

New Light News December, 2017

A Word from the Rabbi

At Rosh Hashana we begin with Abraham. A month later, in Heshvan, we begin with Abraham. On Rosh Hashana, the Rabbis selected Abraham for our Torah reading to present a model of the first Jew as a man of deep faith gazing at the uncertainty of his future. "God will see," he says to Isaac as they ascend the mountain. As I asked in my second sermon this Rosh Hashana, "What is it that Abraham knew God would see? What God saw on the mountain top was that Abraham and Isaac were there, body, mind, and soul. They both said: Heneini -- Here I am. They were both whole in their identity as lovers of God. Abraham did not deny the terror of the situation. He did not ignore the pain. But he refused to surrender to the pain and the fear. He refused to allow the situation, any situation, to dictate the content of his identity as a Jew." Our test is to look at America, at an emerging new cultural dissonance that is arrogant, coarse, brutal, dishonest, impulsive, and chaotic. We don't have to become part of it. We don't have to surrender. God will see the mindful, true, sincere, and compassionate souls we will continue to be.

And now we come back to revisit the Abraham journey in Heshvan with a broader picture, including many heroic acts and question marks as well. Abraham is marked by his incompleteness. He retires from the living the life of an iconoclast when he marries Ketura and settles down with a family of his own. He assigns Isaac a wife (Rebecca) by proxy (his servant Eliezer) and leaves Isaac and Rebecca to make the new decisions of the emerging nation. Though we look to Abraham as the giant of the New Year (Tishri is also called "month of the giants" in I Kings 8), he is really an imperfect servant of God when we read him again a month later.

As I mentioned on Sukkot, Judaism is a theology of imperfection. The sukkah is an imperfect house. The persons of Torah, especially in Genesis, live out and learn from their imperfections. Being imperfect in an imperfect world means not having to compare ourselves with others. Ernest Kurtz and Katherine Ketcham write in "The Spirituality of Imperfection" that the spiritual person identifies with fellow human beings and that "spirituality allows us to "see" that as human beings, we are all standing under the same tragedy, that we are all united in not being God... For how can I fixate on the thought that there is something wrong with someone else if I am look at the world from the framework that there is definitely something wrong with me? Looked at in this way, the other person isn't weird or pathetic, but a brother or sister in weakness and imperfection. Looked at from this perspective, another person's strengths become reason for hope."

Learn to read Abraham and the other early Jews of Genesis with a different mindset. They were the progenitors of different way of thinking about human existence – not as a warrior world of brute strength and me-firstism- but as an attempt to unite flesh and blood with heaven and its Creator.

Shalom,

Rabbi

The Book of Proverbs

Join our friends from the Rodman Street Missionary Baptist Church **at Rodman Street on December 13th and 20th at 7:00 PM**, for a close reading of The Book of Proverbs and what they mean. ***Classes will be at the Rodman Street location for the rest of the year.***

Presidents' Report

What a month we had! And what a month to come!

Not since 1955 have we had such a busy month. In our old home we had to empty the trash - and boy, was the basement filled with trash - and move our belongings to our new home, take down the sign and remove our name from the building. In our new home we had to paint, install new lighting and unpack over 100 boxes. And there is more to come: during the first week of December our plaques will be installed and we will be closing on our old home.

We had a parade. Led by Rabbi Perlman, we marched from old to new through the streets of Pittsburgh. Joined by the children of Tree of Life*Or L'Simcha, we sang and ate in celebration of our move. Thanks to Harvey Issenberg, we were on TV.

We have a new home. Think of it as a new beginning. There are lots of issues, but we expect our new landlords to work through them successfully.

We have the opportunity to design our sanctuary. In the summer we talked about adding stained glass windows and building an ark we can admire. But there is no reason to limit ourselves to these two.

We need your ideas as how to make our new home our home. Write to us at:
info@newlightcongregation.org.

A number of individuals require special thanks for creating the opportunity for us to have a new home:

- The Jewish Federation of Pittsburgh: for hosting a meeting in January to discuss the metropolitan model (many congregations in one building);
- Larry Rubin, acting as a consultant to the Federation, for his support and encouragement promoting the metropolitan model;
- Marilyn Honigsberg: for having the idea to approach Tree of Life*Or L'Simcha about leasing dedicated space;
- Michael Eisenberg, President of Tree of Life*Or L'Simcha for his willingness to consider leasing dedicated space to our congregation; and
- Our Management Team for overseeing the process of selling our old building, negotiating a lease and moving: Arnie Epstein, Barry Werber, Dan Stein, Sharyn Stein, Carl Solomon, Harold Caplan, Barbara Caplan and Stephen Cohen.

Come join us for services on Friday nights, Saturday mornings and Sunday mornings – don't forget after Sunday morning services there's breakfast by the Men's Club for only \$3.

Stephen Cohen, Co-President

Barbara Caplan, Co-President

December Meetings

- Board Meeting, Sunday, December 3rd, 10:30 AM

Chanukah Dinner

Join us for our annual Chanukah dinner on Sunday, December 17th at 5:00 PM. See the enclosed flyer for details.

Movie Night

December 24 is a great time for a movie. We'll see **And So It Goes**, starring Diane Keaton and Michael Douglas, on Sunday, December 24th at 7:00 PM. See the enclosed flyer for details.

Holocaust Remembrances

Dor Hadash invites the community to celebrate the publication of **Wordwings**, a new book by Sydelle Pearl, on Sunday, December 10 at 10:00 AM. See the enclosed flyer for details.

Save the Dates

January 15 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration at Rodman Street Missionary Baptist Church

March 25 – 42nd Street at the Pittsburgh Playhouse

More information in future newsletters.

December Birthdays

Lillian Casper
David Greenberg
Martin Harris
Marilyn Honigsberg
Jeremy Tuckfelt
Brenda Werber

December Anniversaries

Lillian & Hugh Casper
Bonnie & David Greenberg

We Moved!

On Sunday, November 12th, 2017, nearly a year's worth of hard work culminated in the move to our new home at 5898 Wilkins Avenue. Led by Beth Perlman (driving) and Rabbi Perlman (walking), we moved our Torahs to their new home, walking the streets of Squirrel Hill from New Light to New Light. Along with special community members and children from Tree of Life*Or L'Simcha we were warmly welcomed by TOLOS Rabbi Myers and Executive Director Michael Eisenberg. Rabbi Perlman led a dedication ceremony and installed our mezuzah, after which we celebrated with a great brunch.

A video of our move is available at KDKA: <http://pittsburgh.cbslocal.com/video/category/spoken-word-kdkatv/3761796-new-light-marches-torah-from-old-synagogue-to-new-home/>

The Jewish Chronicle also covered our special morning:

<https://jewishchronicle.timesofisrael.com/march-to-new-home-generates-mixed-emotions/>



Reminders

- To purchase Memorial Plaques, Simcha Tree Leaves or Stones contact Ileen Portnoy 412-683-7985.
- To sponsor an Oneg in honor of that special person/event or for no reason at all call Hugh Casper 412-421-7619.
- To sponsor a Sunday morning breakfast contact Dan Stein 412-521-5231
- To purchase bricks for our "Garden of Freedom" or sponsor a Kiddush luncheon contact Barbara Caplan 412-521-4332
- To purchase Enjoy Books, call Sharyn Stein at 412-521-5231
- For information on our cemetery contact Myron Snider at 412-235-7085

NEW LIGHT CONGREGATION

5898 Wilkins Avenue

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www.newlightcongregation.org

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