

Erev Rosh Hashana Message
by Congregation Beth Yam President Michael Weingarten
September 16, 2012

Good Yom Tov! It is a such a pleasure to have so many congregants and visitors here to welcome in the New Year and I am deeply privileged and honored to stand here as the president of this wonderful synagogue. When Janet and I joined CBY 5 years ago as affiliates, we never imagined that we would settle here permanently. Joining CBY, becoming involved, and making so many wonderful friends became one of the major motivating factors in our decision to move from the DC area where we spent the majority of our adult lives. This evening I want to spend a few minutes - I promise it will not be lengthy - in talking to you about why our CBY family is so special and is a family that provides a place that nurtures, teaches, enhances ethics and religious values, as well as a place for celebrations, and a place to turn to in a time of need.

I want to first thank Judy Bluestone and Pennie Meiselman who are both vice presidents of the CBY Board of Directors and the chairs of our High Holiday Committee. The enormous amount of time that they, our office staff, and the army of congregant volunteers have spent to make the holidays perfect is greatly appreciated by our entire congregation. Thank you all for a job well done!

I also want to thank Rabbi Bloom and welcome Linda back to her permanent home here in Hilton Head. We're all excited that she'll now be able to participate in our CBY activities on a regular basis. We all are so lucky to have Rabbi Bloom as our religious leader and I am particularly grateful in having him as my partner in leading the congregation. His commitment and dedication to CBY and the entire lowcountry is demonstrated in everything he does. His religious services and sermons are always inspiring and he takes every opportunity to use his skills and knowledge to teach all of us. Every week when he and I meet to discuss the week's upcoming events, we begin a with a study session where he teaches me something I didn't know about ritual or traditions and sometimes I even teach him something about business practices. We are both truly blessed to have such a mutually beneficial relationship.

I also want to thank our CBY board of directors. Each and every one of them has taken an overt leadership role in keeping the wheels of our Temple running smoothly. Almost every committee and major function we conduct is either led or has the participation of one or more of our board directors. I'd like to take a few minutes to talk about many of the activities that are ongoing and in plan for this upcoming year.

Our affiliate organizations, the Sisterhood and the Men's Club are very strong and active and both support CBY financially as well as providing social, cultural, and religious functions for their members. The Sisterhood is led by a very beautiful and capable individual, who just happens to be my wife. Not only do they contribute financially every year to our Temple, but as a member of the national WRJ their dues contribute to the many charities the WRJ supports. They organize our weekly Friday night onegs, sponsor our community Seder, conduct their own women's Seder, provide bereavement support, support a monthly community soup kitchen, manage our Judaica shop in our lobby and

maintain our JRC library which houses many books of Jewish interest. On an ongoing basis they have their own book club and Lilith salon to discuss contemporary topics on women's issues. Our Men's Club has two handsome and capable co-presidents, (my wife says it takes 2 men to do the job of 1 good woman!). They annually organize all the ushers for our High Holiday services and provide all the ushers for life cycle events held in the Temple. Their biggest event of the year, the annual CBY Men's Club Charity golf tournament, will be held this year on October 8. The profits are distributed to many of the charities in the lowcountry including VIM and Deep Well amongst others, as well as a significant portion contributed directly to CBY. The tournament has become so popular that it sold out almost two months ago. The Men's Club also conducts social opportunities for their members including a Bagels and British breakfast to watch the British Open golf tournament, a Superbowl party held in our social halls, an annual softball game with our youth and a New Year's Eve party they will be sponsoring jointly with Sisterhood. I urge all of you who are not members to join our affiliate organizations to make them even stronger. They need your support and it's the right thing to do.

