

Dear Congregants,

Life doesn't offer many opportunities to stop, slow down, think, and realize that my actions have made an impact. Shabbat morning was so special because your attendance and your outpouring of affection made it very clear that I am fortunate enough to have made a difference in your lives. I am humbly grateful that I was able to do so and that so many of you made time to let me know how you feel. I was especially thrilled to see so many younger members of our community there; it validated my efforts to make the Stash a place where all ages can find a nook to call their own and feel valued.

As an educator I attempt to leave some sort of indelible Jewish impact on all my students. And all of you are very much my students—you have learned enough Torah from me either formally through sermons or informally throughout classes after services on Shabbat—and I am so deeply honored that so many of you have laughed and cried with me, not only on Shabbat when we rediscovered the passionately primal feelings of the pioneers of our shul, but on the times when you cried with me when I remember my mother during Yizkor on Yom Kippur.

For those of you who couldn't make it—no worries! I know how busy life is and have always enjoyed seeing you whenever you come. I know that some of you simply couldn't make it because of illness or age. Be assured that I will miss you and thank you for being part of our shul—the best “non-corporate” and lay led shul in Toronto.

Shabbat was special and left a deep impression. I want to thank the organizers for their tireless planning, sourcing the great food, and wonderful booze, and the entire group of volunteers who made the room's appearance so festive. The room set the tone, and you all brought the atmosphere. And we had a blast and lingered and talked and enjoyed each other's company long into the afternoon. Truly we have created a “haymish destination”.

The torch of tradition now passes to all of you. Get up on the bimah and sing with Rachael. Learn how to read Torah—with the new triennial cycle this will be a far more accessible possibility. Keep learning and growing, having fun, and keep the doors open!

Thanks for being a place that helped me grow, keep in touch. lipinskyjack@gmail.com

Jack