

New Light News May, 2017

From the Rabbi

Dear Gentle Member,

Did you attend the information meeting Sunday, April 23rd? It was an historic meeting in the life of New Light. It was a meeting to extend the life of our shul and I applaud our presidents, especially Stephen Cohen, for being courageous enough and transparent enough to take the next step towards our future. As Steve said, "New Light has never been about the building. We are family." The mood in the room was absolutely positive. Never let anyone tell you that New Light is closing or New Light is having problems. Israel will continue to live!

Our Conservative movement for years has been forecasting a leaner but stronger movement. In the 1970s, surveys showed that 40% of Jewish households identified Conservative. Now we are ranked somewhere in the area of 15% of population or less. Few people and fewer young people identify with synagogue life and there are many options to express your Judaism today without paying institutional dues. Other generations were proud of the material cultural of Judaism - architecture and art - we seem to be heading towards a time when Jews seek to consolidate space to build a critical mass of people of shared interests. This means more spirituality, not less. This means more Torah learning and social celebration. As we speak, right now Jews are gathering in a movie theater, the JCC auditorium, a church, your neighbor's home, and in synagogues flexible enough to allow parallel davening opportunities. This month we will see Jews across the religious spectrum studying a vast cafeteria of subjects at the Shavuot Tikkun (May 30th). How cool is that?

I appreciated the questions at the meeting. It helped discern the options we have, our desire to live beyond the confines of 1700 Beechwood Boulevard, our purpose in sustaining a small family shul. If we do seek tenant status in the heart of Tree of Life, I see a greater potential for partnership, for renewed worship, and for a New Light presence to grow and continue. I have always been one to be suspicious of boundaries for boundaries sake. Religion is ruined when one group thinks they have a monopoly on the truth. I dislike the kind of predatory, triumphalist posturing that some synagogues take. That is not my style. I can learn with every rabbi. I can study and pray with every Jew. Moving to Tree of Life and embracing their other tenant Dor Hadash fits my personality. The more, the more. Let Israel live!

Rabbi Perlman

President's Report on Congregational Meeting

Over 40 members came to discuss our future on Sunday, April 23, 2017.

We first discussed our financial situation. In brief, for the past several years we have balanced our budget through contributions from the Men's Club and Sisterhood. We expect that funding to become unavailable in the next fiscal year.

Over the last several years we have tried a number of approaches to create a long term solution to our financial situation, including an open house to attract new members, seeking new tenants for daytime use of our building, etc. In January, another option was identified. At a Federation meeting of area Synagogue Presidents, we heard a presentation of "The Metropolitan Model." In brief, this Model suggests co-locating many congregations in a single building. In a sense, this is exactly the situation at Tree of Life/Or L'Simcha (TOLOS), which leases space to Dor Hadash: two synagogues in one building.

In March, the Board authorized opening discussions with TOLOS. The plan would be to rent space in TOLOS and sell our building; using the proceeds as an endowment to support our future. Homes in our immediate area have sold for well over one million dollars. While we had a long list of requests to TOLOS, the primary request was that we have a dedicated sanctuary. Other issues included: dedicated business office, dedicated Rabbi's office, outside signage, kitchen use, etc.

As in any negotiation, there are many moving parts. A major concern of our members was the future of TOLOS itself. First, there is a question of the long term viability of TOLOS. Dor Hadash is considering moving to Beth Shalom partially due this concern. Second, Chatham University has made an offer to assume ownership of the TOLOS building. The TOLOS Board is seriously considering this offer.

After much discussion (the meeting lasted almost 90 minutes), there was unanimous support (though no formal vote was taken) for:

1. Selling our building and moving to another site.
2. Ensuring that the site include (offer) a dedicated sanctuary for New Light.
3. Continuing our negotiations with TOLOS but at the same time searching for other locations, including: other area shuls, JCC, etc.

We committed to offering an update at the Annual Congregational Meeting on June 4, 2017. We urge you to attend that meeting to hear further news.

To us, New Light has never been about the building. We are family. We care about each other. We share simchas and sorrows together. We celebrate holidays together. We study and learn together. We socialize together.

