

*A member of the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame*

ק ה י ל ת א ו ר ח ד ש  
**CONGREGATION OR CHADASH**  
**CONGREGATION OF NEW LIGHT**



# The New Light

## **A New Year Begins**

*By Bill Wahler, OC Co-President*

President of a synagogue. What an honor. What a responsibility. What a headache. They say you have to be strong and dedicated to do that job. They (and who exactly are they) say you are a total meshugenah to do it twice in your lifetime. Yet, here I am. It was twenty one years ago that I became the leader of Congregation Beth Simchat Torah in New York City. CBST was the largest GLBT synagogue in the world. At that time we had no rabbi and close to 1000 members. You know the old line about two Jews and three opinions. Try leading with 999 second guessers and I would extrapolate that into 1500 opinions. I survived.

I moved to Chicago in 2001 because of a change in employment. I joined Or Chadash but did not become very active until several years ago. Looking back, I consider that a loss on my part. Now, I have the privilege to

be co-president for the next two years.

Or Chadash has much more to offer than just regular religious services. There is also a vast array of educational and social events. I have made some great friends since I joined Or Chadash and my Chicago family has continued to expand. You only get out of something what you put into it. The more you contribute to the life of Congregation Or Chadash the more you will benefit from its many and varied offerings. I encourage each of you to get more involved. Attend a social outing. Be a part of one of our social action programs. Sign up for one or more of our classes. Join a committee.

I wish everyone a great summer and I look forward to seeing more and more of you at Or Chadash events in the coming year.

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community of

## **Or Chadash, The Congregation of New Light**

In Chicago ....

**Our People,**

**Our Community,**

**Our Synagogue**

## **Come Add Your Light To Ours!**

## Meet the Author

By Rabbi Edwards

We have new opportunities to meet author Evan Fallenberg. Evan, a native of Cleveland, lives in Israel. He is the author of an award-winning novel, "Light Fell," about which he has previously spoken at Or Chadash. ("Light Fell" will be receiving the Stonewall Book Award from the American Library Association.) He is also a translator, most notably of Meir Shalev's "A Pigeon and a Boy" and of Ron Leshem's "Beaufort" which was made into the stunning Israeli film.

You can read more about Evan at [www.evanfallenberg.com/entry.html](http://www.evanfallenberg.com/entry.html)

Evan will speak at services on **Friday, July 10**, sharing some thoughts on translation and the current Israeli literary scene.

On **Saturday, July 11**, you are invited to Larry and Susan's home in Hyde Park at 12:30 for a light Shabbat lunch and a discussion of "A Pigeon and a Boy." Please let Larry know if you are coming: 773-326-1490.

On **Sunday afternoon, July 12** at 2:00, Evan will be reading and speaking at Spertus downtown:

[www.spertus.edu/programs/arts/evan\\_fallenberg\\_on\\_light\\_fell.php](http://www.spertus.edu/programs/arts/evan_fallenberg_on_light_fell.php).

## Chesed Shel Emet The Truest Act of Kindness

By Carol Goldbaum

Progressive *Chevra Kadisha* (Sacred Society) have come to Chicago. Previously, this was only performed by the Orthodox. Participating in a *Chevra Kadisha*, particularly the preparing of the deceased person for burial

(*Taharah*), is the most selfless act one can perform. Clearly the deceased person ((*met* (M) or *metah* (F) in Hebrew)) can not repay this *mitzvah*. There are two Progressive (non-Orthodox) *Chevra Kadishot* in the Chicago area: one covering the Evanston area and one at Anshe Emet. If there are enough people in Or Chadash interested in learning about and being part of a *Chevra Kadisha*, we will talk with Rabbi Burg about joining together.

Jewish tradition is very clear that we should show *Kavod Hamet*, respectful treatment of the deceased from the moment of death through the completion of Burial. Ideally the community or a *Shomer* watches over *metim* and read Psalms from the moment of death whenever other services are not being provided until burial. The members of the *Chevra Kadisha* conduct the washing and purification of the deceased, the dressing of the *met/metah* in the shroud and putting the deceased in the coffin and closing it.

