



אור חדש

**New Light Congregation**

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## **New Light News August 2021**

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### **A Word from the Rabbi**

**Dear friends,**

We are coming to end of the Book of Numbers in our synagogue Torah reading. It is good to be alert to the transitions that are made along the road to the Promised Land. One of the most puzzling stories told is the tale of the Second Generation Israelites who are simply described as “short tempered” on the road to the Land. Rashi explains that they have two years left in the forty year journey in the wilderness. The new generation has no knowledge of being in Egypt. They don’t complain about the watermelon and leeks and meat they used to eat in Egypt. They don’t even ask to return to Egypt. According to Rashi, they lose sight of their destination and become fed up with how difficult it is keep walking and walking and walking without sight of a land of milk and honey on the horizon. They have no more room in their hearts for pain to dwell. They have had enough.

What do they do? They speak against God and Moses (Numbers 21:5) and they say “Why do you bring us up from Egypt to die in the wilderness, for there is no food and no water, and we cannot stand the wretched bread!” Netivot Shalom, one of my favorite Hasidic commentators, says that this is the worst sin that the people have committed in all the rebellions in the desert. So much that God lets loose poisonous snakes to bite, injure and kill some of them.

What was the punishment so cruel? Not only did the second generation turn their backs on Moses and God, they also started a big lie. They must have been suffering from heat stroke or delirium when they said that there was an absence of food and water. We are told that God miraculously let manna rain from the heavens and created pools of sweet water along the way. Why create a big lie and then add that “the bread we do have (isn’t bread a kind of food?) makes us want to retch” (Alter).

The story as I taught it on Saturday morning in shul is about the sin of ingratitude. Suddenly, God releases snakes (the midrash tells us that he had previously withheld them to protect the Children of Israel on the road) and tells Moses to create a copper serpent on a pole (much like the medical symbol of the Caduceus). Everyone who prays in penitence and gazes at the copper snake will be healed. The Netivot Shalom explains that the snake is a symbol of evil which represents the primordial snake who manipulated and drove Adam and Eve to disobey God. He becomes a pariah of the animal kingdom because his food (dirt) is always before him as he slithers along. He doesn’t have to work hard to get food as other animals who hunt and he behaves with great hutzpah when he lashes out and bites and harms for no benefit to himself. The Second generation behaved similarly in a gratuitous fashion when they created the Big Lie when food and water was always present. When gazing at the copper serpent held aloft, they look themselves in the mirror and see that they themselves have become snakes. They are not grateful for the food that is before them. They lash out from the short temperedness and become prickly in questioning how God directs their lives. They stop taking the broad view of the journey, says Rashi, and begin to deceive themselves with the narrow view.

When we lose the idea that God is the director of our lives, even when we sometimes do not understand, we allow the evil inclination get the best of us and we lose heart in a reality that others define for us. We believe the Big Lie. Let’s return to the reality that God has entrusted to us. As one road sign I saw recently tells us, “Make America Grateful Again!”

Shalom,  
Rabbi

## August Presidents' Report

### HIGH HOLY DAYS

We have attempted to contact every member regarding their vaccination status. We are happy to report that almost 99% of members and seat holders are vaccinated.

The High Holy Days are very early this year. Please remember to return your survey and other material mailed earlier this month by Friday, August 6.

### MEMORIALIZATION WORK GROUP

The Memorialization Work Group is beginning to discuss the key questions concerning a memorial: administration, location and type.

*Administration:* Preliminary discussions of the Work Group are in agreement with the position taken by the New Light Board - That the creation, ownership and long term maintenance of the memorial should be under some type of public or semi-public non-profit entity; and that it should include representation of the families, the three congregations and the public.

*Location:* Sub-Committees have been formed to address the issue of location. Similar to the Board, the WG is divided on where it should be located, with some members favoring a location on the Tree of Life site and others seeking an alternative public or private location. A meeting was held with the City of Pittsburgh to discuss the possibility of having the memorial on public (park) land. Positives include the fact that the memorial would be open to the public and that the City would be responsible for maintenance. On the other hand, public demonstrations would be permitted by anyone seeking access to the memorial.

