

Yom Kippur 2024
Howard Rock

Over 30 years ago our family celebrated my son's bar mitzvah less than two months after category 5 Hurricane Andrew devastated Miami. The synagogue was but a shell: there were no carpets, the walls were badly damaged, the windows had lost their coverings. It was like a wartime situation. And yet it was the most wonderful bar mitzvah I ever attended, one that we will never forget. It just shows that it's the spirit that counts the most.

Last Sunday we held our Yom Kippur services courtesy of the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd. With few visitors they were more intimate than usual, and that intimacy added much to the proceedings. Almost everyone participated one way or another. We were fortunate to have the talented cantorial soloist Bart Gilleland along with the piano accompaniment of Karen Verm. Andrea and I helped lead the two main services as well as Yizkor. Norm, as always, was our rock, the center of our services with his knowledge of so many ancient prayers. Like our bar mitzvah of 1992, I don't think anyone will forget this Yom Kippur. The sense of togetherness and community was priceless. Words that we have heard so often had an even deeper meaning. Finally in our break-the-fast supper we got to talk with each other in a spirit of hope and fellowship.

I wish to thank Norm, Andrea, Bart, and Karen for their invaluable contributions. Jason Posnock's violin added much to the Kol Nidre prayer and mourner's kaddish. Marci's alternate Torah reading allowed us new insight and understanding of our ancient text. The beautiful and

thoughtful music after the service by Vance, Katie Hamilton and Mariya Potopova touched us. Our supper was hosted superbly by Barbara and Ellen who were helped by many others. Henry assisted me deftly in moving the books and supplies from Sacred Heart to the Lutheran Church. Finally, I thank everyone who attended in person or online. You were all so helpful to our spirit with your sensitive readings. Indeed, putting on a service like this takes a village and the village was there for us, even at the last minute.

We livestreamed to services and for the Kol Nidre service we had 71 people tuning it at one time or another. We had problems with the sound which, if we do this again, we will work to resolve.

At the Kol Nidre service I gave a talk trying to find a meaning, even a spiritual meaning, for Hurricane Helene. I attach it in case you might find it of value. Writing it allowed me to think about things like this in a broader way.

As we go forward in the year 5785, I hope the Brevard Jewish community will continue to be a source of comfort, fulfillment and stimulation.