

CBE Annual Appeal Speech, Yom Kippur, 5779
Jamie and John Steinberg, 5779 Annual Appeal Co-Chairs

JOHN:

Shanah Tova to each of you.

Jamie and I are so honored to serve as your CBE Annual Appeal Chairpersons during this great new year.

Now, I know just what each of you is thinking right now...

“Why didn’t WE get selected to be the CBE Annual Appeal Chairs?”...

I mean who among us would not want the glory of standing up here and asking a congregation *in the midst of fasting from food and water* for a hefty monetary donation??

Seriously though, after hanging up the phone with Dave Lieberman and accepting this role, Jamie and I had great cause to reflect on just what CBE and this wonderful group of people mean to us. Like many of you, CBE has been the focal point for many of our family’s key milestone events. From baby naming, to Hebrew school, to Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, our son and daughter Reid and Emery have grown up in the halls of this great building. They and we have formed friendships here that will last through and enrich our lifetimes. This is our Jewish home and we share in the task of making it a strong and fitting home that we can all keep returning to year after year after year.

JAMIE:

Just over 14 years ago, John and I, and our then 11 month old son, moved from San Antonio, TX to Northern Virginia. We moved “up north” for a career opportunity, although we did not know anyone here. Through the curious networking method known as “Jewish Geography,” and a little luck, Reid and I found ourselves at CBE for a Jewish Mommy and Me class. We found instant friends with the other mothers and babies. These CBE families welcomed us with open arms, and when I found myself on complete bed rest 6 months after moving here while pregnant with our daughter, Emery, these amazing friends, and Morah Paula, all stepped up to provide our little family with meals and great company. The blessing of these CBE friendships continued as playgroups, Chavurah and cherished companions during our life cycle events.

Our family has been called to this bimah for some wonderful occasions that include Aaliyah's, Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, and some pretty awesome purim shpiels. But today, the call to this bimah is different...today the call is on behalf of each of you and this entire congregation.

JOHN:

The CBE dues we pay each year are significant family contributions, but they only cover part of the annual operating expense for this congregation. Having been part of the Finance and Budget Committee for the past few years, I can tell you with great certainty that each and every dollar of the CBE budget is carefully reviewed and responsibly spent to maximize its potential. We are fortunate to have a great team of volunteer leaders who do the heavy lifting of planning and implementing the day-to-day operations of this congregation.

Each time you enter this building you are reunited with your spirituality, your friends, and your heritage. Congregation Beth Emeth is more than a house of worship. It is a source of grounding, connection and belonging.

This congregation started in 1979 with just 15 families meeting at Reston Community Center. By 1985, this land we use today had been purchased and a sign was proudly placed alongside the road to mark this construction site for passersby on Lawyers Road. A very unfortunate but awakening fact that many of you may not know is that our congregation was the victim of 2 acts of vandalism before we even had a building to vandalize. The proud 'Future Home of' sign was defaced with swastikas painted on both sides and then later in 1985, in a separate act, the wood posts of the same sign were cut leaving the sign to fall to the ground. Yes, right here in the middle of Fairfax County!

If you are curious, the newspaper article documenting these horrible acts is posted on the CBE website archive.

Some of the times I feel most connected with my Jewish heritage are when that very ability to be Jewish is somehow threatened. Each of us has our own connection to the challenges in our people's history. Some of those connections are from decades or longer ago, and some of those may be very recent. In 2017 when the violent demonstrations hit Charlottesville, VA, it gave me chills to learn that the membership of Congregation Beth Israel had to take the precaution of removing their torah scrolls from the building for fear that it may be torched.

You may at first think it seems like a long shot to try and connect these bits of history with this speech about you making a donation to the CBE Annual Appeal. However, one of the best ways that we can empower our Jewish future is to ensure that OUR Jewish home is strong and secure.

We need your contribution to the Annual Appeal to keep Congregation Beth Emeth strong today and strong tomorrow. Here today and Here tomorrow.

JAMIE:

Many of you may be here with a few generations of family. Perhaps you have kids in the teen tent, or children in the youth service today. Perhaps you have college

students home to celebrate Yom Kippur with you. Maybe Bubbe and Zeyde have come to visit for the week. CBE is one of the generational mixing bowls that gives us all cause to come together under one roof. In an era of detachment and electronic distancing, this building helps us keep it real and personal.

Each of us needs something different from CBE. The ability to meet so many different needs and expectations is a great strength of this congregation. The ability to join our voices in prayer and song, the ability to share quiet moments of reflection, and the ability to draw generations closer together. These are all CBE strong points on which we lean and depend. Our CBE community has created an amazing spiritual home for our family and for yours.

Please help to build on these CBE strong points. Please fold down the tab on the donation card that feels right to you and pass it to the ushers.

Thank you for this important call to the bimah today. We wish you all a new year filled with peace and happiness.