Installation Address
Rabbi Dan Moskovitz
Temple Judea - November 9, 2001

Shabbat Shalom,

First let me begin by thanking Oscar, Kevin, Elisha, and Jonah for sharing this simcha with me this evening. We all look forward to your being called to the Torah tomorrow and wish you Mazel Tov on all that you too have accomplished to reach this moment. I am honored that I was installed as a Rabbi at Temple Judea on the Shabbat of your B'nai Mitzvah.

Thank you also to Alan Henkin, of the UAHC; I am honored that you could be here this evening, thank you for your beautiful words.

Kaye, thank you for your words as well, you joined with Don on the interview team that flew out to Cincinnati while I was finishing school and from that moment I knew you were a person of unique quality and dedication. Your leadership this past year, in this exciting and challenging time for our congregation has been inspiring. Thank you for hiring me, and for all the dinners at your house (its still the best restraint in town) and above all for your friendship.

Michael, I wondered after Karen's installation what you were going to do with a last name like Moskovitz… You lead by example, your commitment and dedication to this congregation is only out matched by your true love for it and the Jewish people. I learn from you and respect you tremendously. On Rosh Hashanah you came into my office after the first service while I was sick with phenomena, you told me to go home; in fact I think you ordered me to go home. I said no, and instead of firing me, you and Cathy stayed and made sure I was taken care of, and didn't push myself to hard. That may have been your role as President, but it's was an act of friendship that I will never forget.

Let me also say a special thank you to my friends and colleagues Rabbi Goor, Rabbi Bender, Cantor Caro, Rabbi Raff, Cantor Mark, Todd, Margie, Natalie, Halli and Marisa. Some people come to work in a place and are fortunate to make friends there, I came to Temple Judea to be with my friends and while I am here I try and do a little work as well. Thank you for leading tonight's service, for your words, prayers and music, for the work we do together to bring Torah into the lives of our congregation, but most of all thank you for your friendship it is an honor to do what we do

together, if ours is a sacred calling, and I believe that it is, then it is made even more sacred by doing it with such talented and dedicated professionals and friends.

To Rabbi Raiskin, who performed my baby naming, officiated at my Bar Mitzvah, and joined me and Kim under the Chuppah. You have been part of every simcha and have comforted me and my family at every time of loss or sorrow, thank you indeed for being here tonight, but thank you even more for having been there at all of those moments along the way leading up to today. When I was growing up you were the only Rabbi I ever knew, you greeted us each Sunday morning of Religious School, standing in the parking lot with big hugs and an even bigger smile. You were always ready for my questions (I was one of those kids who would try to stump the Rabbi every Sunday morning with questions like how could a bush be on fire but not get burned, and when Moses parted the Red Sea what happened to all the fish, now I stand out front on Sunday mornings and get those questions and I realize that I should have listened more closely to your answers.)

When I was a kid I figured every Rabbi must be like you. As I have grown up and met others I realize that there are many models for Rabbis,

and many ways to go about this sacred task, but few Rabbis are like you. I consider it to be one of the greatest blessings in my life and in my rabbinate to have had you as my model and mentor. For while there are many ways to be a Rabbi, and I am indeed finding my own way, I can hope for nothing more than to someday be a Rabbi as wise, compassionate, and dedicated as you. Not to mention this year you celebrated your 45th year at Peninsula Temple Sholom and I would love the job security.

A special thank you also to my wife Kimberly for your love and support. You endure the long hours, the late phone calls and the last minute change of plans that come with this calling, not to mention listening to my sermons, often more than once. It was upon your advice that I took the position here at Temple Judea. In a time of great professional turmoil a few years ago you saw clearly through the haze and encouraged me to make a bold step and apply here. Thank you for our life together, and thank you particularly for encouraging me to be a part of this community.

It is on this last point that I truly celebrate this evening, being a part of this community. The Rabbis of the Mishnah teach that when two people sit together and share words of Torah, the *shechina*, the divine presence of God

dwells among them. I have always loved this verse from our tradition and have referred to it often from this pulpit. But tonight, perhaps for the first time I truly understand what it means. For God to be present in our lives we must have a partner to share life and God's teaching with. In the micro, that is our spouse or partner, our soul mate, the one with whom we experience all of life's joys and sorrows. But in the macro, on the larger scale, it is the *k'hal*, the community. Why join a synagogue, why be part of a community, so that we can sit together, as we do now, as a *k'hilah kedusha*, as a holy congregation and collectively feel God's presence in our lives.

Rabbi's need temples too. We need congregations that we can join with and mourn with, and pray with and learn with and learn from. Temple Judea is such a place, and as I have come to know it over this past year, it is a pretty remarkable place for that very reason. God is present in the work that we do here together, God is present in our Religious school which is teeming with students and ideas, and God is present in our Nursery School and parenting center in the care with which our teachers help mold young lives and minds. God is present in our adult learning, our Youth Group, our Brotherhood, our Sisterhood, our Adult Society, our Havuroth, our Outreach Center, our ESL program, our Board of Trustees. God is present in our acts

of *Tzedakkah*, in my view God was here on Sunday, on Mitzvah Day making PB&J sandwiches with us in that very room and at Tarzana. God dwells *b'tochenu*, amongst us in this sanctuary when we come together to pray and in our living rooms when we come together to mourn. God is in this holy place and the work that we do here together. Not because the Rabbi or Cantor bring God, not because the congregation brings God, but because together as a community when we are learning, and caring and worshipping together as a community God sees this and wants to join in as well.

Thank you for letting me part of such a place, such a community. Rabbis may work all their lives to serve a congregation with a *n'shama,* a soul such as this one, I am blessed and honored to get to do it after being a Rabbi for little more than a year. For that unique blessing, I say Amen.