Our goal is to be together: to ensure the long term viability and vibrancy of the congregation.

Please call us with your questions – or suggestions. We need your help.

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| Barbara Caplan, Co-President | 412-519-7141 | barbaracaplan@gmail.com |
| Marilyn Honigsberg, Administrative Assistant | 412-521-7174 | msh1223@hotmail.com |

Tikkun Leil Shavuot

Join the annual community-wide free study night at the Jewish Community Center in Squirrel Hill on Tuesday, May 30, from 10:00 PM to 1:00 AM. There will be three 50-minute sessions, each with multiple classes, featuring local rabbis and leading thinkers, including our own Rabbi Perlman and Beth Kissileff. A complete schedule of classes will be distributed at the event and will be online at jfedpgh.org/Shavout. Topics range from history, biblical stories, politics, faith, love and sex. Plus, cheesecake and coffee will be served! See the enclosed flyer for more information.

Shavuot Services

Services are Wednesday, May 31st, 9:45 AM and Thursday, June 1st 9:45 AM at New Light. Yizkor is on Thursday.

The Book of Proverbs

Join our friends from the Rodman Street Missionary Baptist Church **at New Light on Wednesdays, May 17th and 24th at 7:00 PM**, for a close reading of The Book of Proverbs and what they mean.

May Meetings

Board Meeting, Monday, May 8th, 7:00 PM
Men's Club Meeting, Monday, May 15th, 7:15 PM

May Brunch

The New Light Congregation Sisterhood and Men's Club invites everyone to brunch on Sunday, May 21st, 2017, 10:00 AM. Guest Speakers will be Pittsburgh's own Dr. Knowledge and Miss Information (Mr. Charles Reichblum and Mrs. Audrey Reichblum).

See the enclosed flyer for details. Please get your reservation to Ileen Snyder. This will be the Sisterhood's year end program.

Movie Night

Our next movie is "Dough" on Sunday, May 28th, 7:00 PM. See the enclosed flyer.

Summer Preview

Watch for news about our next casino trip to Wheeling Downs, set for Sunday, July 9th, 10:00 AM. Contact Dan Stein at 412-521-5231 if you are attending.

The Sisterhood is interested in planning a summer excursion to World of Values and Wicker Outlet in Greensburg, PA on June 25th. Please contact Sharyn Stein at 412-521-5231 if you are interested.

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. 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.

May Birthdays

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| Merle Blumenfeld | Sheldon Reck |
| Marvin Feldman | Reva Simon |
| Naomi Greenblott | Jo-Ann Tuckfelt |
| Rachelle Grobstein | |
| Harvey Issenberg | |
| Fay Neft | |
| David Paris | |
| Ronald Rager | |
| Nadine Reck | |

May Anniversaries

Carol & Marvin Feldman
Ronna & Harvey Rosenberg
Gerry & Dr. George Tessler
Brenda & Barry Werber

Sunday Morning Services/Breakfast on Hiatus for the Summer

Note that Sunday morning services with breakfasts provided by the Men's Club have ended for the summer as of May 1. They will resume in the fall.

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

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| Rabbi | Jonathan Perlman | 412-904-3601 |
| Co-President/Social VP | Barbara Caplan | 412-521-4332 |
| Co-President | Stephen Cohen | 412-421-3999 |
| Administrative Assistant | Marilyn Honigsberg | 412-521-7174 |
| Membership | Debbi Salvin | 724-444-6324 |
| Sisterhood | Sharyn Stein | 412-521-5231 |
| Men's Club | Dan Stein | 412-521-5231 |
| Simcha Tree & Memorial Plaques | Ileen Portnoy | 412-683-7985 |
| Treasurer | Harold Caplan | 412-521-4332 |
| Onegs | Hugh Casper | 412-421-7619 |
| Cemetery | Myron Snider | 412-235-7085 |
| | Gerald Sapir | 412-782-1882 |
| | David Paris | 412-980-4862 |
| Religious | Richard Gottfried | 412-367-7384 |
| House Comm. | Scott Caplan | 412-422-2614 |
| Corresponding | Janet Cohen | 412-512-0949 |
| Calendar | Janet Cohen | 412-512-0949 |
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