

February 2016 Message from Rabbi Dubin

On Saturday evening, January 9, Howie Hirsch and I arrived in Chicago for the Union of Reformed Judaism's [Shallat Rabbinic Transition Program and Retreat](#). In total, 14 pairs of newly engaged rabbis and their presidents arrived from every corner of the nation to learn, brainstorm, and support each other through our shared processes of rabbinic transition.

For two days we were immersed in a most wonderful seminar on transition theory and practice. We learned about creating sacred partnerships, clarifying mission and vision, engaging in mutual and ongoing review, implementing purposeful planning, and utilizing helpful resources from the URJ.

Throughout the conference we kept returning time and again to the critical importance of creating sacred partnership. It's difficult to put into words just how good it made me and Howie feel when we came to realize that so much of what our instructors were describing as sacred partnership matched what is already second nature at JCNWJ!

Sacred partnership is formed not just between the President and Rabbi. Far from it. Creating sacred partnership is something in which our entire JCNWJ community is engaged. We already know that it takes work and intention, thought and focus, concentration and awareness, and commitment. Our *kehilat kedusha*, our holy community, already knows what it means to create and nurture a *b'rit kodesh*, a sacred covenant of partnership with one another. And, from my perspective, the best part of it is that this awareness existed well before I ever came on the scene.

One of the factors that made the Jewish Center so attractive to me during the interview process last spring was the clear and obvious commitment that I saw from the congregation to the concept of sacred partnership. From the children in the Sunday School, to the members who rarely set foot inside our building, yet continue to support Jewish life in Warren County, to our remarkably active Board of Trustees, the aura of love of and commitment to JCNWJ is nothing short of inspired (and inspiring!). And, of course, this does not happen by accident.

Even as we all participate and benefit from the sacred nature of what we do, there are certain individuals who deserve special mention for having played extraordinary roles in the process of making this the expected norm. In particular, I would like to thank my two immediate predecessors ([Rabbi Mary Zamore](#) and [Rabbi Ellen Lewis](#)), the crop of fantastic teachers of our [Mike Weiner School of Jewish Learning](#), our current [Board of Trustees and committee members](#), our past presidents, and most definitely our current president (who also happens to be one of our past presidents!). The sacred work you are doing today is merely a continuation of the sacred work you had already been doing well before Cantor Labow and I arrived over the summer.

With less than five months since Rosh Hashannah, we are, of course, still in a state of transition, which I expect will continue for some time to come. All the same, I can't

imagine a more supportive, eager, and sacred community than the one that I have inherited at the JCNWJ. And for this, I am truly grateful.

Todah Rabah,
Rabbi Dubin

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