

Invocation for Minneapolis Mayor Betsy Hodges Swearing In  
6 January 2014/5 Sh'vat 5774  
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Shir Tikvah Congregation

**This New Day**

89 years ago, Evelyn and Toby,  
my Jewish grandmothers  
were born to a Minnesota  
in her infancy with their right to vote;  
where anti-Semitism suffocated the moral core of the city  
and racism  
bled through the bones of government halls and city roads and public parks and  
country clubs and universities.

One grandmother grew up to be an artist,  
the wife of a traveling salesman,  
the mother of three daughters,  
a fierce advocate for family  
and tradition.

My other grandmother was deaf,  
so much denied her because society couldn't see past her disability, as she raised her  
five sons in North Minneapolis—  
once the state's Jewish neighborhood—  
married to my grandfather,  
a union typesetter  
activist in the deaf community,  
and an avid bowler.

My grandmothers lived on the edge of life in Minneapolis, uncertain,  
But full of love,  
Hoping for a brighter future for their children and grandchildren and great grand  
children.

Their great granddaughters,  
10 and 6 and ½  
are home in Minneapolis.  
We are home.

Our daughters attend Minneapolis public school  
where their teachers believe in them  
and support them

and guide them to become fabulous young women,  
 where their two dads volunteer  
 and work with them on spelling tests  
 and projects about light and hurricanes and stamps  
 and their family is loved.

My grandmother's great granddaughters  
 Are here to witness  
 A proud woman become their mayor  
 Alongside a woman who is Police Chief  
 And women heading the city council  
 Rising proudly  
 With Somalis  
 And Latinas  
 And Hmong  
 And Catholics  
 And Protestants  
 And Jews.  
 Each elected by the people of this city.  
 All leaders.  
 Everyone at home in Minneapolis.

This new day  
 Let our Mayor shine with the gratitude of history  
 and the prayers of our sisters  
 and our sons  
 and our grandmothers and their descendants  
 Upon a Minneapolis  
 that now beholds the beauty of creation  
 and the diversity of peoples born to this land for generations  
 and those new to our exquisite frozen shores.

This new day  
 we are proud in all that we have accomplished and  
 we join in celebration  
 of all we have become.

This new day  
 This new year  
 This new beginning  
 Let us embrace the call of our past  
 And the fierce promise of today  
 As we rise to create together  
 One Minneapolis  
 Where every child can look to this podium

And into the eyes of this new mayor  
 And this new city council  
 And see in her future, in his future  
 That some distant day ahead,  
 Themselves standing here  
 Leading their beloved community forward.

Our sacred responsibility  
 Is to work together  
 To listen to one another  
 To daily practice empathy and compassion  
 And radical hospitality  
 To put down our weapons and  
 Lift up our hearts in our hands  
 Seeking mutual understanding  
 And respect  
 To make it so.

This new day  
 We ask your blessings for this new mayor—  
 May her light shine with bold courage  
 and may she lead  
 with the tender urgency  
 and robust compassion we love—  
 And to the city council,  
 Where the leadership of empathy and mutual respect  
 Is your guiding light—a  
 And to the citizens of our great city of Minneapolis as  
 We celebrate the best of who we are and  
 Dream the biggest dreams we can dream and  
 Work together to lift our eyes to the horizon  
 To make for those who come next  
 a Minneapolis  
 worthy of their dreams.

This new day,  
 We are blessed  
 Let's get to work.

Amen.