



אור חדש

New Light Congregation

New Light News June 2019

From the Desk of the Rabbi

Dear Friends,

On Shavuot we read the Book of Ruth, a tale that begins in tragedy (the death of Avimelech and his two sons) and ends in hope (the birth of a son to Ruth and Boaz). Ruth comes outside the Jewish community and saves the day from a despairing community of Jews. She restores hope to them by rebuilding the next chain in the line of Avimelech within her. Her dour mother-in-law Naomi celebrates as the new baby comes to replace her two sons who have died. The Book of Ruth wants us to consider contingency in our lives – why we are in this place at this time – and wonder how much a presence God has in directing our lives.

Some of the greatest stories of the Holocaust demonstrate how powerful the Shechina was in the lives of people who survived. Take for instance the story of Mir Yeshiva in Vilna as told by Rabbi Azriel Langa, a student in the Mir Yeshiva, to author Rabbi Issachar Frand. But first a bit about Ruth.

In his Sefer, *Ikveh Erev*, Rabbi Langa questions a key phrase in the Book of Ruth. It says there “*Vayiker mikreh chelkas haSadeh L’Boaz.*” “*Vayiker mikreh*” basically means “And it just so happened” that she ended up picking in the field of Boaz. Just so happened? It was “luck” that she ended up there? Was it really just dumb luck that Ruth married Boaz, became the grandmother of perhaps the greatest king of Israel and the progenitor of *Moshiach*?

Judaism does not believe in “luck.” The Ribono shel Olam (Master of the Universe) knew what he wanted to happen. So, says Rav Langa, God exerted a little “*Hashgacha Protis*” (personal guidance) and perhaps mixed in earthly affairs a little to make sure that Ruth picked the right field, and everything fell out as He intended. So why then does the pasuk use the expression “*Vayiker mikreh chelkas haSadeh L’Boaz?*”

Says Rav Langa, the answer is that this teaches the lesson that what appears to us as happenstance (“*mikreh*”) just LOOKS like that. It LOOKS like a stroke of luck. However, it is not luck at all! It is all pre-planned. We’ve talked before about how God hides his miracles so that we may gain merit by seeking them out. This is a prime example.

The story of the escape of the Mir Yeshiva students from the Nazis is another example. Rabbi Langa wrote: “If a prophet would have predicted in Europe in 1930 that there would be a

Holocaust in Europe and the entire student body of the Mir Yeshiva would manage to escape just in time, who would have believed him? Could anyone have predicted the amazing sequence of events and opportunities that enabled the salvation of the Yeshiva students?"

What happened? As the Soviet Armies drove the Nazis and their minions back through Eastern Europe, it briefly left the city of Vilna in the country of Poland. Learning that the former Soviet Union was going to redraw the borders of Eastern Europe, putting Vilna in Lithuania, Jews from everywhere in Poland rushed to get to Vilna. During that brief window, the Nazis, busy fighting for their lives, were unable to stop the flow, and escape from Poland was suddenly possible. The Mir students as well as many Jews with them, ran for Vilna, leaving the Nazis and the anti-Semitic Poles behind them when the borders closed. Temporarily safe, the students were then able to leave Europe before the former Soviet Union could trap them behind the Iron Curtain. The happenstance of this "accident of History," the cascade of visas, the travel permits, the Chinese and the Japanese governments coming together at just the right time to get them to Shanghai, the seemingly impossibly complicated arrangements and agreements coming together at the last minute, was nothing short of — shall I say it? — miraculous.

Luck? It was God working behind the scenes to save the Torah greats like Rabbi Langa for the rest of the World. Graduates of the Mir Yeshiva and their descendants are now in Israel and here in America, bringing the learning and the insights for which the Mir Yeshiva is famous to the rest of Yiddishkeit and all of us.

Rabbi



Congregational Meeting

The New Light Annual Congregational meeting is Sunday, June 2nd at 10:30 A.M. in the Zweig Library. A regular board meeting follows. Please plan to attend. There are two agenda items.

1. The Nominating Committee will propose the following slate:

Co-Presidents	Barbara L. Caplan, Stephen R. Cohen
Administrative Assistant	Marilyn Honigsberg
Membership VP	Debbi Salvin
Social VP	Barbara L. Caplan
Treasurer	Harold Caplan
Financial VP	Carl Solomon
Recording Secretary	Ileen Portnoy
Corresponding Secretary	Janet Cohen

Board Member Vacancies:

There are five vacancies for a three year term, one vacancy for a two year term and one vacancy for a one year term. Proposed new board members are:

Ethel Kubitz	Fay Neft	Ann Notovitz
Merle Blumenfeld	Deborah Rosen	

Other nominations for officers and board members will be taken from the floor.

2. Dues

The recommendation is that there is no increase in dues for the upcoming year.

Presidents' Report

What Happened in May:

- The sign outside our sanctuary was installed.
- The sign outside the building was installed.
- Working with a Beth Shalom volunteer, Joe Jolson, we have installed brighter ceiling lights in our chapel. Please come - the prayer books are now readable!

What's Coming in June

- We have been granted access to the kitchen in the Eisner Commons. Starting in June, our joint TOLOLS - New Light Men's Club Sunday Breakfast will have a cooked meal following services. Services will be in our chapel. Breakfast will be in the Eisner Commons. Beth Perlman has graciously volunteered to cook for the guys. Thank you. Please come Sunday morning services. We need you to make a minyan!
- We are moving five of our seven memorial boards, hopefully in June. We have retained a firm to build supports for the boards that mimic the mahogany in our chapel. The two largest cannot be moved because they too tall for the walls. We are adding a sixth board, dedicated to Dan, Rich and Mel.
- We will also be moving our Simcha Tree and Presidents plaque into the lobby outside our chapel.