After training, I participated in my first *Taharah* in April. It was a memorable and awe inspiring experience. I realized how precious our bodies are even after death. The group of women who participated were from 4 different congregations. Some of us know others and we quickly bonded with each other as we prayed that our work would be done with respect. We donned surgical gowns, gloves, booties and head coverings as well as masks. The room was spare with a gurney where the *metah* was covered with a sheet. Throughout the various stages of the ritual washing and purification we recited various prayers and

verses from the Torah. When we were finished, we dressed her in the traditional burial clothing (*Tachrichim*) which symbolize that we are all equal before our Creator. These consist of loose trousers with the feet sewn shut, a long sleeved blouse, a *kittel* & sash, and a bonnet that also covers the face. Shards of pottery are placed on the eyes and mouth. If the person wore a *Tallis* that is placed over the *kittel*. Following this, we placed the shroud itself in the coffin and laid her gently on it and sprinkled earth from Israel and covered her. We worked closely together and felt that her spirit or soul was in some way present. We asked her forgiveness if we had done anything in error. After that we cleaned the *Taharah* room and took off our surgical garments and ritually washed our hands again, to signify our completion. We then placed her coffin outside of the room and recited another brief prayer. The whole experience lasted about an hour including about 10 minutes of processing our experience. We then left the funeral home and washed one last time and in good womanly fashion shared a chocolate bar.

I spoke about this experience before services on May 1 and several women expressed interest in being members of a *Chevra Kadisha*. Since men would provide the services to men and women to women, we are looking for additional volunteers, both male and female. Please call or send me an email if you would like to discuss this further. Asking about it does not commit you to "signing up."

## For the love of reading...

By Susan Boone

I've never been much interested in the comics/graphic novels genre of literature (except of course Maus). But a few months ago in the book review section of *The New York Times* there was a brilliant review, done in graphic form, of a conventional (i.e., non-graphic) memoir, see [www.nytimes.com/2009/03/28/books/review/bechdel.html?ref=review](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/28/books/review/bechdel.html?ref=review). I mentioned this to the Matts at services one Friday evening — they're artsy/graphics types and I knew they would be familiar with this reviewer, whose name I couldn't remember. Indeed, they guessed Alison Bechdel, creator of *Dykes to Watch Out For*. I explained how extraordinary I found this review — how could anyone conjure up such an approach? It is an amazing act of synthesis, absorbing and illustrating reviewing a text in so few comic panes.

In May we visited my sisters-in-law in LA. Still taken by this review, I described it to Lisa (Larry's sister). She ran out of the room returning with a book, which she held up dramatically, asking, "have you read *this*?!". It was Alison Bechdel's own memoir, *Fun Home*. I read most of it that day, purchasing it when I returned home to finish it. It is always fun to discover a new author, and this time I have also met a new ... what to call it ... communication strategy? Her story itself is quite compelling, and made so much more vivid in this graphic form -- the pictures convey an intimacy and a tenderness that is hard to put across in narratives using text totally amazing alone. Or so it seems to me. She explains it

herself, "I think in words and pictures, and find it difficult to explain myself without access to both registers." If you're casting about for a book to read this summer (in addition to *A Pigeon and a Boy: A Novel* by Meir Shalev) you might try Alison — she's totally amazing!

*Editor's Note: It is so good to see items from the congregation. Keep it up and thanks, Susan.*

## And Thank You

Last month we forgot to acknowledge the donations. Sorry for the error, so an extra thanks for donations in June from Shirley Gendel in honor of Rabbi Larry Edwards' birthday. Also, a donation from Norman Sandfield towards the Shabbaton was received.

This month we received a donation from Howard Aronson for Jean Aronson's yahrzeit. More Shabbaton donations from Howard Aronson and Frank Nussbaum.

Also, we collected \$87 in Tzedakah money which went to the NUJLS.

### ONEG SPONSORSHIP

Celebrate a birthday, graduation or anniversary, or honor/memorialize a loved one with an oneg sponsorship. Please contact the Or Chadash office at [office@orchadash.org](mailto:office@orchadash.org) to make arrangements and pick a date. Thank you!

