

## **Kol Nidre – Yom Kippur Address by President Pennie Meiselman, 5778/2017**

It is my privilege and honor to give my last High Holy Days speech as President, to you and my wish for all is to have a healthy, happy and peaceful 5778.

Whether you are members here or guests, I am so pleased you are able to join us tonight to observe both Shabbat and Kol Nidre, a Double Mitzvah.

The view from here is very exhilarating seeing so many congregants, their families and visitors worshipping together on Kol Nidre 5778. Our beautiful sanctuary, our Aron Kodish holding our sacred scrolls including a recent addition this year, the Book of Esther in its Shoshon home and our beautiful Standing Menorah fills me with such pride in Congregation Beth Yam and all that we accomplish each year. The beauty that surrounds me does not happen without a great deal of support from our generous congregation. I would like to share an excerpt from Exodus “And G-d spoke to Moses, saying speak to the children of Israel, that they should take a gift for me, from every person whose heart moves him. You should take my gift.... and let them build a sanctuary, and I will dwell in their midst,”

Here at Congregation Beth Yam we have a minhag, a custom, of giving with a free heart. Here as in ancient Israel, the gift is not measured only by its value but its intent. Through the generosity of members, past and present, we have been able to create this beautiful home in which we can worship, teach, learn and live our Jewish faith in the Low Country.

We have built and re-built this physical building through the efforts of many who sit here tonight. Here in our sanctuary, at this awe inspiring time, we can feel our spirituality grow among our families, friends and neighbors.

As we follow on this path during this Holy Season we are reminded by the Sages that it is our role to support the Temple. Our dues support approximately 50% of the cost of maintaining CBY, which includes our Rabbi, our Religious School, our Music program which includes our Student Cantor, our Music Director and Shabbat Choir, our office staff and our beautiful building.

In order to fully support all of our functions, we must reach out to our members and ask them to participate in our various Fund Raising endeavors. In some congregations, it is the tradition for members to stand during a Kol Nidre Appeal and announce their financial commitment to the entire congregation. I am not in favor of that approach, rather I like the CBY approach – Friends support Friends. Our Friends Campaign is a critical aspect of our Fund Raising efforts. Please be an even better Friend to CBY this year. We need your participation to continue to be the full-service Synagogue in the Low Country.

I am reminded of the story of Honi, the Circle Drawer, from the Talmud. Honi asks a man who has planted Carob trees if he expects to live another 70 years to eat the fruit that the trees will then be able to bear. The man replied: I did not find the world without Carob trees when I entered it, as my fore bearers planted from, so I am planting for those who come after me.

In our tradition we have committed to assuring the continuity of our heritage in the Low Country. With this in mind, the Board of Directors created the CBY Endowment Fund to grow the financial assets that would become our tree to cover us against any unforeseen event that we might face. We seek commitments from all of our congregants from their estate plans to this Endowment Fund. I urge you to respond positively to our fund trustees, as they reach out and contact you, to help us grow our own Carob tree.

We are fortunate at Congregation Beth Yam to have and have had many generous congregants whose generosity was responsible for our beautiful House by the Sea. In addition there is a group of anonymous donors who have provided the funds for our Student Cantor, our Music Director and Shabbat Choir. These funds are running out.

For these special programs to continue, we depend on “T’Rumah” which means Gift. The Torah says this generosity comes from the soul and generates an open-handed response. Once these Days of Awe are over, if you could look into your hearts a little deeper and provide a little extra to help CBY it would be greatly appreciated.

I want to publicly acknowledge my appreciation to the Board of Directors and all the committee members to let you know how important your involvement and dedication is.

I especially want to thank my husband Alan for his never ending support of me performing the Mitzvah as the President of our wonderful congregation.

L’Shana Tova

G’mar Chatimah Tova

May you be sealed in the Book of Life for a good New Year.