

The story of your child's creation.

To my Pastor,

Frank, there are no words for the wholeness (shalom) with which you and your community sent me and our CJDS community into Shabbat with the extraordinary gift of your book of blessings from congregants of all ages as our neighbor at the New Albany United Methodist Church. [\[click here to read their letters and blessings to us\]](#)

But I will try...

When I read aloud the email to my staff that you sent me the evening of the shooting in Pittsburgh, as well as the beautiful letter you wrote to Rachel and me, we all wept. What kinds of tears are these?

I believe these are tears of learning, knowing, and believing something that Jews have so tragically *not* widely known or felt throughout history: that they – we – are not alone.

We have been reading over and over and over again all the letters in the Book of Blessings you gave us. I hope it's okay to point out two, in particular, that touched me particularly deeply. I'd like to quote from them here:

*One family, the Lampl's, write:*

*Dear Neighbors,*

*During these uncertain, scary, and sad days, you are not alone. We stand with you. We hold you in our arms. We love and value you!*

*We want you to feel safe and loved in our community. We believe in the same scripture. We want you to feel free to worship...*

*Together we will overcome hate. We will create a community where love wins. We will be a place and a space where our lights shine. Hand in hand we will be good friends, good neighbors, and be the love the world needs.*

*Love always wins!*

And there was this letter:

*Dear Neighbors,*

*Please do not let this terrible tragedy be borne on your shoulders only. Use ours. We stand with you against this injustice. We sit with you to comfort you through the dark hours of grief. We pray with you for a better tomorrow. We are stronger together.*

*Yours, today and tomorrow,*

*Kevin and Jane Jackson*

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As I shared with everyone today, I want to live in a world where we all live by your four sacred words, "We couldn't do nothing."

"We couldn't do nothing" were the exact same words used by the Catholic nun who saved my grandmother and 62 other Jewish girls in a convent in southern France, between 1942 and 1945, when she was asked, "Why did you risk your lives to save those girls?"

And so, we receive your holy book with the weight and inspiration of knowing and believing we are not alone.

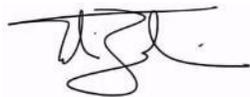
Please know, Pastor Frank, and all our New Albany United Methodist friends, that through this book, you give those of us in the Jewish community the most sacred gift of all: by standing with us in solidarity, you help us heal an unfortunate experience of too often having felt alone, throughout times and places.

This is how I understand the spontaneous standing ovation you all received from all of us last Friday: as a profound thank you from the bottom of our souls for going a long way to heal a painful and generational fear within us. Your presence at CJDS today, your presence that I feel every day from next door, your calls, your beautiful and thoughtful letters, your warm embraces physically and through words of solidarity, are what bring us the best tears we could possibly hope for.

May we and our communities enjoy many, many more years of friendship, learning and living together. And may we meet only for "*simchas*," for happy occasions!

In love and friendship,

Your Rabbi.



Tali Zelkowicz