What's Happening at the Cemetery

- We have received a verbal commitment from the Snow Foundation to replace our cemetery entranceway, replace the roof on the garage and paint the garage. We are seeking final bids and hope to have the work completed before the High Holidays. Our expectation is that next year we will submit a grant to repair the bathroom.

What's happening with Tree of Life

- On May 15th New Light and Dor Hadash wrote a joint letter to TOLOLS accepting their recommendation that we identify a mediator to discuss distribution of money donated to TOLOLS since October 27th and to discuss our place in the reconstructed TOLOLS building. We named three mediators.

- *Barbara and Stephen*

Shavout Services

Sunday, June 9th (Day 1)

Monday, June 10th (Day 2, with Yizkor)

at 9:45 AM in Helfant Chapel

Trip to Westmoreland Museum of Art

Have you been to the new museum outside Greensburg? It has a wonderful collection of American art. Interested in a bus trip later this summer? More details to follow in the July bulletin.

Tikkun Leil Shavuot

The annual community wide late night study Shavuot session starts at 10:00 PM on Saturday, June 8th and continues to 1:00 AM on Sunday, June 9th. All sessions are at the JCC and are free. And there will be cheesecake!

Moses in the Midrash

June 11th – Moses Strikes the Rock. June 25th – The Death of Moses. All classes are at 7:30 P.M. in the Lehman Center.

June Birthdays

Gertrude Adams
Faye Bleiberg
Robert Daniels
Philip Fehl
Joel Reisz
Sharyn Stein

June Anniversaries

Barbara & Thomas Kleyman
Beverly & Jason Manne
Ann & Jacob Notovitz
Beth & Rabbi Perlman
Nadine & Sheldon Reck
Roselle & Carl Solomon

Upcoming Community Events

Joyce Fienberg Book Club

The next book club meeting will be on Monday, June 17th at 7:30 PM at the home of Patty Lemer, 150 Maple Heights Road, Pittsburgh, 15232. The book will be “Women Rowing North: Navigating Life’s Currents and Flourishing As We Age” by Mary Pipher.

AARP

Squirrel Hill AARP will host its annual end of the season session with a wonderful luncheon at noon, Wednesday, June 19th at the Comfort Inn Conference Center, 699 Rodi Road, Penn Hills.

Following the lunch there will be installation of officers by Barry Weber: President, Marcia Kramer, Vice President, Marsha Stern, Treasurer, Marilyn Honigsberg, Recording Secretary, Andrea DiBello, Corresponding Secretary, Hilda Goldhammer and Financial Secretary, Gerri Linder.

Entertainment will be provided by Nick Fiasco with his program “Sounds of Sinatra and Friends.” Reservations can be made by calling Marcia Kramer before June 10th at 412-656-5803.



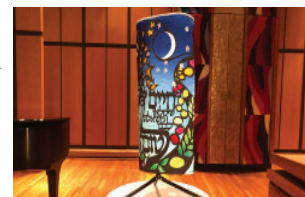
Recent Events

Eric Cohen Interview

Eric Cohen recently spoke at the Jewish Center of Norwich and was featured in an interview on Channel 12 News, Binghamton, NY. The interview can be seen at : <http://bit.ly/EricCohenInterview>.

Torah Cover Presentation

Cantors Steven Stoehr and Stephen Stein presented a special Torah cover at a ceremony on April 30th at Rodef Shalom. Eleven gold stars on the mantle represent the 11 victims; colored circles represent a river of comfort that flowed from around the word to Pittsburgh. Commissioned by the international assembly of cantors, the beautiful cover will travel across the country to be used as an educational tool and then return to Pittsburgh to be shared by the three congregations.



Hate Crime Legislation Press Conference

On May 9th Pennsylvania state officials held a press conference in front of the TOLOLS building to introduce legislation to fight hate crimes through education and penalties. Pictured is Representative Ed Gainey, along with Senator Jay Costa, Representative Dan Frankel, Senator Lindsey Williams and Pittsburgh City School Board President Lynda Wrenn.



Tree Plantings

On May 6th students from Greenfield Elementary School planted fruit trees and placed memorial benches on their school grounds. Sharyn Stein, who was present for the ceremony, noted that Dan Stein was a substitute teacher and worked at this school, as well as other Pittsburgh Public Schools. On May 15th Allderdice High School students planted eleven trees on the front lawn of the high school. Their hope is that the “trees serve as a memory of what happened on October 27th and a call to action for future generations,” according to Emily Pressman, Allderdice senior.

Delegation from Russia Presents Books



A delegation of 40 Russian women visited Pittsburgh and the TOLOLS building on May 20th to present three Russian/Hebrew Books of Psalms. Each book was inscribed with a message from Rabbi Berel Lazar, chief Rabbi of Russia. Debi Salvin, along with Julie Harris and Debbie Rosen, were there to accept a book on behalf of New Light and Dor Hadash.

Interfaith Program at Shadyside Presbyterian Church

On May 22nd Shadyside Presbyterian Church hosted New Light members as their guests at a presentation on immigration and anti-Semitism by Lauren Bairsfathé, director of the Holocaust Center Center. A kosher dinner was provided.

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 at 412-421-7619
- To purchase bricks for our “Garden of Freedom” or sponsor a Kiddush luncheon contact Barbara Caplan 412-521-4332
- To purchase Giant Eagle gift cards contact Marilyn Honigsberg at 412-521-7174
- For information on our cemetery contact Stephen Cohen at 412-421-3999

NEW LIGHT CONGREGATION

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Onegs	Hugh Casper	412-421-7619
Simcha Tree & Memorial Plaques	Ileen Portnoy	412-683-7985
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