Dear Friends,

Best wishes for a sweet and meaningful new year of 5786! I'm eagerly anticipating the High Holidays at Beit Tikvah, and I hope to greet many of you in person as we gather to reflect, celebrate, and reconnect.

Our theme this year is **"Gardens of Hope: Planting and Nurturing for Resilience."**

The image of a garden is a rich and timely one. In a world that often feels chaotic or unpredictable, a garden invites us to engage in slow, steady, and intentional acts of care. Each seed planted is a small act of generous vision. Each moment of tending—watering, weeding, pruning—is a statement of resilience, a choice to invest in beauty, growth, and life.

This is the spirit of the High Holidays. As we begin the new year, we plant the seeds of our aspirations, hopes, and commitments. We take stock of the soil of our lives—what needs nourishing, what needs clearing, what's ready to bloom. Teshuva, the practice of return and renewal, is one of our most powerful tools for nurturing these inner gardens.

The prayers of the season offer guidance, but they also invite us to do our own spiritual gardening. We don't have to take every word literally; instead, we might approach the liturgy as a well-tended landscape, full of paths and corners where meaning can blossom differently for each of us. Some metaphors may feel outdated or challenging, but others might surprise us with beauty or insight. I encourage you to look for the language that speaks to your spirit—and to trust your own instincts about where and how your growth will take root.

I'm also delighted that our community continues to grow in connection and collaboration. Whether this is your first time attending High Holiday services at Beit Tikvah or you've been with us for many seasons, I hope you'll find both inspiration and camaraderie.

Reach out. Say hello. Share a smile. These seemingly small gestures are like sunlight and rain to our communal garden—simple, powerful, and life-giving.

May this be a year of resilience, hope, and healing for each of us and for the world we share.

**L'shanah tovah—wishing you joy and sweetness in the year ahead,**

**Rabbi Doug Heifetz**