

## **Rosh HaShanah: A Really New Beginning**



This year, our High Holy Day Worship will be a truly new beginning for our congregation. We will daven with a newly revised *Mahzor Seder Avodah*, we will be led by Hazzan Howard K. Glantz in his first services with us, and we will welcome new members from the Oxford Circle Jewish Community Centre-Brith Israel, who have now become part of AJ.

The publication of our new *Mahzor Seder Avodah* is the culmination of a two-year project that was set in motion

by the generosity of **Mark Rubenstein** and his family. The new volume is dedicated in memory of their wife and mother, **Barbara B. Rubenstein**. Barbara was a woman of stellar character, who loved AJ and the serene beauty of our religious worship. Identifying her memory with our most precious spiritual resource, the prayer book for the *Yamim Noraim*, the Awesome High Holy Days, hallows her life in a very precious way.

Through the Rubenstein endowment, every member of the congregation will receive a *Mahzor Seder Avodah* as a gift. Each single member will receive one copy, and each family unit will receive two. Additional copies for children and guests will be available for purchase or loan. Leather-bound copies, with the name of the owner embossed in gold, will also be available for purchase.

Through this expansive act by Mark and his family, the congregation will be able to shift quickly to the new *Mahzor Seder Avodah*, and ensure that everyone has one for the service. It will make the service this year extra festive.

AJ has used *Seder Avodah* since it was published by Rabbi Max D. Klein, our rabbi for sixty years, upon his retirement in 1960. Many of the distinctive aspects and associations of the AJ liturgy were fashioned by *Seder Avodah*. The new volume is distinctly in the *Seder Avodah* tradition. I have striven to hold fast to the special parts of the AJ service that are unique. The language, though reviewed thoroughly and edited, bears the stamp of Rabbi Klein's felicitous turn of phrase that makes worship poetic. At the same time, the book is considerably expanded as many traditional passages previously omitted are now included. New readings and poetry seek to make the volume more inviting and engaging in prayer.

It is my hope that this volume will be embraced by those who love *Seder Avodah* for its reverential majesty, and also by those who are seeking a greater link to the liturgical tradition of the ages of our people. As you know, Hazzan Glantz and his family join us from Farmington Hills, Michigan, where he has been the Hazzan of the same congregation that I served before coming to AJ. What a coincidence! Hazzan Glantz is a man of great energy and creativity. As I have worked with him over the summer, I know how eager he is to carry on the musical tradition of AJ, which is now his first priority.

As we all grow together, I know he will place his distinctive mark on the evolution of our congregation just as Cantor Davidson and I, and our predecessors, have done.

The weekend of September 10 and 11, 2004, will be the first opportunity for the Hazzan to demonstrate the remarkable versatility of his talents. On Friday night, he will lead "AJ's *Shabbat Rockin'* in the Jewish New Year's Eve." With a band and upbeat music, we will get the year underway. On *Shabbat* morning, he will lead his first full *Shabbat* Service with choir and organ. And on Saturday night, he will lead *Selihot*, the first High Holy Day Service.

I know you will welcome Hazzan Glantz, his wife Dayna, and their beautiful children Rafi, Remi, Rose, and Rory to AJ.

Oxford Circle Jewish Community Centre-Brith Israel is itself the result of the merger of two distinguished and historic congregations in Northeast Philadelphia. In fact, we have many AJ members who grew up, and learned about what it is to be a Jew, in those congregations. During the summer months, OCJCC-BI members already began to be involved in every aspect of AJ life. In September, there will be formal services transferring the *Sifray Torah* from their former location to AJ. Their presence and energy add a new dimension of spirit and fervor to our congregation. I am sure that our combined congregations will incorporate the strengths of both, and that a stronger, more vibrant congregational community will emerge as a blessing to our members and the region.

We have much for which to be thankful in this year's beginning of beginnings. Let us embrace our heritage, work with devotion to shape the present, and anticipate a future of Jewish conviction, commitment and strength for Congregation Adath Jeshurun.

Cindy and our children join me in wishing you all a happy, healthy and blessed new year. *LiShana Tova Tikatayvu vi'Tayhataymu*, May you be inscribed and sealed for a year of peace and goodness, love and blessing.

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