## Social Activities for July

By Mindy Stillman, Membership

### Saturday, July 11th 7:30pm

Music of "Pirates of Penzance" and "the Mikado" @ Millennium Park Pritzker Pavilion. Look for the OC pride flag. **Free**

### Tuesday, July 14th 8:30pm

Movie in the Park "Bringing up Baby" (with my favorite actress Katherine Hepburn) @ Indian Boundary Park, 2500 W Lunt Ave, Chicago, IL. **Free**

### Out at the Ballgame is Sunday August 16<sup>th</sup>

We have ten tickets available for the annual Out at the Ballgame event.

Watch the Cubs beat the Pirates at this 1:20 game.

Tickets are \$32.

Please call or email the office if you would like to purchase a ticket.

### Congregation Or Chadash

5959 N. Sheridan  
Chicago IL 60660  
(773) 271-2148

Email: [Office@OrChadash.org](mailto:Office@OrChadash.org)  
Website: [www.OrChadash.org](http://www.OrChadash.org)

Rabbi: Laurence Edwards  
Cantorial Soloist: Judith Golden

Co-Presidents:  
Marvin Levin and Robin Sampliner  
Executive VP: Bill Wahler  
Treasurer: Rick Greenthal  
Webmaster: Marvin Levin

*Rabbi Edwards is available by appointment and can be reached via email:*

[rabbiedwards@orchadash.org](mailto:rabbiedwards@orchadash.org) or  
phone (773) 326-1490

## 2009 Pride Parade

By *Mindy Stillman*

A whopping 30 OC members and friends participated in the Pride Parade on Sunday, June 28th. It was a beautiful sunny day, as we rode on and walked along side the decorated flatbed truck driven by Robin. We proudly wore our brand new OC t-shirts as we waved and cheered along with the people who lined the parade route.. Thanks to all of the participants for making this a very successful event.

Over a dozen OC members and friends watched, danced and sang along with the movie "Mamma Mia" on the beach on Saturday, June 27th. We didn't let the rain put a damper on the fun that we had.

All in all, it was a wonderful Pride weekend.

Thanks Elise and Marvin for great photos.

*It begins with a truck*



*And it comes together with the help of all*



*The Or Chadash Family gets ready to ride*



*Robin as teamster, watch out*



If you like the t-shirts in these photos you too can get one. Contact [office@orchadash.org](mailto:office@orchadash.org) and let us know. Every shirt sold supports our synagogue.

*Do you need a minyan for a truck? Carla, Bill and others work the crowd*



*Or Chadash enjoys the Parade*



*Ron Magers of ABC/WLS poses with Elise and Laurie*



*And another successful Parade comes to a close*



Thanks to everyone who helped, marched, decorated and supported our People, our Community, our Synagogue.

## The Fast of Tisha b'Av

The Fast of Tisha b'Av is **Wednesday evening July 29 at 8PM.**

We will be joined by Lomdim and observe this on the beach reading Lamentations and discussing portions. Bring a blanket to sit on. It is traditional to sit on the ground or a low bench as we are mourning the destructions of the Temples and other calamities.

## July Dine-around

Still hot and time for hot food again, but this time Mexico.

The history of Jews in Mexico goes back to the time when Hernando Cortes conquered the Aztecs in 1521. He was accompanied by many *Conversos*, Jews forcibly converted to Christianity during the Inquisition of 1492. Many prominent Mexicans claim they are of Jewish descent, referencing their *Conversos* roots. Besides Presidents Porfirio Diaz, Francisco Madero and Jose Lopez Portillo, renowned artist Diego Rivera publically announced his Jewish roots: "My Jewishness is the dominant element in my life," Rivera wrote in 1935. "From this has come my sympathy with the downtrodden masses which motivates all my work."

Join in the history of our people and sample at this month's choice.

**Little Mexican Cafe**  
**1055 W Bryn Mawr Ave**  
**(773) 769-1004**  
**July 10 at 6:15**

No reservations are needed, but try to arrive by 6 p.m. to ensure adequate seating.

*Bete' Avon*

## Pride Shabbat, Cookout and Beach Service Oh My!

*By Robin Sampliner*

I hope you all were able to attend the cookout and service on Friday, June 26<sup>th</sup>. We had over 60 people in attendance!

Thank you to Ethel Meyer and Bill Wahler for planning the event. And thank you for Ethel and Carla Jones for being the GRILL MASTERS for the evening. We had lots of food, folks and fun. And of course wonderful weather for a cookout. Thank you to everyone who brought something to share with the group. We must have had a lot of hungry people in attendance, because there was not much food left over!

