



## Rabbi's Message

### A MESSAGE FROM RABBI SILVERMAN

The value of Shabbat services on Friday is often misunderstood. It does not mean, all of a sudden, because someone decides to attend our evening service, that the individual has become a “Shabbat observer.” We had a surge in attendance on Friday, November 2nd, largely in response to the atrocity — the tragedy — which took place in Pittsburgh on the previous Shabbat. Being in our Synagogue that Friday night was an expression of solidarity, of pain, of remembrance, and of determination in the aftermath of the awful events which had come like a plague into our consciousness.

Being together for a Shabbat service can be a response to tragedy and can be a response to values of a different kind: We are together with other Jews and visitors, some of whom may not be Jewish: individuals, for example, who are studying or wish to learn about Judaism. We are together for a peaceful purpose, in the midst of a world that is full of conflict. We hear or read words which come to us from a long tradition. We can acknowledge that these words may not express our own thoughts. Yet we know these words are important: Without them we may not have come to be where we are in the world and in our own thinking. We hear a D'var Torah, words of teaching, usually from me, the Rabbi, and occasionally from one of you, members of CBJ. (In recent weeks, when I was away on two occasions, Seth Teles and Jeff Isaacson not only led services; they also gave thoughtful talks related to the Torah portion of the week.) We have a quiet time during services: time to let go of our daily struggles, time to meditate, time to think, time to remember those who are sick or injured and to send helpful thoughts in their direction.

Being together for a Shabbat service also means a chance to socialize with others who are there with us: those others who are there, perhaps, just to meet us. This weekly practice of ours is one of the most precious hours in my daily life. How important might it be to you? I can't answer that question. Why not try it? Give services a chance — any Friday night will do — and see for yourself!

*Rabbi Lawrence*