Hayom harat olam! Today the world was born! We joyfully proclaim this every year on Rosh Hashanah, the first of the High Holy Days. Anticipation builds as the summer ends. For many of us, the High Holy Days frame a uniquely intimate and yet communal experience of God in our lives, unlike any other. We look forward to seeing friends, to the grandness of our services at Masonic Hall and the Javits Center, and to blessing each other for a sweet new year, fairly confident the world will align with our wishes and expectations.

But this year, the world is different. The voices of suffering and the unmistakable evidence of mass injustice keep us up at night. If we sleep, these are our first realizations each morning. We weep at the horrific, escalating corruption of our nation, reaching our borders and beyond, drawing the worst of the world’s leaders toward us, forcing our best thinkers and activists to fight back in disgust. Our nation staggers under assault from our own toxic leadership and from foreign aggression. Our electorate is confused, angry, and divided. We are uncertain whom to trust to speak truth to us, to represent us, to protect us against the threats that surround us. Reciting the morning blessings, Jews give thanks to God for having spread solid earth over the waters. Yet we witness storms everywhere—water covering streets, homes, and towns. One earthquake proves the planet itself to be fragile and unstable. To face all this, we need to reinforce our connection to our community and to God.

This year, it is overwhelmingly urgent that we gather in worship and song and cherish each other. In the sacred time and space of the High Holy Days, in an atmosphere of blessing and love, we will stand among friends and strangers, each of us yearning to release memories of our misdeeds and to find relief from shame and failure. We all need strength to face the realities of life and acknowledge our own mortal fragility. We need God and we need each other.

This year, we will continue our commitment to action as a bold spiritual community of resistance and love. We work to rescue the earth and its inhabitants, to fight the wanton cruelty of our most powerful officials, to generate safety and possibility for the most vulnerable and threatened among us. We protect the widow and the orphan, the refugee from across the oceans, the child at our southern border, the trans woman of color, the queer youth fleeing bigotry within their own home, the black citizen of our own country still facing racist brutality and violence today. There are still racism, queer-hatred, rising Jew-hatred, Islamophobia, and xenophobia in the world. But we are here, strong and proud, and grateful for our diversity.

In moments when despair or fear or anger might overwhelm us, we do not give up—we act. No one can do everything, but everyone can do something. As we fulfill our traditional responsibilities of cheshbon nefesh (self-assessment) and teshuvah (atonement), as we lay our souls bare before God, we sustain each other with music, courage and with joy, with expressions and reflections of hope. We are reminded, in sacred text, on the door handles of our synagogue and on its walls: It is good to give thanks. During the High Holy Days, CBST will once again unfailingly work spiritual magic to give us strength for a good, sweet new year, as a bold community of resistance and love. Together we say,

\textit{Hazak hazak v\'nithazek.} Be strong, be strong, and we shall be strengthened.

Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum  Gregg H. Passin  Yolanda Potasinski
Senior Rabbi  Board President  Executive Director
CBST is a Sanctuary Congregation with a weekly pro se Immigration Clinic for LGBTQ asylum seekers, building confidence with tools and procedures and a new accredited CLE (continuing legal education) course for attorneys who will lend their expertise to those in need.

We celebrate Jewish and queer culture with ancient words, historic settings, and contemporary poems and compositions. We teach and explore Torah and reveal the truths that could not be found until CBST came into existence nearly half a century ago.

CBST’s World Pride Shabbat at Masonic Hall with guest speaker Tony Kushner and Stonewall50 demonstrated the triumphant celebratory presence of queerness in our City and in the world.

Agadah Adventures immersive multi-sensory theatrical educational experiences for the very young bring Jewish stories to life. *Inside the Whale* (Yom Kippur), *Down the Nile* (Pesach), *Under the Rainbow* (Noah), *Behind the Mask* (Purim).

We make magnificent music, blessed for 25 years with Music Director Joyce Rosenzweig. Music at CBST is not an adornment. It is an essential component of our strength and presence as the world’s largest LGBTQ synagogue. It is the painful cry to God and the joyful noise we make.

House of Peace: CBST members welcome Muslims every Friday for weekly Jummah Prayer at The Islamic Center at NYU.

We write and call governmental officials with our weekly “Resistance: Calls & Cards” program.