After dinner we headed to the beach for a beautiful service led by David Morck and Judith Golden. Praying on the beach with the lake in the background is such a wonderful experience. And we just made it to the end without needing flashlights.

Thank you to the World Congress of GLBT Jews for sponsoring the oneg. We sure did have a lot of people in the Michigan Room that night.

With all of the events of the week and weekend, I'd say Or Chadash had a pretty darned good PRIDE!



## Our Mission

To provide a warm and affirming community where all Jews can feel welcome. To accomplish this mission, Or Chadash will:

**Remember** that it was founded as an answer to the prejudice that gay and lesbian Jews experienced in other synagogues;

**Strive** to ensure that no Jew experiences prejudice within our community;

**Maintain** affiliations with the Union for Reform Judaism and the World Congress of Gay and Lesbian Jewish Organizations;

**Build** strong ties within the greater Jewish community of the metropolitan Chicago area;

**Dedicate** itself to the basic obligations of Jewish life, including:

- **Respecting** the contributions of people of all generations
- **Sharing** the life-cycle events of its members
- **Celebrating** Shabbat and the holidays
- **Fostering** prayer with sincerity
- **Visiting** the sick
- **Comforting** the bereaved
- **Encouraging** the study of Torah

Congregation Or Chadash is a not-for-profit organization that is largely supported by contributions from its members and friends. Please remember us generously.

## The Or Chadash Mussar Group Open to All

By Carol Goldbaum

The Or Chadash Mussar study group meets once a month on the second Sunday of the month in the library at 1:30 PM. Modern Mussar is a Jewish practice founded by a 19<sup>th</sup>-century rabbi, Israel Salanter. However its origins go back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. It emphasizes ethical conduct, living a more conscientious life, and an increased awareness of one's responsibilities toward oneself and others. In the Mussar practice, one focuses on soul traits (such as equanimity and patience) through meditation, journaling, and other means to help one become more in touch with one's emotions, thoughts, behavior and reactions, as well as identifying ways to modify them if one chooses. These exercises help one become more self-aware, content, and able to better contribute to one's immediate environment and community. The OC group is working with Alan Morinis's book, *Everyday Holiness*. This group is still open. If you are interested in joining, please contact **Stephanie Friedman** at [office@orchadash.org](mailto:office@orchadash.org).

## Save the Date

High Holidays will be here before you know it. We are making plans and, as Robin said in her article, we have outgrown our usual space for High Holidays so we will be at changing venues just for Days of Awe. Details including public transportation and parking will be coming so watch the website, check your High Holiday ticket form, or call for more details, but please be sure to join us. Contact the office at: (773) 271-2148  
Email: [office@orchadash.org](mailto:office@orchadash.org)

## Thank You for Volunteering

Thank you to everyone who volunteered to help at the Andersonville Midsommarfest booth. This was Or Chadash's first time with a booth at the festival and it was a huge success. Lots of people stopped by, learned about our services and programs and filled out green cards. We hope to see many of the visitors at future OC events. OC volunteers rock!

*Some people are just that enthusiastic about us. Jerry, Amanda, and Kat greet festival goers with information about Or Chadash*



## The Next Volunteer Opportunity – N. Halsted Market Days

Our first festival of the summer was a huge success! Let's make Market Days even more successful. Market Days will be held on **August 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>**. We will once again have a booth at the festival and will need people to man/woman the booth from 11am-6pm both days. If you are interested, please contact Robin Sampliner or the Or Chadash office.

## Gift Idea

If you saw our flag in the Pride parade and said "Gee, I want one", well you can have your very own. What better way of showing your support for your people and your community than with our Pride Flag? All purchases support Or Chadash.

