

# A FEW WORDS FROM RABBI CRAIG MARANTZ

Shalom *chevrei*.

To all of you who attended my investiture weekend, I thank you. For those of you who couldn't make it, I hope you will take a look at the following writings that marked the moment. I've also included my thanksgiving to numerous people who made this precious passage happen. There other writings, videos and photos that we will avail to you, as well. I want to make sure that everyone in our community has some connection to this transformative moment for our *kehillah kedoshah*, our sacred community. Enjoy!

Make it a day of blessing and be a force for good!

*Zie gezunt* (Be well):



Rabbi Craig Marantz

## Response to Rabbi Yoshi Zweiback by Rabbi Craig Marantz

Dear family and friends. Esteemed colleagues and leaders from inside and outside this hallowed congregation-by-the-Lake, valued volunteers and our entire staff whose extra special effort made this moment possible. To all present who grace this moment of consecration and investiture. I say thank you and "*Brukhim ha-baim*." Welcome. I am delighted that you've come to celebrate with me, and blessed that you walk with me as we mark this sacred passage.

Dear Rabbi Zweiback, Yoshi, my friend--I thank you for your soulful presence and your beautiful words of investiture. Our teacher Rabbi Lawrence Kushner likens our lives to a jigsaw puzzle made more or less complete by the pieces we hold at birth. But truth is, then, we don't possess all the pieces of our own puzzles. We need help. Now, according to Rabbi Kushner, everyone carries with them at least one and probably many pieces to someone else's puzzle. They don't always know it. We don't always know it. But when one presents such a piece to another he or she becomes a messenger, a *sheliach*, from the Most High. Yoshi, you are such a *sheliach* for me and have brought me important puzzle pieces, and so I wanted to honor you and thank you here. And now.

So, friends let me give you my perspective of the story Yoshi and I share. I met Yoshi at Camp Hess Kramer ("CHK," (clap)) in the summer of 1988. I loved Kramer but I had grown out of it in a way. Although I vowed never to leave its friendly confines, the need to grow as a young Jewish man and leader outweighed loyalty and comfort. And, while complexities of the moment threatened to drive me away altogether, something deep inside me knew I had to hang in there. Building Jewish community was too important a task to abandon. So, I decided to go "upstairs," as they say. To Gindling Hilltop Camp (clap, clap), Kramer's sister camp. Because they needed me there. As you well know, Yoshi, our friend Rabbi Bob Davis was to be the new director. And they needed veteran staff to aid the transition. To make the change worthwhile, I, myself, needed a friend. And, there you were. Not only to help your mentor Bob succeed. Not only to contribute gloriously to the success of camp. But likely unbeknownst to you at the time, and in ways I have only grown to appreciate much later, you became my *sheliach* when I really needed one, bringing me some puzzle pieces that continue to make a difference.

In particular, you have taught me from the outset to love lifelong Jewish learning and teaching. You've integrated intellectual acuity, musicality and humor into your rabbinate, modeling this rare combination of skill, this beautiful versatility, all these years--not only for me but many of our colleagues. And, most importantly, you have remained my friend. So, when I found myself at another significant crossroads, questioning my purpose as a Jewish man and leader. When I felt called to leave safety, comfort and familiarity. When I felt summoned to spread my wings and soar in this creative, diverse, inclusive and aspiring community--in this great urban center, I could only think of you to come help me consecrate this moment of change. To help me--to help us--sanctify the transformative puzzle pieces we now discover together in our work as a *kehillah kedoshah*, as a sacred community. So, thank you from the bottom of my heart for being here. And thanks to Jacqueline, your three daughters, and the Stephen S. Wise Temple family for letting us have you present for this precious moment. My love to you all.

Our Torah portion is *Toledot*, which means "generations." If you look at your order of prayer, so beautifully designed by Rickie Jacobs (Thanks, Rickie!), you see the phrase *l'dor v'dor*, from generation to generation. The model for Rickie's artistry are the Clara Morris Doors at the entrance to Lederer Hall. So tonight (as Rabbi Zweiback so thoughtfully reflected) we celebrate and honor the generations of leadership since 1880, our founding year. In that spirit, Rabbi Zedek and Rabbi Schaalman, I thank you for your wise and beautiful words and for your presence and for your living legacies. It is because of your *zechut*, your merit, [and that of our other senior rabbinic leaders throughout our history] that I now stand on a lasting platform of excellence that has helped Emanuel endure and thrive for nearly 140 years. I pray that I live up to this collective rabbinic legacy you've helped shape. That of intellectual rigor, of outstanding teaching and preaching. That of the pursuit of justice and of the practice of *mentschlikeit*. And, with your help and the help of our community, I know I'll be able to add to the virtue you have all sewn as our spiritual leaders.

So, my friends, we enter into a sacred covenant, let us understand that our *brit* will hold its greatest merit, it's greatest *zechut*, if we learn together to build effective and creative scaffolding for future generations: Our pursuit of 21st-century relevance. Our nurturing of a growing, diverse and open community. Our discipline in shaping a robust, efficient and responsible effort. Our dedication to being a collective force for good, bringing justice and compassion to a fractured world. Our inspiration in constructing a visionary commitment to meaningful, lifelong Jewish engagement and purpose. All will bring us *zechut* because we work in concert as covenantal partners to preserve this legacy of excellence that calls us both.

*Adonai oz l'amo yitein. Adonai yavarekh et-amo ba'shalom!* May God grant us and all people strength. And bless us all with peace. ((Ps. 29) *Kain yehi ratzon!* May it be God's will!

### **My Heartfelt Thanks to:**

- Marlene Dodinval--For organizing this great celebration and leading the search committee.
- The Rabbinic Search Committee--For your hard work and, as Jill said, your *sechel* (good sense) in picking me:))
- Jill Gardner--For your help in organizing this wonderful evening, for leading our congregation and being a wonderful partner in leadership.
- The Board of Trustees--For your ongoing leadership and service.
- Rickie Jacobs--For designing the lovely order of worship.

- Dan Smolensky, Jeanne Cole and Jon Ledsky--For your sustained contributions as volunteers.
- Susan Bertocchi, Mark Warnaar and all the other dinner volunteers--For your hospitality and a delicious meal.
- Rachelle Sheffer and the Sisterhood--For the yummy *oneg* we are about to enjoy.
- David Rakofsky--For videoing our experience and making sure we could hear it, as well.
- Barry Glaser--For additional videography
- Luc Dodinval--For capturing beautiful photos of our investiture Shabbat
- Ruthie Seidner and our intergenerational choir--For lending such beauty to our our prayer.
- To Rev. Greg Sabetta--For your musical presence.
- To our entire staff--For your ongoing effort and support: Cantor Friedman, Rabbi Manewith, and Elizabeth Cohen; Our office mavens: Jessica Katz, Nicole Tuthill, and Myra Wagner. And, our valued custodians: Jose Zaragoza, Dan Banks, Jr. Chris Rabago, (and Charles Williams, too)
- To our esteemed rabbis *emeriti* Herman Schaalman and Michael Zedek, as well as the other Senior Rabbis who have also served the Emanuel family since 1880.
- To my entire family for walking through life with me--with special thanks to Betsy, Cara and Jared for your loving patience.