

## ***New Light News July, 2017***

### **From the Rabbi**

Dear friends,

As Benjamin Franklin was leaving Independence Hall on the final day of the Constitutional Convention in 1787, a lady stopped him on the steps and asked: “Well Doctor what have we got, a republic or a monarchy?” Franklin replied, “A republic... if you can keep it.”

This month we celebrate the Fourth of July at the beginning of the month and Tisha B’Av (the evening of July 31st) at the end of the month. One is the birth of American democracy (if we can keep it) and the other is the destruction and rebirth of the Jewish covenantal community. Both Jews and Americans have had rocky journeys in trying to get to the ideal nation. For Jews, it has been a balance between the claims of a Creator God on mortal human beings and the rights of a people to uphold these claims (or duties) and protect themselves throughout history. For Americans, it has been about creating a Representative Republic in which elected officials represent the rights of citizens in government and also uphold the authoritative claims of the Constitution. Another balancing act. How ironic that we approach both July Fourth and Tisha B’Av engaging in one of the greatest tumults of our political history as Presidential scandal runs afoul of obstruction of justice and violation of the Constitution. Now you can understand what Franklin was talking about. America was founded as a tenuous Republic with checks and balances. Franklin feared the signs of his times—mob rule and armed rebellion and secession—and the new constitution was meant to protect minority rights as well as clamp down on authoritarianism.

The Bible illustrates that from its origins the Jews had problems balancing the tugs of Covenantal Community. Much of what we read in the Books of Numbers and Deuteronomy concerns outright rebellions of the people against God and Moses. Whether it is complaining about the manna or turning back to Egypt because of the fear of what lies ahead or being seduced in orgies with foreign women, the people don’t understand the gift of freedom provided by God and get stuck in their selfish interests. God wants to provide for their rights but the people do not heed God’s claims on them. Judaism rests on the precarious covenantal agreement that our ancestors made with an all-powerful Creator God and the existence of our people relies on our “buy in” made possible by centuries of Halacha (Jewish law). That a Jewish polity can exist without all its members living in a sovereign nation is extraordinarily. By God’s will, we continue to exist!

Tisha B’Av comes to upend our confidence in our self-sufficiency. Unlike Yom Kippur, it is about shouldering the blame of the nation and mourning our short memories. We were twice evicted out of God’s holy presence (the Jerusalem Temple). Do we dare upset the balance between His claim on us and our right to beseech Him?

Keep your eyes on the flag and remember the Temple this month!

Rabbi



## Presidents' Report

On Sunday, June 4, 2017, New Light Congregation, voted to create a new spiritual home by renting space from Tree of Life\*Or L'Simcha (TOLOLS) and sell its current building. We hope to move after Succoth. A press release was sent to the Jewish Chronicle and published in the June 15<sup>th</sup> edition. We hope you saw the article. And we hope it puts an end to the rumors that we are closing!

We are entering a world with many issues to manage: What happens if the building is not sold – or does not close – before we move in November? What if a buyer wants to close before then? What will be our cash situation this year – pre- and post-move? How – and with whom – should we invest the proceeds? What should we take with us? The ark? Our books?

We have had several inquiries about our building with one serious buyer. We are in negotiations. The major concern expressed by all is zoning and occupancy. Our building is old and, though it meets all applicable codes, may not be code compliant for a new buyer. Plus, the lot is zoned residential. Any commercial buyer would need a variance from the City. Getting a variance is expensive, complex, subject to the whims of the political process, and time-consuming.

We are beginning to plan for our new home. We are scheduling an **Open House** on Sunday, July 16<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 – 3:00 PM, and on Sunday, July 30<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 – 3:00 PM at Tree of Life\*Or L'Simcha. For those who have never been in the building (and for those who have never roamed its many nooks and crannies) there will be tours of our new New Light Sanctuary, our offices, and the rest of the building. Tours will be led by the President of TOLOLS, Michael Eisenberg.

We need your input: What should our new sanctuary, currently configured as a social hall, look like? Where should the memorial plaques be placed? Where do we want our ark? We are in the process of talking to several professionals to give us some suggestions. Their sketches will be available at the Open Houses for your feedback.

We are all looking forward to the next exciting chapter in the life of the New Light Congregation.

Barbara Caplan, Co-President

Stephen Cohen, Co-President

## Tisha B'Av Services

On Monday, July 31<sup>st</sup> at 9:00 PM at New Light Congregation - Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist synagogues around Pittsburgh will join us for a communal reading of Lamentations and the Tisha B'Av service.

## July Meetings

Board Meeting, Sunday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 10:30 AM.

Men's Club Meeting, Monday, July 10<sup>th</sup>, 7:15 PM.

## The Book of Proverbs

Join our friends from the Rodman Street Missionary Baptist Church **at Rodman Street on Wednesdays, July 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> 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.***

## Casino Trip

The next casino trip to Wheeling Downs is for Sunday, July 9<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 AM. See the attached flyer for more information. Contact Sharyn Stein at 412-521-5231 by June 30<sup>th</sup> if you are attending. We need several more people for this trip.

## Movie Night

Our movie this month is *Denial*, on Sunday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 PM. See attached flyer for more information.

## Giant Eagle Gift Cards

Please contact Dan Stein at 412-521-5231 to purchase Giant Eagle Gift Cards.

## Jewish Heritage Night at the Pirates

The sixth annual Jewish Heritage Night at the Pirates is Tuesday, August 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:05 PM. Each ticket includes a Hebrew "Let's GO Bucs" Hat. To order tickets please contact Josh Avart at 412-325-4903 or [joshua.avart@pirates.com](mailto:joshua.avart@pirates.com). Ticket prices are

Outfield Grandstand: \$18

Outfield Box: \$30

Home Plate Box: \$35

All seating will be filled on a first come, first serviced basis. Deadline to purchase is July 19<sup>th</sup>.

## Contact Information Reminder

If you have not yet done so, please send your current contact information to Janet Cohen, 412-512-0949 or [janet.cohen@gmail.com](mailto:janet.cohen@gmail.com). Please remember to include whether you want all your contact information in the member directory and whether you want to receive the monthly bulletin via email or print. Even if your information is correct, please let Janet know.

### July Birthdays

Ethel Kubitz  
Howard Kubitz  
Jacob Notovitz  
Michelle Reisz  
Rochelle Sands  
Myron Snider

### July Anniversaries

Ruthann & Sidney Shapiro



## Reminders

- To purchase Memorial Plaques, Book Plates, Simcha Tree Leaves or Stones contact Ileen Portnoy 412-683-7985.
- To sponsor an Oneg sponsoring 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" contact Barbara Caplan 412-521-4332.
- For the best soup in the City of Pittsburgh contact Harold Caplan 412-521-4332
- For information on our cemetery contact Myron Snider 412-235-7085

## NEW LIGHT CONGREGATION

1700 Beechwood Boulevard

412-421-1017

[www.newlightcongregation.org](http://www.newlightcongregation.org)

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