***Shabbat Shalom! L’Shana Tovah! A sweet and happy new year to all of you!***