

November 9th, 2018/1st Kislev, 5779

Dear Little Shul community,

Just as we set our clocks back and feel the darkness, we enter the Hebrew month of Kislev. Chodesh tov! We are now in the month which comes at the darkest time of the year, and we will be lighting our menorahs in just over three weeks. We certainly can use Chanukah's reminder of light, miracles and a small band of righteous warriors defeating hatred.

We have another historical reminder right now. Tonight is the 80th anniversary of Kristallnacht. On the night of November 9, 1938 until dawn on November 10th, Nazis torched more than 1,000 synagogues, vandalized Jewish homes and schools, and violently destroyed more than 7,500 Jewish owned businesses. Over 30,000 men were arrested and taken to concentration camps and at least 100 people were killed on the spot. Kristallnacht means "the night of the broken glass."

There had been many instances of economic, social and political discrimination against Jews with occasional bouts of violence before that date, but Kristallnacht was a turning point which changed everything. The systemic violence, beating, incarceration and murder took off and escalated. In a documentary about survivors of Kristallnacht created by the Leo Baeck Institute, Edith Friedlander, born in Vienna in 1922, warns, "The greedy, power-crazy people have to be watched early on." Dr. Josef Eisenger, Born in Vienna in 1924 proclaims, "Under the right circumstances, you can make people believe in anything because there's a tribal instinct in us, we want to belong, we want to belong to a group, we want to be suspicious of people who are different, or come from a different place, and that can be exploited by political parties, by demagogues on any kind. The only protection is to have a very strong democratic tradition."

Let us honor those who were killed by working to shatter every last shard of discrimination in the world today, and continue to bring light into our country and this world by our words and actions.

Please join me this evening for services at 7:30 pm, and tomorrow morning with me and Abraham at 10 am until noon for chanting, meditation and contemplative Torah study.

Shabbat shalom,
Rabbi Diana