All of our committees have been busy at work planning for an exciting and event filled year. Our Ritual Committee focuses on all things sacred to Judaism. They participate with the rabbi in the planning of all of our services and recently had one of the Torahs we're using during these holiday services restored to a 'kosher' state. Our Fundraising Committee has kicked the year off this past Thurs. evening with our very successful 92StY program. There are four more programs scheduled through this December and we're anticipating additional programs to be announced for the Winter and Spring season. The programs for this fall are featured on the poster in the lobby. In addition, we're having a Jazz Concert open to the entire community in the lowcountry on October 14th at the Hilton Head Beach & Tennis Resort as well as a CBY gala being planned for the Spring. Our Outreach Committee which focuses on our interfaith families was formed just 2 years ago is exceedingly active, and in within their first year received national recognition from the URJ. They are sponsoring an Outreach weekend on Oct. 19-21 including sessions featuring the national chairperson of the URJ Outreach function. Our Adult Ed committee is pursuing exciting plans to offer distance learning by teaming up with professors from the College of Charleston who teach Jewish studies. And of course, Rabbi Bloom is always taking the opportunity to teach us new things. He will be offering a new course this winter to expand our knowledge. Our Arts & Acquisition Committee, which keeps our Temple adorned with beautiful religious objects, was responsible for our impressive new Judaica display cabinet in our lobby, which was financed through the generosity of the Caplan Fund. We now have a home for many smaller objects of our heritage including the beautiful collection of Judaica on loan from Jean Caplan. Our very active Membership Committee conducts an annual dinner each year to attract new members, an ambassador program to initiate new members into our CBY family and a pot luck dinner to keep our members connected and enthused. Our Care Committee focuses on the needs of Jewish seniors as well as performing pastoral duties of support and comfort for those congregants who are sick and hospitalized. They have 4 events planned this fiscal year conducted in our social halls oriented to remote seniors, the first one scheduled this coming week on Sept. 24 to celebrate the High Holidays with a musical concert. Our Communication Committee keeps everyone informed internally as well as externally through our website as well our monthly

and weekly Tidings. Our Social Action Committee is our social conscience with many programs to help the needy including our current food drive – please fill your bags and drop them off in our JRC before the end of the holidays. They will be delivered after the holidays to Deep Well whose shelves unfortunately are almost barren. Through SAC, CBY supports the Back Pack Buddies program to feed needy children on the weekends, as well as Family Promise, which provides temporary shelter to folks who are homeless. Every year they organize our Mitzvah Day and the Blessing of the Animals, which this year is on Oct. 21st. Our Resource Committee has sponsored a leadership class the past 2 years for congregants who are interested in becoming leaders in CBY, many of whom are now on our Board of Directors. This year they are organizing a ‘Back to Shul’ Day on Sept. 30 for all our committees to show their wares and recruit volunteers to help support their efforts. Our newly formed Movers and Shakers Committee is planning to sponsor strictly social events oriented to the under ‘60’ set. Our Music Committee is responsible for the beautiful music we’re enjoying throughout these holidays as well as a newly formed CBY choir who sing several times a year at our Friday night services.

One of the things we’re proudest of, is the growth of our Religious School. We now have 54 children enrolled in our school, which is almost double what it was just a couple of years ago. Every Sunday after Religious School, we have a Boker Tov service that all the children and their parents attend. It’s heartwarming to see their enthusiasm and participation in the service. It’s held at 11:30 on each Sunday Religious School is held and I’d encourage you to attend to see how our Jewish traditions are being passed down to our youth. We also have a very active youth group which is growing. We hired a new Youth Advisor for this year and there are many plans to keep our youth involved in Jewish life.

Besides all the committees who plan and execute all of our activities and events, we have a large number of volunteers who keep the ongoing operation of our Temple running smoothly. These include the Budget and Finance Committee who manage all of our finances, the Administration Committee, who manage our front office staff and handles scheduling of all our activities and events, our House Committee who handles maintenance, landscaping, and ad-hoc construction projects, Security, Insurance, Legal, Nominating, Cemetery and lastly but by no means the least, our Endowment Committee whose mission is to help ensure our financial future. As you can imagine, it takes a large community of volunteers to accomplish all of these activities.

Since these are the Days of Awe and the most important holidays of the year, I’d like to end my talk on a religious note. I did some research and found out that when Adonai, our G-d, handed down the commandments to Moses, there were really 11, but there wasn’t enough room on the tablets for the last one. The last one went as follows: “Thou shalt volunteer in your House of Worship to enable your community to reach its fullest potential.” There is even a prayer related to this commandment, which we recite at the beginning of our Board of Directors meetings each month:

“Baruch atah Adonai Elohienu melech haolam asher kidshanu b’mitzvotav v’tizivanu la’ask b’tzorchai tzibur.

Praised are you Adonai our G-d, Ruler of the universe, who sanctifies us through mitzvot and has commanded us to engage in the needs of the community.”

Make this the year you take this commandment seriously and become a volunteer at CBY!

As a last note, again, it is wonderful to see so many worshippers here to celebrate the holidays and I hope all of you will be here for all of our holiday and Shabbat services. I look forward to greeting and speaking to as many of you as I can throughout the holiday season. For those of you who are visitors from out of town, we hope that any time you are here in our ‘paradise’ we want you to know you are always welcome to make this your Jewish home away from home. For those of you who are visitors and live here in the lowcountry, we hope you’ll seriously consider becoming a permanent member of our CBY family.

On behalf of Janet and myself, we wish you L’shana Tova Tikatevu v’Tikatemu. May you all have a sweet year and may all your names be inscribed and sealed in the Book of Life.

Shalom