Installation Address – Temple Sholom
Rabbi Dan Moskovitz
November 15, 2013

THANK YOUs

What does it mean when a rabbi takes of his watch? Relax! It means absolutely nothing. But there ***has*** been a lot of speaking tonight and I will be brief.

Rabbi Goor – Thank you., my friend and mentor since I was a student in rabbinical school. You've guided me to become the rabbi I am today. Temple Sholom – you need to know that so much of what I do as a rabbi and how I do it I learned from this rabbi. Well at least the good things, the bad things, those are on me. Don you are my rabbi –It means

more to me than I can say that you are here to share this moment with me. Thank you!

Today I am honoured and humbled to be the next Senior Rabbi of Temple Sholom, to stand on the shoulders of our founding families and benefit from the visionary leadership of Rabbi and Cathy Bregman, our incredible staff and our dedicated lay leaders, past and present.

Rabbi Bregman, on Rosh Hashanah you handed me Torah. But prior to that, and for almost 50 years, you and our leadership team have every day been planning Temple Sholom's future. David and Dennis, thank you for your confidence in me as well as your partnership over these past 10 months since

you first offered me this opportunity. I will do my very best to beworthy of the kind words you extended to me this evening.

Thank you, Anne Andrew and our entire welcoming committee for this evening and all of the many evenings and programs over these past months. You have welcomed me, Sharon, and our children; Judah, Levi and Estee into your homes, your circle of friends and done everything possible to create opportunities for us to connect with our community. We love it here all the more because of you.

Anne I know well enough now that you hate that I am about to single you out for special

recognition but it must be said. You have done so much for Temple Sholom and for our family. I will never forget our arrival at YVR when you dressed as a clown, nor will our children. From that moment to now, you and Eric have opened your home and your hearts to us and I am forever grateful.

In coming to Temple Sholom I have been blessed with a talented and dedicated team of colleagues and now friends. Thank you Ashleigh, Karina, Odayah, Bernie, Rufina, Dimitar, Josh, Naama, Carol, Lisa, Jenny and Jen for all you do to make Temple Sholom such a warm, welcoming and smooth running place.

Rabbi Brown, Cantor Taussig and Rochelle – How blessed I am to work with each of you! The song from the Passover Seder comes to mind:

Dayaynu – It would have been enough if Temple Sholom only had such a dedicated and capable executive director. Who is apparently related to every Jewish Winnipegger in this city and personally knows everyone else.

Dayaynu it would have been enough if Temple Sholom only had such a talented cantor with a voice and a n'shama that lifts our spirit to new heights every shabbas.

Dayaynu - It would have been enough if Temple Sholom only had an Associate Rabbi who is a true partner and teacher of Torah, so well respected in the rabbinic community; an associate who shares my vision and values and is so incredibly capable and competent.

Dayaynu – it would have been enough to work with just one of you, but to be blessed with all three of you ***and*** our whole team! I feel like I scored the rabbi-cantor-executive director 'hat trick'.

Thank you also to my incredible family for flying in from California to share this weekend and to our dear friends from Los Angeles and Temple Judea, and my friend and

colleague Rabbi Jan Offel. I am blown away by your presence this weekend. What should a rabbi pray for? That I should be blessed twice in my lifetime to make such deep and lasting friendships at Temple Sholom as I did at Temple Judea!

Most of all, thank you to my partner and best friend, Sharon and our children Judah, Levi and Estee. This transition has been hardest on you. In moving to Vancouver I got to pursue my passion and calling. You uprooted from parents and grandparents, friends, home and schools to join me in following this dream. Please know that I could not do this without your love and support.

VISION

And to you our congregation; I need you to know that I know, I REALLY KNOW that Temple Sholom is ***special***. It is a jewel. The congregation I inherit is extraordinary in so many ways. A pillar of this community, respected across North America and up and down Oak Street. A shul above politics and turf battles, with a sanctuary reasonably full on Friday nights AND Saturday mornings and a religious school that is innovative and engaging. We have a morning minyan and ongoing Torah study that exists because of the Jewish values of our members. A sisterhood and sixty plus program that not only wins awards but more importantly wins

our hearts through the chessed, the KINDNESS they show everyone they touch. I am inheriting a wonderful congregation – my first priority as your senior rabbi will be not to break it.

In the book of proverbs, a book attributed to wise King Solomon, he wrote, 'Without a vision, the people perish' (Prov. 29:18). My vision for our community simply put is **more joy less oy.** It is a vision guided by faith **not fear**. Faith that together we can be as Torah commands us to be - a house for all people, a community of sacred purpose, built upon a foundation of meaningful relationships. A community that is about people not programs.

Vikor Frankl whose great philosophical observations grew out of his own torment in the Shoah observed, “Life is not primarily a quest for pleasure, or a quest for power, but a quest for meaning.”

The greatest task in life is to find ***meaning***. That task is amplified when shared by a whole community.

The gift of faith in general and Judaism in particular is the gift of ***meaning***. Why be Jewish? Because Judaism holds the answer to the ultimate question – what is the meaning of life, for what purpose was I created?

For generations of Jews the answer to the question why be Jewish was victimhood; 'they tried to kill us'. Victimhood colored with a little guilt – or, said more politely, obligation. 'My parents went to shul so I go to shul.' Why be Jewish? 'Because the world will not accept me as anything else.'

Those answers are utterly insufficient today. We cannot be a people living in fear of our own demise. That is not meaning enough. Fear will not sustain our community; fear and guilt will not grow our congregation.

Over these past four months, I have sat in dozens of living rooms, spoken with hundreds on the phone or in person over countless cups

of coffee. Indeed, on the High Holy Days, I probably shook 2,000 hands and exchanged words of greeting and hopefully moments of connection.

If I have learned anything from these invaluable opportunities to meet you and get to know your stories; it is that the road to a meaningful Jewish life and community is not paved by fear, not driven by paranoia or victimhood, but rather a quest for ***meaning***.

A vibrant, relevant, inclusive and unapologetic Canadian Reform Judaism is what our community needs. A ***modern*** Jewish endeavor based on the ***ancient values*** our ancestors lived and for which they were

prepared to die. On justice, compassion, love of the stranger, the sanctity and joy of life and the dignity of every human being without regard to color, culture, creed, gender, age or orientation.

You taught me that. Your stories of intermarried children who feel unwelcome in synagogue. Of grandchildren and your own school-age children who see religious school as more burden than blessing. Of families feeling bound by technological chains, obligated in so many directions that the Sabbath they need most of all moves farther and farther out of reach. You showed me when I met with young single adults who find no reason to join a synagogue because to

them Judaism is not a religious experience but rather a cultural expression. Singles and seniors who are alone and isolated; yearning for meaningful relationships and a supportive community at a time when people dear to them are slipping away.

- More Joy less Oy
- **Faith** not Fear
- People not Programs

The three pillars of my vision for Temple Sholom at this unique moment in our history.

The verse I chose for this evening's invitation was from Pirkei Avot; *aseh lechah rav v'koneh lechah haver*. Get for yourself a teacher, a rabbi, and you will acquire for yourself a friend. I am humbled and deeply grateful to be your rabbi, I look forward and would be honoured to earn ***your*** friendship.