

Erev Rosh Hashanah
Warren Silbovitz, Kehillah President

L'Shanah Tovah and Happy New Year.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and our staff, it's my pleasure to welcome you to the Chapel Hill Kehillah Synagogue. It is truly an honor to stand before you as we usher in another new year.

I especially want to welcome those of you who might be new to our community; we want you to enjoy our services and we want you to feel welcome. You may have noticed that in the lobby there are pictures of our Board with their names. Each board member will be wearing a name tag. In addition, there are others who have name tags and all of these people can provide any information or help that you might need. Please do not hesitate to introduce yourself. We would love to meet you.

We are fortunate to have Rabbi Jen Feldman and Yoni Fischer lead us in prayer during these High Holy Days and we thank them for that.

I want to thank the wonderful group of people who work so hard to make the High Holidays happen. They are Nicci Gafinowitz who handles the community/social aspect, Jama Purser who takes care of the facilities issues, Diane Wright who does publicity, Randy Kauftheil who takes care of the ritual piece, Meg Lewis who handles security, and Sheila Tayrose and Andy Sachs who coordinate the ushering.

I also want to thank our hard working staff led by Melissa Segal our Executive Director, Dina Schiff our Religious School Director, Megan Hans our Kehillah Jewish Preschool Director, and Stephanie Stuchiner our Administrator. Your dedication and hard work is noticed and appreciated. We also have so many wonderful dedicated committee chairs and committee members who do so much for our community throughout the year. Thank you for helping to create this wonderful community that we all are fortunate to be a part of.

Our newly formed Board and Executive Committee want to provide for your spiritual, educational, cultural, and life cycle needs. Our intent is to be open and responsive to your concerns. Please tell us when you feel that we should or could be doing better. Do not hesitate to bring us your suggestions as to how to improve. I'm sure most all of you know a Board member who you would be comfortable talking with and I am always available for a conversation. You can find all of our

phone numbers and email addresses either in the Kehillah News or on the Kehillah's website.

As your new president, I am feeling many emotions. The responsibility I have undertaken sometimes feels overwhelming. Sometimes I feel uncomfortable in this position, but at the same time I am buoyed by the trust you have placed in me and I will work hard to prove that your trust is warranted. You might ask then, why do I do this? The simple answer is that I feel a responsibility to help carry on our Jewish traditions and learning so I push myself to confront my doubts. When the time and moment is right, we all need to determine what our responsibility is to our past and to our future, our children. As a Reconstructionist synagogue, we have the ability to carry on traditions and learning in a way that can work in today's modern world. We just need to make it happen. This is not always easy and I will speak more on this on Yom Kippur.

We live in a very complicated world and being a Jew today can be equally complicated. During the summer, I read the book *Sacred Strategies* which talks about transforming synagogues from functional to visionary. The book explains how congregations can transform themselves from functional institutions primarily geared to the consumerist wants of their members to sacred communities offering something far more meaningful--a religious vision, serious prayer, learning opportunities for all and a means to engage in acts of kindness. *Sacred Strategies* is about the role that synagogues can and must play in the future. *Sacred Strategies* tells how eight American synagogues moved from functional to visionary congregations committed to engaging members. I highly recommend reading *Sacred Strategies*. I was encouraged while reading this book to see that in many ways we already are a visionary congregation, but there is always more that we can do. As we go into the next year, I would like us to take a closer look at how we can be even more of a visionary synagogue and move to an even higher level.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, officers and staff of the Kehillah, I thank you for your support and involvement, and I wish you a sweet New Year.

L'Shanah Tovah!