

## **Rabbi Lewis' Message for May, 2013**

When I sat with our Confirmation Class this week, I thought of how things have changed in the last nineteen years. The world somehow seemed safer. It was pre-9/11. We still felt invincible in our country. No one would have dreamed that two brothers would wreak havoc on the Boston Marathon. No one thought that a young man would shoot up an elementary school in Newtown. I found myself wondering how to prepare our students for a future that is so uncertain.

The changes are not all bad, of course. Nineteen years ago, if I wanted to communicate with Confirmation, I had to pick up the phone or mail flyers. Now, I e-mail. They don't all read their e-mail, but their parents do. When students want to communicate, they text. If a student is late to class, someone always has a cell phone and can send a message so we can find out if he overslept or if she forgot.

When students need to know how to chant a Torah or haftarah portion, I e-mail an mp3. No tapes, no CDs. One year when the class was a large one, they wrote their Confirmation sermon together via Facebook.

And yet, so much hasn't changed. Students read from the same Torah (well, not the same scroll – this year will be the first time they read from our new Torah). The words of the Ten Commandments remain the same. The prayerbook is the same one they used when they became b'nai mitzvah. Most importantly, they still just like being together, whether on the retreat or in the Simcha Room for class.

And so when I find myself worrying about how to prepare them for the years after Confirmation, I reassure myself that we are already doing the things we can to prepare them – and to prepare ourselves – for a future that can't be predicted. We are teaching them the words of our tradition. We are inviting them into the experience of being a community, even if the community of the Confirmation Class is a small one. We are letting them know each one of them is important to all of us. And we are training them to be leaders of their future communities.

If you have never been to a Confirmation Service, you have missed something special. All of our classes participate, from K-1 through Confirmation. The liturgy celebrates Shavuot, the holiday that commemorates the receiving of the Torah and the commitment to keep Torah and transmit it. We all stand at Sinai again as we did thousands of years ago. That is something that hasn't changed; it is eternal.

Come join us.

Rabbi Ellen Lewis