Prices start with a donation of \$30 and ordering details can be found at [www.orchadash.org/flag.html](http://www.orchadash.org/flag.html)



## Cycles of Our Lives

### **Happy Birthday**

July 2	Allen R. Brown
July 3	Mindy Stillman
July 3	Morris Stroz
July 9	Patricia J. Benjamin
July 11	David Morck
July 12	Robert A. Rosenstein
July 21	Irwin Drobny
July 22	Carla Cenker
July 22	Ramona Hernandez-Perez
July 23	John Griffith
July 25	Gary Liss
July 27	Joseph P. Shure

### **Anniversaries**

No Anniversaries in July

### **Thanks for the Oneg....**

**Friday, July 3:** Oneg still available for sponsorship

**Saturday, July 4:** Lunch sponsored by Linda Preston in memory of her husband, Tim Preston, and in celebration of July 4

**Friday, July 10:** Oneg sponsored by the Or Chadash board in honor of Rabbi Larry Edwards and Susan Boone

**Friday, July 17:** Oneg still available for sponsorship

**Friday, July 24:** Oneg sponsored by Irwin Drobny in memory of his parents, Ruth and Ben Drobny

**Friday, July 31:** Oneg sponsored by Steven Joachim and Stephen Neeley in honor of the bar mitzvah of their son, Neil

### **July Service Schedule**

**July 3:** Shabbat Service with Reuben Lewy and Judith Golden 8 p.m.

**July 4:** Saturday morning Shabbat service, 10 a.m. A light lunch follows.

**July 10:** Torah Service with Rabbi Edwards 8 p.m.

**July 17:** Shabbat Service with Lilli Kornblum 8 p.m.

**July 24:** Shabbat Service 8 p.m.

**July 31:** Shabbat Service with Rabbi Edwards 8 p.m.

## **Changes At Or Chadash**

*By Robin Sampliner,  
OC Co-President*

We just installed the new board at Or Chadash in a very nice service/ceremony on June 19<sup>th</sup>. I am looking forward to working with the new board and seeing what can be accomplished this year at Or Chadash.

That is not the only thing that is changing on July 1<sup>st</sup> at Or Chadash. As many of you heard in Marvin Levin's announcements at the installation service, the space that we use within Emanuel will be changing. We will no longer have use of South Dannenberg. The Chicago Jewish Day School that uses the building during the week is growing and bursting at the seams. They will be taking over both the north and south parts of Dannenberg. Therefore, we will no longer be having the monthly potluck dinners on the last Friday of the month. If needed, we will be able to use the Michigan Room for dinners and for purposes other than an oneg. We have also been assured by Emanuel, that when needed, they will do what they can to find alternative space in the building for us to use.

As most of you see Or Chadash, not much will be changing. Except for the High Holidays. As many of you that attended the Torah Dedication service at the end of May found out, when the chapel fills up, it feels rather small. It's the perfect space for us on Friday nights, but not for the High Holidays. The Or Chadash board has been working very hard over the past year to come up with

viable alternatives. And we have been successful!

In September, Congregation Or Chadash will be holding its Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services at the Jewish Reconstructionist Synagogue (JRC) in Evanston! We are very excited about the opportunity to have our services in this new space and in a beautiful, green building. Lots of factors were taken into consideration when deciding where to have our High Holiday services; cost, location, accessibility, feasibility, and the opinions of OC members. We are confident that the right decision was made.

**All of the Rosh Hashanah (Erev, Day of, Tashlich) and Yom Kippur (Kol Nidre, Shacharit, Yizkor, Musaf, Mincha and Neilah) services will be held at JRC.** Shabbat Shuvah (the Friday night service in between the holidays) will still be held at Or Chadash in the Chapel.

When the High Holiday ticket forms are sent out, we will also inform everyone how to get to JRC via car, train, or bus. It is easily accessible via public transportation. It might take you a little longer to get there than to OC, but it is doable and we believe the trip will be well worth your time and effort.

Keep an eye out for further updates in upcoming newsletters and mailings. If you have any questions, please direct them to Robin Sampliner or Bill Wahler, or to the OC office.



## **Rabbi's Column continued from Last Page - Are We the Cutting Edge**

*JM*: Third, straight people join gay synagogues because there's a refreshing irony to GLBT religious expression. Yes, we understand that for most of Jewish history, Leviticus was read as anti-gay, and that to many people, "gay (religious) Jew" is an oxymoron. But we're doing it anyway. This means that most gay synagogues approach Jewish ritual and text with a little more critical distance — even a sense of humor. This is deeply relaxing.

Well, maybe it is relaxing. It is also exciting, energizing. Torah gets refracted through some new lenses, and shines forth with a different glow. As synagogues cast about trying to figure out what they should be in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, our model of being partly lay led and wholly committed to the embrace of difference should be something to consider: not a bland sameness, but an experience of abundance.

