



Construction Ceremony – Rabbi Miriam Berger

The builders don't see mud and steels as we do. They show us around this site with the vision of what it is to become. They talk us through it, hoping to share the future, "from that column there to just by the mixer is the main hall, the offices, the kindergarten...". They can describe so perfectly what these steels, bricks and mortar will become, and yet that is only the beginning.

When Bob, Simon and Mike who have tirelessly poured over spreadsheets, contracts and ideas, see these steels, they see members flooding in for services, for learning and for social opportunities.

When Charles, Alan, Richard, and Roger, who have agonised over the finances and the practicalities of making it work, see the diggers and tools, they see generations to come feeling so at home in this place, knowing it will become the focal point of the memories of so many and the place of lifecycle-marking moments.

When Kathy, Paul and Helen see this wonderful site, they see the beauty of the designs they helped to formulate, enabling a spirituality to flow from the rooftop and the opportunity for ritual sewn into its fibres.

When Andrew, Paul and Suzi see the mud and rain, they can see the values, the community spirit and the outward facing windows that they baked into this process, knowing it will inform how we behave in the building and as neighbours, as Jews and as responsible *mensch*s.

The list of people who have got us to this point is huge, because it involves every donor, every person who shared an idea, a hope, every member who voted to say "yes we can" and every member of staff who constantly goes above and beyond to be the very best version of this community we can become.

And yet we are building far more than a building. We are building the future as it should be. We are creating community as we know it has the potential to be, and if we can do it for our 900 families and others who join us on the way, then this version of society can continue to be replicated and we can truly partner in the creation of a corner of the world that mirrors the vision that our prophets taught.

As we stand here open to the elements, we remember that as a people we went from sukkah-seeking wilderness wanderers to rooted dwellers in communities across the world. So from these sukkah-like beginnings we can see a future which this structure will house, but whose influence will stretch far beyond four walls. Our future will be based on our own 4Rs:

Ritual
Relationships
Receiving
Being Radical

Ritual: Using our thousands of years of Jewish heritage and ritual to mark time, make meaning and to ensure the weight of responsibility of holding such a tradition continues, to give us the passion to preserve our link in the chain of tradition. It is ritual that makes us community, gives us our identity, connecting us to the past and making us responsible for the future.

Relationships: Knowing that society as it should be is based on us being in relationship with one another. Knowing each other, being responsible for one another and knowing those connections stop us drifting from the core of what drives us. We are individuals with stories which need to be known to each other in order to understand one another.

Receiving: We need to be ready to receive – to listen. To look well beyond the boundaries of our community and hear the stories of many others, near and far. We need to extend ourselves, come out of our comfort zone of looking inwards and look out into the world through the unique Jewish lens through which our values are framed.

Being Radical: We shouldn't be scared to be the radical ones. Radically relational. When we are ready to act and do what is right, we don't need to wait until there is someone to follow. We can be the ones to speak out, to act, to reform society and to start creating the world as it should be.

In this building we will pray for a better world
From this building we will act to bring about that better world.
In this building we will study the Jewish sources and the practice to love our
neighbours as ourselves.
From this building we will show others how society can be.