

Dear Friends,

I write this letter with deep appreciation to you who have newly joined our community, and to you who have renewed your synagogue membership. Seeing the collective “you” at various times in the course of the High Holidays, and knowing, too, that so many others viewed us on line is inspiring. Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionist Judaism, opined that *belonging* supersedes both *believing* and *behaving* with regard to Jewish Peoplehood. Indeed, in our community people hold a variety of beliefs concerning God, and observe a wide range of ritual practices. What unites us is our affiliation with the Reconstructionist Synagogue of the North Shore. We are more than Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur. We are Shabbat and Purim, and Holocaust Memorial Day, too. We are a center for Jewish studies – from Gan Shalom to adult seminars with our ‘shul’ school in between. We are committees and the many, many, meetings that go with them. We are a choir, a Rosh Hodesh Group, a Men’s Group, a Girls’ Group, and a Bros Group. We bring the congregation to our college students by way of holiday packages. We are social programs, and we are social action programs. Yes, we reach inward into the synagogue ‘family,’ and we reach out to the larger Jewish community and beyond to the American and world communities as well. The ‘program’ booklet, which was mailed late this summer, is encyclopedic with opportunities to spend time in the synagogue, or to participate in activities under synagogue auspice.

One of the most significant and controversial reforms of Mordecai Kaplan was his elimination of the concept of Jews as the ‘Chosen people.’ Dr. Kaplan thought one group holding themselves above another and sanctioned by God, no less, was antithetical to democratic America. But while we Reconstructionist Jews may no longer consider ourselves to be the Chosen People, we remain a “Choosing People.” In the Golden Land that is America, Jews need not affiliate. That you, members and old and new, have chosen to be RSNS affiliates is the ultimate expression of Jewish identity and commitment, and very much appreciated by all of us here at the synagogue.

Once again, I wish you a good year – a year of healthy, well-being and of peace.

Warmly,
Lee