

Rosh HaShanah 2023 - 5784

President's Address

Karen Goldberg

Hello friends, Shana Tova. . .

What a beautiful view I have right now. I can't tell you how happy I am not to be at Woodwinds. It has been a long, long three years. Right Bruce? Right John?

In this sacred space, in front of this magnificent ark, it is a profound honor to stand before you as president of this beloved synagogue. This season of reflection and renewal calls us to explore the essence of our faith and our values. So, I will take this opportunity to ask you about our synagogue's values. Here is my question. If you had to pick one thing that our temple should provide, what would it be?

For me, it is connections. Connections to each other, connections to our creator, connections to our heritage.

The Hebrew word for connections is Keshet and this is the theme I wish to talk about today; the importance of forming authentic connections that strengthen our existence as a Jewish community and nourish our individual souls.

In a world where technology is dominating more and more of our lives, I often wonder if this brings us closer together or further apart. It is beautiful that we have congregants that are streaming this service right now who would otherwise not be able to observe Rosh Hashanah with our community. It is certainly fun to scroll through face book (or fake book as I often call it) and see what vacations you all have been on, what your children are up to, and how your babies and puppies are growing. Did you know that Snap Chat has a new feature called a virtual friend. You can ask it questions about trivia, it can offer you advice and can help plan what to make for dinner. It gets to know you over time and changes its responses based on your likes and dislikes. That's kinda cool? Maybe kinda scary? My perspective, as a pediatrician, is that despite how technologically linked we are, teenagers are more lonely, more anxious, and more depressed than ever. I don't believe that the answer is more medicines or more therapy (although these often do help). I think the answer is more KESHER.

In this ever-changing world, it is our connections that provide us with stability and meaning. They remind us that we are not alone on this journey, and they give us the strength to face whatever challenges lie ahead. This is what our children need, and this is what we need.

We at TBT want to help forge these connections so this year we are forming small interest groups that will meet monthly. We are calling this new program, you guessed it Keshet. Because even if you choose Shabbat dinners or mountain biking or cooking classes or the care takers group, they are all really about forming genuine connections. We will have sign-up

sheets at our break-fast so jump right in and sign up. You may just learn something new and make a new friend.

There are so many ways to experience connections at TBT. Come to a Shabbat service and then stay to schmooze at the oneg. Come inside when you drop your children at religious school and join us for tefillah. Come join Kol Ami on our hikes, movie discussions, wine tasting, or the book club. Join the men's club for whatever it is they do. Come meditate Saturday morning and then you can be nice and relaxed for Torah Study

But our connections extend beyond these sanctuary walls. Our vibrant congregation is actually out in the community building homes, supporting refugees, fighting antisemitism and hate, collecting backpacks for children who can't afford them and always speaking out for social justice, Tikkun Olam. You can jump in, or you can slowly dip your toe in the water.

So please take a moment during these High Holy Days, to reflect on one thing that you can do to deepen your connections to each other, to Temple Beth Tikvah and to our broader Jewish community. In a time when divisions and discord often dominate the headlines, we, as Jews, have a responsibility to be a beacon of unity and understanding. Our bonds, formed through our shared heritage, faith, and history, remind us of the importance of empathy, compassion, and tolerance. We share in each other's joys and sorrows, and in doing so, we create a network of love and compassion that sustains us through life's trials and triumphs.

Over the last three years our temple has faced unprecedented challenges, but we have also witnessed remarkable resilience and strength within our congregation. We have adapted, we have learned to pivot, and we have remained flexible and strong. Our commitment to our values and to our community has never wavered. We have remained connected.

Our synagogue stands as a testament to these enduring connections, connecting generations past, present and future in a tapestry of faith and love. We are here in our new sanctuary because so many of you share this love for TBT and realize the importance of supporting our Jewish community on the shoreline. We are here more specifically because we were able to raise over 7 million dollars through your donations. So, I would like to say a sincere and heartfelt Toda Raba. However, our work is not done.

During Selichot we heart Rabbi Offner ask for forgiveness for the delays in this building project. Now, on Rosh Hashanah, it is my turn to ask for forgiveness. Many factors contributed to making this project more expensive than anticipated 4 years ago. We now have a bank loan that accrues interest every day. It is my goal to pay it back fully over the next 2-3 years. I am asking you all to help us meet this goal. If you are able, please contact me about an additional donation or a first-time donation to our ongoing capital campaign. As Theodore Herzl said, "if you will it, it is no dream".

My dream for all of us at this High Holy Day season is to achieve deep reflection, sincere repentance, and profound connection. May the bonds that unite us as a congregation grow

even stronger and may the connections we form today continue to guide us on our spiritual journey in the days, weeks, and years to come.

Shanah Tova - a sweet and blessed New Year to you all. Thank you for your dedication to our synagogue, and may our connections continue to flourish in the new year ahead.