



December 23, 2016/23 Kislev 5777

Dear Shir Tikvah & Friends:

Tomorrow night, we light the first candle of our Chanukah. It's our people's loving, gentle defiance against the darkness of the winter night, against intolerance and bigotry. We kindle a flame of hope and resistance that grows each night, radiating God's promise that with each new day, our hope and our faith grow more powerful.

I'm gonna get personal here.

We need you this year.

We need your hands, your hearts, your questions, your hope, your defiance, your holy skepticism, your commitment to keep singing a robust song of hope into a world that aches to hear our melodies of justice, our harmonies of dignity.

And we need your financial support. I know so many of you have already given generously this year. But I'm asking again because our doors have expanded in the past month. Our work ahead is bigger than ever.

A few weeks ago, on a cold Shabbat evening, a young Muslim woman came alone to Shabbat services.

I introduced myself.

"I'm frightened," she said as she held my hands.

"Last night, a man tried to rip off my hijab on the bus. No one said anything. I didn't know where to go. I heard from my friends that Shir Tikvah is a place where I'll be safe."

I hugged her. "You're safe here," I promised, both of us teary.

My heart broke into a million pieces.

What a blessing that our synagogue has a reputation where a scared young Muslim woman would feel safe!

And what an enormous responsibility to bring Shir Tikvah's vision into the world: A community where all people are treated with respect, compassion, and love.

As we light our Chanukkah candles and bring 2016 to a close, Shir Tikvah needs your support more than ever before. Please: make a generous contribution now to support our holy work. We're grateful to each of you—for all the ways we are creating the world, together. Thank you for your contributions, each and every one.

We face ginormous challenges in the days ahead. Together, we will resist every effort to hurt people and respond with abundant love and moral courage. Together, we will sing loudly and courageously our eternal song of hope.

Shabbat Shalom,
Michael