Welcome everyone. Let's start off with a song

Song: Heenay ma tov

Heenay ma tov u-ma nayim
Shevet akhim gam ya-khad

Reader: That's a lot of words in Hebrew. Whatever do they mean? One of the words is “tov” which you've heard when people say “mazel tov” - good luck. “Tov” means “good,” and we put “ma” in front to mean “how good.” The word “nayim” means “pleasant.” And “heenay” means “look and see” or “behold!” So the first line reads

Heenay – look and see!
Ma tov – how good
Oo ma nayim – and how pleasant

The second line has these words:
Shevet – to celebrate
Akhim – brothers and sisters
Gam ya-khad – all together

So the whole song says
Look and see how good and pleasant it is
When brothers and sisters celebrate together

Now let's sing it again.

Heenay ma tov u-ma nayim
Shevet akhim gam ya-khad

Reader: What does this have to do with us? Are we all brothers and sisters?
We don’t all have the same parents, but when we come together like this we are all part of a family. We’re part of the family of Kahal B’raira, and that is part of the family of Jewish people all over the world.

So maybe we are brothers and sisters, at least for a while. What are we celebrating? We’re celebrating the end of Yom Kippur – The Day of Atonement. To atone for something you did means to feel sorry for it, and to try to make it right. Maybe you remember this morning when we all got together and thought about how each and every one of us does things we might feel sorry about. I’ll bet you’re saying to yourself – “We already did that. Do we have to do it again?”

Reader: The answer is no – and yes! We’ve come together to celebrate the end of the eight days where Jews like us all over the world take time to think about how we’ve behaved during the last year. In a few minutes we’ll have a break fast. That’s a meal people eat after fasting. Some adults like to fast on Yom Kippur as a way of remembering how the year has gone and what they want to do differently next year. Why do we make such a big deal about this?

Reader: The most important thing that we believe is the importance of thinking about the results of what we do. Before we steal the last piece of cake, we think about whether it was being saved for someone else. Before we get up and leave our toys on the floor we think about what will happen if someone steps on them. Before we make fun of people, or play a trick on them, we think about how they will feel. Before we agree to do someone a favor that we really
don't want to do, we think about how doing that favor will make us feel, and how it will affect our friendship. Or we try to. But we don’t always. So at this time of year, during the eight days after Rosh Hashonah – which is when we celebrate the birthday of the world – we take extra care to remind ourselves that we want to do a little better next year than we did last year.
In a certain kingdom there was a ruler who believed strongly in the justice of his laws and in adhering strictly to them. "A law is a law," he would say to his advisors. And he never allowed exceptions to be made when enforcing them. One day, a beggar was caught in the palace kitchens stealing cheese and bread. The King ordered him to be hanged, as this was the punishment for stealing. "But I am so poor and hungry," explained the beggar. "And you, oh King, have so much. Surely there is a bit of cheese and bread to spare. I would have asked first. I am not a thief by nature. But no one was about. And the sight of the food there on the tray..." "Sorry. No exceptions," interrupted the King. "Take this thief to the gallows."

"What a pity. What a pity," bemoaned the thief as he walked in front of the guard whose sword pointed him in the right direction. "Now my father's secret will die with me. I would gladly have shared it with the King before being hanged."

"Out with it," ordered the King's guard. "What secret?" If the King would but put a pomegranate seed in the ground, I could make it grow and bear fruit overnight. Such is the secret my father taught me."

The guard stopped walking. "Perhaps the King would like to know of this secret before you are hanged. Let us return to him. The guard brought the thief back to the King's chambers and he told the King his secret. The King was interested. "Show me," he said, and ordered the guard to fetch a pomegranate seed from the palace gardener. Accompanied by the King's officers, the King, the guard, and the poor beggar went out into the garden. There the beggar dug a hole for the seed, but he did not put the seed into the ground. Instead he stood up. "I can work the magic after the seed is placed in the ground, but I cannot be the one to do it," said the beggar. "Only a person who has never stolen or taken anything that did not belong to him may plant the seed. Since I am a thief, I need one of you to do the planting." The group standing around the thief became silent, and in the silence birds' songs and insects' buzzing seemed to grow louder.
The thief turned to the Grand Vizier and held out the pomegranate seed in the palm of his hand. "Would you do the planting?" the beggar asked.

