

On Erev Rosh Hashanah, Rabbi Todd spoke with our community about hope. It is hope, he reminded us, that suffuses our prayers and inspires us to keep reaching outwards as we move through both good and challenging times. He also urged us to remember that hope drives the creative process and lifts us to action, spurring us to repair what is broken in the belief that tomorrow can be better if we work to make it so.

His words inspired me to think about how that spirit of hope, together with a large measure of work and determination has driven so much that we can be proud of here at TBS. We are now a community of nearly 900 households. Remarkably, even as we have grown, we retain the personal feel that has long been our hallmark. Friends greet each other with warm hugs and handshakes on Shabbat and I often see how those who are new are invited to sit with others so they won't feel alone. Our nationally recognized children's center and learning programs for older children are at full capacity, and our building brims with activity day and night. Our Sisterhood, Brotherhood, Garden Club and Three Score and More or Less communities inspire so many friendships amongst our members, and there is simply a sense of warmth and community that greets anyone who enters our doors.

Rabbi Todd's words also led me to consider my hopes for our congregation. While we have so much to be proud of, we know that our success as a community comes because we are always working toward higher aspirations.

My first hope is that we will always be a community of inspiration: Inspired by prayer and the study of Torah, let us be inspired to make the world a better place. Let us gain knowledge and awareness of the issues that face our world and let our knowledge spur us to advocate for positive change.

We have long been a community which cares deeply about social justice. For many years, our actions were individually driven and we lacked a cohesive structure to channel our energy. I'm excited to say that over the past year much has changed. As Rabbi Jay shared on Rosh Hashanah, many members of our community who are passionate about achieving righteousness and justice have come together to engage in education, awareness raising and activism. Throughout the spring and summer months the initial phases of TBS Tzedek, our Social Justice initiative began to take shape and we are better positioned than ever to tap the energy of our community to make an important difference in the world outside our walls.

My second hope is that we will continue to be a community of compassion: Let us see when others are troubled or suffering and let us use our talents and energy to lift them up, to make life easier, in even the smallest of ways. This is not about fixing what is wrong, but about offering support so that another person can find their own strength to carry on.

Our chesed community, has touched so many lives, including that of my own family. Several years ago, when my daughter was 15 she had knee surgery for a soccer injury. One day as she was recuperating, the doorbell rang and someone, I believe it was Margie Glou, announced that she had come to deliver a healing wrap. My son, Daniel, listening from the other room heard "healing wrap" and thought that someone was going to perform a rap song for Hannah so that she would feel better. It turned out to be a beautiful, soft, knitted mini-blanket—She was thrilled, Daniel was greatly disappointed, and we ended up with a funny story to tell. But chesed is also the jar of honey left on our doorstep last week because our family faced a loss in recent months. When someone needs rides for medical treatments, our community offers a companion and driver. When a family experiences a loss, we provide food for the shiva, and in multitudes of other ways, our chesed

community ensures that we are all embraced and cared for in times of challenge.

I also hope that we will always be a community of humility and wisdom: Let us possess a willingness to see where we are falling short of our highest aspirations; that we are able to step back and measure ourselves dispassionately against our ideals, accepting that progress may be incremental, but also acknowledging where we are still striving.

At Temple Beth Shalom we have consistently driven to improve what we do. Whether it's reimagining our learning programs, as we did when we created Mayim, or re-building our temple home, we regularly hold up a mirror and determine where we want to do better. Over the past six months we have engaged in this very process of reflection as we developed a new strategic plan. Led by Jeff Shapiro and Peggy Lowenstein, and guided by Rabbi Jay, a diverse group of TBS members came together and spent hours thinking about the values of our community and what we would like to achieve. I'm excited about the roadmap we created and am happy to say that we hope to formally adopt this new strategic plan in the next month. Most importantly, I believe that as we implement it together, we will move from strength to strength over the next five years.

Finally, I hope we will always be a community that supports itself with "nativ lev," a generosity born of love, and an equal sense of commitment to our shared future. One year ago, we moved back into this beautiful new building, and over the course of this year we have experienced so much within its walls—moments of celebration and learning, personal conversations with our caring rabbis, and times of meaningful worship and reflection. As you may remember, Mikdash, our project to create our new temple home was a community wide effort. It was envisioned through hundreds of congregational conversations, about our deeply held values, our passions, and our

shared commitment to our temple community. It is now time to extend this conversation to an area that we haven't ever fully envisioned—that of long term financial sustenance. It is my hope that the spirit of *nadiv lev*, offerings of the heart, together with a deep sense of commitment will inspire us to live even more fully as a giving community.

Inspiration, compassion, humility, wisdom, generosity, and commitment. As I aspire to these ideals for myself, I hope and truly believe that they are within reach of us as a community as well.

On behalf of my husband Sam and our children, Hannah and Daniel, I wish you *Shana Tova*, a very sweet and healthy New Year.

And now, I am happy to welcome Beth Pinals, past President, who will share a little more about our new initiatives to support our financial future.