

## *Message from the Rabbi*

Marking time is a complicated business. The beginning of Mishnah tractate *Rosh haShannah* lists the four "new years" in the Jewish calendar, each of which designates a different counting. On the first of *Nisan*, the festival cycle restarts with Passover and the years of the king's reign are counted. On the first of *Elul*, the tithe of cattle is determined. On the first of *Tishrei*, calendar, sabbatical, and jubilee years begin and the tithe of ground crops is calculated. And on the first of *Shevat*, just before *Tu biShvat*, the tithe of tree crops is set.

The Mishnah goes on to list four moments of judgment during the year. Though these are related to the new years, most happen on different dates. The new years generally mark times of harvest and maturation; on each, a process has completed that can now be quantified and assessed. The moments of judgement take place during gestation phases, the periods of quiet preparation during which results are not yet visible but are nevertheless in formation.

The day we call *Rosh haShannah*, occurring at the beginning of the approaching month of *Tishrei*, appears on both lists. On this New Year, we confront our pasts, the opportunities seized and neglected, calls answered and ignored, work performed and left undone. This reflection plants a seed and influences the course of the year to come. Humanity is unique in that, by coming to terms with our past, we have a hand in determining our future. Unlike the plants and cattle, whose gestation phases are biological and built into the seasons, our time of judgement is tied to our conscious choice to reorient inward, to return to ourselves and to God. Thus, on *Rosh haShannah*, we simultaneously harvest and sow.

This past year has been a time of great change for the Agudat Achim community. As we collectively reflect on CAA's recent experiences, I hope that future striving is balanced with appreciation. My family and I have been struck by the warmth, generosity, and mutual concern of this community as well as the dedication and sustained engagement of so many of its members. These are some of the qualities that drew us here and make us so excited to share in this community's future.

As we enter into a time of gestation and introspection together, I invite you to share with me both your appreciation and aspiration, your reflections on what is already dear to you at CAA as well as what you envision for the road ahead.

Thank you for inviting me to participate in the journey of continuing to nurture this community's roots while growing new shoots and striving for even greater fulfillment of our shared calling.

May we merit future vision as well as deep recognition of the blessings of this community. My blessings to you and your loved ones for a good, healthy, and very sweet new year.

*Shannah tovah!*

Rabbi Zehavi

### *President's Message*

We all in the Jewish faith have the great pleasure of once again entering into a new year, 5778. It is amazing and remarkable that any group, organization, or faith has stood the test of time, cultural differences, war, and persecution to remain a strong tightly knit culture and community despite these challenges. This has been achieved in the past by people working together with others in different countries, cities, towns, and of course within our own temple. None of this would be possible without people willing to change and adapt to fit the needs of the times without sacrificing their beliefs.

The year 5778 at Congregation Agudat Achim will be definitely a time of change and looking toward the future. I have the great pleasure of welcoming Rabbi Shuki Zehavi, his wife Ashira, and their 2 sons to our synagogue and family for the New Year. We are very excited and looking forward to their new ideas and thoughts to help us come together as a community. I hope all of you welcome them and give them your open mind.

I want to thank Debbie Campbell for her hard work over the past year. She makes the running of the temple look easy. She has once again put together a wonderful L'Shana Tova book. As in previous years you will find the calendar, phone directory, and all the other important information regarding the congregation. I also want to thank Lori Parker for her hard work, dedication, and tremendous patience throughout the year. Without these two wonderful people my job would be a lot harder.

Congregation Agudat Achim is only as great as the people who belong to it. As in any organization without people it is just four walls and a roof. We all have experienced and enjoyed many wonderful memories here and look forward to many more. I urge you to get involved in whatever capacity you can. I am very excited for the New Year and look forward to seeing all of you in the future.

My family wishes you a Happy New Year!

Shalom,  
David M. Fisher



## *Principal's Message*

Shalom Haverim,

A beautiful new year is here, offering us a special chance to renew, refresh and reassess. We are encouraged to greet the New Year with optimism and confidence. Judaism believes strongly in the concept of free will. We have the power, to a large extent, to determine our present and future. When we focus on good and positive outcomes, rather than the opposite of that, we are more likely to achieve our goals. The way we look at something is the way that it is! Therefore, we eat sweet foods like honey on Rosh HaShanah in part to begin the new year on a positive note, and to help induce a positive, sweet and good year.

Agudat Achim is a synagogue family that is full of goodness and sweetness. Our religious school is firmly committed to nurturing these values as we begin a new year of study, prayer and community. I am pleased to welcome back a wonderful and devoted teaching staff; Nessa Cohen, Miranda Smerling, Greg Jones and Rena Stoler, along with teacher aides Norman and Evan Tall, Harrison Carter, Teah Arum, Leah Bateman, and Abigail Cohen. Together we will continue using our collective skills, passions and flexibility to create a deep and motivating learning environment.

Our school is privileged to have the continued nurturance of a productive, caring school committee, led by chair Steve Weedon, and a very supportive synagogue board under the leadership of our president Dave Fisher. As always, our school is enhanced by the capable attention of Debbie Campbell, who does so much for us "behind the scenes", and Lori Parker, who always makes sure our classrooms are squeaky clean. This year we are excited to welcome Rabbi Zehavi and his beautiful family into our synagogue and our religious school community. Rabbi Zehavi has a wonderful spirit and a lot to offer our children-we are really looking forward to his input and guidance.

On behalf of the entire school community I wish you all a sweet year full of goodness  
...Shana Tova U'Metuka.

B'Shalom,  
Debbie Fruchtman, Principal