So, suggests Michaelson, "Unintentionally, [GLBT synagogues] have become laboratories of the Jewish future."

We hope we are open and welcoming. We hope we provide an environment that feels safe and generous and also serious about our commitment to Jewish study and practice – to Jewish life in all its possibility. They're not breaking down our doors yet, but be ready!

## **World Congress Board Meeting**

*By Bill Wahler, OC Co-President*

The Board of Directors of the World Congress of GLBT Jews met in Chicago June 25 and 26, hosted by Congregation Or Chadash. There were delegates from across the United States, from Boston to Los Angeles as well as from Mexico and Argentina.

The primary focus of the meetings was a new mid range strategic plan. The major topics agreed upon were conferences (international and regional), outreach, leadership training and being an information clearinghouse. The World Congress hosted a well-attended reception for the greater Chicago GLBT community on Thursday, June 25 at Emanuel.

Future World Congress events include a conference in Los Angeles, August 13-15, 2010. It will be a full weekend of religious, educational and social events is planned which will include the next board meeting. **MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW.** More information will be forthcoming shortly. Hopefully we will have a large OC contingent in LA next summer.

There was also discussion about a future conference in early 2012 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Think about that as a future OC group trip.

Members of the World Congress board also joined us for Pride Shabbat and several marched/rode with us at the Pride Parade.

*Norman, Rabbi, Craig (from Howard Brown), Mindy, and Jerry enjoy the World Congress Reception*



## Are We the Cutting Edge By Rabbi Laurence Edwards

In *The Forward* of June 12, Jay Michaelson reflects on why straight people are joining GLBT synagogues. I'll condense his three main points, and wonder aloud whether you think any of them apply to us. I recommend that you look at the whole article: [www.forward.com/articles/107069/](http://www.forward.com/articles/107069/)

**JM:** First, because of their community bonds and shared histories of exclusion, GLBT synagogues are often warmer and more welcoming than your average synagogue in the suburbs. ... GLBT people have experienced rejection, and so GLBT synagogues work hard to make up for it. As a result... gay synagogues are among the most proactive in terms of inclusion ...”

Especially in the Reform and Reconstructionist movements, inclusion is what everyone is talking about now, and GLBT congregations are ahead of the curve on this. Because specific forms of oppression and exclusion are closer to our historical experience, the mitzvah of not oppressing the stranger because you were strangers in the Land of Egypt resonates more immediately at Or Chadash. I think we generally deserve high marks for welcoming strangers, and actively looking for ways to include new members. But this does not happen automatically – as with any other group, most of us find it easier and more relaxing to hang with folks we already know. Do we, as Michaelson suggests, welcome folks “warmly and effectively, with fewer judgments, raised eyebrows or grumbles about political correctness”?

**JM:** A second reason that gay synagogues are attracting so many straight members is that they are voluntary communities. Their members are people who have every reason to leave the Jewish world and never come back. They — we — have been scorned, vilified, marginalized, reduced to sexual beings, and analogized to perverts and deviants and worse. And that’s just by our rabbis. ... Yet despite all this, you can walk into a gay synagogue and find dozens, or hundreds, of people filling the pews and singing at the top of their lungs.

Well, it’s true – we do sing. It does usually feel like people who show up at Or Chadash are glad to be there, and as a percentage of total membership our attendance rates are pretty good. And maybe there is also a little bit of political resistance: who are you to tell us we don’t belong in the Jewish community?

**Rabbi’s Column continued on Previous Page**

## Reflection for Rosh Chodesh Tamuz By Judith Golden

We journey on  
Experimenting with rebellion  
Weeding out false arrogance  
Struggling to set standards to live by  
And ways to reclaim ourselves  
When we have touched our own deadness  
Taking detours from holiness  
Around human-ness  
Fighting to claim our place

And even when we whine  
When re-sources we have learned to  
depend on dry up  
You remind us You are the true source  
You quench our legitimate thirst

We ask that You bless us  
With the clear message of Your intent  
And the vision to see Your angels  
As they guide us on our path

Help us trust that there is indeed a  
homeland inside of us  
Where we can prosper in our aliveness  
That we will find this place  
That You are with us  
As we journey on