The Grand Vizier was visibly shaken. "It will not grow if I plant it either," he admitted, "for once when I was a lad, I stole a small carving knife from my neighbor's house." He could not look at the thief directly, but lowered his eyes.

So the thief turned to the keeper of the King's books. "Perhaps you would do the planting?" the thief asked.

It was the bookkeeper's turn to grow pale and bow his head. "I cannot do this either," he said, "for I deal with sums of money each day. Perhaps there has been a day where I made a mistake and subtracted too much for the sums."

Each of the King's advisors as well as the King's guard admitted that he could not plant the seed.

"Then it must be you, oh King, who will plant this seed," said the thief, "for you are the only one here who has never taken The King's usually haughty features softened, and his straight shoulders slumped a little.

"Children can be attracted to pretty objects," the King began. "I remember a time as a child where I was severely punished for desiring my father's royal necklace and hiding it in my room. I did not know its value or importance. I only knew that its jewels shone like stars and sent rainbows running through my room when I held it in the sunlight by my window."

There was another silence after the King spoke, until the thief, still holding the seed, said, "You are all so mighty and powerful and want for nothing. Yet not one of you can plant this seed. While I, who stole a little food to keep from starving, am about to be hanged."

"You are a clever one," said the King, "to show us that not one of us is perfect. Should my laws be as strictly enforced as I wished them to be, none of us would be standing here today. I therefore revoke your punishment. You may go free. And in appreciation for the lesson you have taught me, I give you my father's necklace. Go, knowing that because of you, my laws will be forever enforced with compassion as well as justice."

This Little Light of Mine

1) This Little light of mine
I’m “gonna” let it shine
This Little light of mine
I’m “gonna” let it shine
This Little light of mine
I’m “gonna” let it shine
Let it shine. Let it shine. Let it shine!

2) All around the world,
I’m gonna let it shine (3x)

3) In my daily work,
I’m gonna let it shine (3x)

4) Free of fear and hatred
I’m gonna let it shine (3x)

5) Building a new world
I’m gonna let it shine (3x)

6) This little light of mine. ... (3x)
REMEMBERING

In the rising of the sun and in its going down,  
We will remember them.

In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter,  
We will remember them.

In the opening of buds and in the rebirth of spring,  
We will remember them.

In the blueness of the sky and in the warmth of summer,  
We will remember them.

In the rustling of leaves and in the beauty of autumn,  
We will remember them.

In the beginning of the year and when it ends,  
We will remember them.

When we are weary and in need of strength,  
we will remember them.

When we are lost and sick at heart,  
We will remember them.

When we have joys we yearn to share, we will remember them.

So long as we live, they too shall live,  
For they are now a part of us

And we will remember

After Rabbi Jack Riemer
Reader: So we come together one more time on Yom Kippur to renew our promise to ourselves that we’ll make next year just a little bit better - and then we celebrate that promise by having a nice meal with our friends. And then we’ll end the special time by saying goodbye. If we say it in Hebrew we’ll say Goodbye by saying Shalom, which means Hello and Goodbye and Peace. Then we’ll say khaverim - a khaver is one friend and a group of friends is khaverim. And then, because we’ll need to check in with each other next Yom Kippur, we say le-heet ra’ot, which means “see you again.”

Let’s sing that all together now:

Song: Shalom Khaverim.

Shalom khaverim
Shalom khaverim
Shalom, shalom.
Le heet ra’ot
Le heet ra’ot
Shalom, shalom.