

Josh Ravitch, Erev Rosh Hashanah Speech, 5772

Shana Tova.

I've been given the honor of speaking to you for a few minutes, on this day when we review the past year and look forward to the New Year. I offer a poem providing some highlights of the past year's events at Kehillah and some exciting future plans, and do so with sincere apologies to Theodore Geisel, otherwise known as Dr. Seuss, from whom I liberally borrowed and adapted portions of the first several verses.

When I leave home to go to shul,
Amy always says to me,
Josh, keep your eyes open, and see what you can see.
But when I tell her where I've been
And the things that I've seen
She looks at me skeptically and says
"Your eyesight is much too keen
Stop telling such wild tales,
Stop turning minnows into whales."

So what can I say
When I get home today?
All the way to our shul
And all the way back
I've looked and I've looked
And I've kept careful track
And what did I notice
Besides my own feet
Was a wonderful Yom Tov crowd
Here on Kehillah Street.

That's not all to tell of
That won't do at all.
We have many wonderful new members,
From both far and nearby
They add so much to our community
We can reach for the sky!

I saw many comfortable new chairs
Whose champion was Howard
And tall, hand-crafted new Reading Tables
Which over short people towered.

I saw Dina and Tamar and Religious School doings,

And our own special Steph, with new baby cooings
I saw Melissa scrambling diligently to keep things flowing,
And Megan with preschoolers, always coming and going.

We had a wonderful Pesach Community Seder
Over 100 people from young'uns to zeyda
And Shabbat Shiras and Tot Shabbats with guitars
And a parking lot constantly jammed up with cars
And at all the events were the Freedmans hard at work
From a car where cameras, dance shoes, and Havdallah candles lurk.

I saw the Purim Shpiel with much silliness continue to grow
And our newest act, the 5th graders, were the stars of the show
I saw Jonathan, Rafi, Meg, Cheri, Susan, Janet, Amy, and Mary
The talent on stage was poppin about merrily
We had tap dancers and prancers and kites flying high
We had singing and flinging and michigas oh so sly.

I saw Warren and Susan on committees galore,
Now they're off to Bawston and a grandbaby to adore
We'll all miss the family of Silbowitz
We're adjusting, though at times...I still want to shvitz
But I don't, thanks to Amy, Beri, Exec, Board, staff, committees and others
We're all pulling together, working like sisters and brothers.

Yom Tov speechifying would obviously not be complete
Without a plea for dollars and remodeling to entreat.
One big goal for this year is to beautify this room
With carpet and reshaping to make it all bloom.
Landscaping and new signs to inspire people to sing
And a refinished and welcoming administrative wing!
Some details were sent to your home in a letter
We'll still be warm, caring Kehillah...only better
If you like these High Holy Day services, these plans, or this poem, I suggest
A donation when the campaign calls would be most welcomed, with zest.

There are too many people here who contributed time, money, effort in oodles,
For me to acknowledge all in this very short moment, with kudos.
So I'll end simply by offering many nachas to all here today
Good YomTov, Good Yor, may good things come your way!