KOL NIDREI OPENING PRAYER 5779
Temple Sholom, Vancouver, BC Canada

We gather tonight 10 days in to the New Year. It is Yom Kippur. We have come to pray, to praise, to turn inward and to re-evaluate our lives and our deeds. We have come to hear Kol Nidrei. As its stirring sounds draw near we think back to years gone by.

We sat then in other sanctuaries, or perhaps right here, at the side of parents, or grandparents, now grown old or long since gone. We tugged on the fringes of their tallis' just as their memory tugs on our heart strings in yet another new year without them. As children we gazed up at them and dimly sensed the meaning of a Jewish soul. Indeed, the piercing possibilities of this day are not this single day's alone, rather they are built upon the years of 'Kol Nidrei memories". The possibilities of this day, the promises we make and those we acknowledge we failed to keep, they are built upon the promises we uttered at this same time in years past.

As children we may not have fully understood the power of the promise, the importance of a vow, but as adults, as parents now ourselves we know its power, its power to inspire others, its power to inspire ourselves. On this Kol Nidrei we offer this prayer, we make this solemn promise, to ourselves, before God who stands as witness to our words:

All vows, promises, and commitments made in Your presence since last Yom Kippur and in the years before, may we be given strength to keep them.

Our Marriage Vows – may they endure
Through dark days and through dull days.
Through fatigue and through anger.
May our love prove string enough, and our faith deep enough,
To last

Our vows to ourselves, commitments to good health
May we take our own lives seriously enough to heed them,
Keeping our promises in the way we eat and drink,
The way we work and rest
And the things that get us angry.

The promise we made to study and to worship –
We meant them when we made the,
But so many things get in the way.
This time, may we be strong enough to let our better selves prevail.

Promises made by boys and girls who stood upon this bima.
Who glimpsed what life as Jews might hold in store for them,
May their idealism and their vision be with them through all their days, not just that one day.

Commitments made to parents and friends,
Pledges to charity and other good intentions, -
Help us to become as noble, compassionate and generous
As we say ourselves to be at those moments.

Dear God, we meant in all seriousness the promises we made
To You, to each other, and to ourselves,
Even as we mean the vows we speak tonight.
They were our reaching toward You, as plants towards the light.

May you reach down to us as we reach up toward You,
And give us strength and self-respect, fidelity and vision,
To grow to be the people we have sworn to be.

All vows, commitments, obligations,
Promises we make
From this Yom Kippur to the next –
May we be strong enough to keep them.

For this we pray.