In Memory of Jerry Daniel
Rabbi Daniel Pressman
Rabbi Emeritus, Congregation Beth David

Dear friends,
Helen and I regret that we can't be with you in person. We send greetings to all of those present, and in particular to Audrey and Natalie, who have cared for Jerry so attentively and lovingly. Thank you, Rabbi Roller, for the opportunity to share a few thoughts about Jerry. Simply put, Jerry was one of the finest people I have ever known. When I think of him, one of the teachings in Pirkei Avot comes to mind: "הֱוֵי מְקַבֵּל אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם בְּסֵבֶר פָּנִים יָפוֹת. "Receive everyone with a pleasant countenance" is the usual translation, but it doesn't do the Hebrew justice. סֵבֶר פָּנִים יָפוֹת denotes greeting people warmly, kindly, and hospitably. That was Jerry. When I visualize him, it's always with a smile.

He loved people and it showed.

Jerry was Beth David's founding president, and as one of the four original families, he merits credit for what was really a great act of faith. It sometimes happens in synagogues that founders resist changes and new ideas — "It's not like the good old days." Not Jerry. He was thrilled with Beth David's growth and remained an active and enthusiastic participant. In recent years, he kvelled over Beth David's beautiful new building. I once asked him, "Could you have imagined that we would have such a lovely space?" He said, no, but it's great. Jerry loved Beth David like a proud father loves his child as they grow and develop, Jerry attended my Talmud class for many years. One of my memories of his smile is him sitting at the other end of the long table from me, happily learning and participating in the discussion. One thing I remember from that class was the time some of the people were talking about their participation in the Jewish Genealogical Society. Guessing the answer, I asked them how far back they had been able to discover, and I think the furthest was about five or six generations. Then I asked Jerry, "How about you?" And Jerry could trace back to the fifteenth century!

Sephardic Jews address their Rabbis as *kavod ha-rav*, honored Rabbi. Jerry didn't use that honorific, but he embodied that value, and I always appreciated his friendship and support.

Finally, there is a Yiddish expression that describes Jerry: a *zisseh neshomah* — a sweet soul. His lovely soul has left us, to add his light to the world to come. He had a life well-lived. He was loving and loved, kind and loyal. He leaves a legacy and an example for us all to follow. Jerry taught us to greet others with a smile, and he showed us how to be kind and loving, and so we can say that his memory will truly be a blessing.