We are now beginning to address the really hard question: *What* should the memorial be?

Many of you participated in the focus group held by Dan Rothschild about our feelings about the TOL site rebuild. The process was simple: Dan handed out to each participant a 3" x 3" pad and asked us for our top of mind thoughts about three aspects of the TOL rebuild: **Emotional**, **Social** and **Physical**. Our request to you is to now address this question for the memorial. *Describe the characteristics of the memorial - regardless of location - using these three categories as a starting point.*

- **Emotional:** What emotions should the memorial evoke?  
(some starting words: contemplative, educational, solemn, grand, park-like, etc.)
- **Social:** What should be the "take-away" for a visitor?  
(some starting words: remembering our loved ones, combating anti-Semitism, eradicating hate, historical reasons for why it happened, etc.)
- **Physical:** Should it be a "piece of art" (like the Fred Rogers Memorial on the North Side) or a museum (like the 911 Museum or Flight 93 Memorial which have visitor centers and art)? If a museum, what should be displayed? What is the purpose of the museum?

Please send your thoughts directly to Steve and Barbara: [info@newlightcongregation.org](mailto:info@newlightcongregation.org) and [barbaracaplan@comcast.net](mailto:barbaracaplan@comcast.net)

Barbara Caplan and Stephen Cohen  
Co-presidents

#### August Birthdays

Anne Caplan  
Jason Manne  
Marla Perlman  
Trudy Wachs

#### August Anniversaries

Barbara & Harold Caplan  
Janet & Stephen Cohen  
Carol & Larry Kanterman  
Ethel & Howard Kubitz

## Maimonides and the March to the Days of Awe

A weekly examination of Maimonides' Laws of Repentance. We will examine the journey of the soul, sin, forgiveness, and the meaning of the High Holidays. The text for the class can be found at [https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/911888/jewish/Teshuvah-Chapter-One.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/911888/jewish/Teshuvah-Chapter-One.htm)

Wednesdays, at 7:00 P.M., starting July 21, and weekly thereafter, in the Lehman Library.

## Shabbat Services

Friday night and Saturday morning services continue to be in-person and on Zoom. Everyone is welcome. If you plan to attend in-person and have not already done so please send your vaccination status to [janet@newlightcongregation.org](mailto:janet@newlightcongregation.org).

Please also email [janet@newlightcongregation.org](mailto:janet@newlightcongregation.org) if you need the Zoom connection.

## Board Meeting

The next board meeting is Sunday, August 1 at 10:30 A.M. Use the same Zoom connection as for Shabbat. The September board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 1 at 7:00 P.M. and will be in-person, room TBA.

## Sisterhood Meeting

The next meeting is Tuesday, August 17 at 1:00 P.M. Use the same Zoom connection as for Shabbat.

## Welcoming Elul

On Sunday, August 8 at 2:30 P.M. everyone is invited to join the 10.27 Healing Partnership at Temple Sinai to help prepare for the High Holidays and the third commemoration of 10.27. Please see the flier on page 4 for additional information.

## Joyce Fienberg Book Club

The next meeting is Sunday, August 1 at 1:00 P.M. The book is "The Other Black Girl: A Novel" by Zakiya Dalila Harris. The Zoom connection is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82010840998>.

## Reminders

- To purchase Memorial Plaques, Simcha Tree Leaves or Stones contact Ileen Portnoy 412-683-7985
- To purchase bricks for our "Garden of Freedom" 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

5915 Beacon Street  
412-421-1017  
[www.newlightcongregation.org](http://www.newlightcongregation.org)

Rabbi	Jonathan Perlman	412-904-3601	
Co-President/Social VP/Yahrzeits	Barbara Caplan	412-521-4332	<a href="mailto:barbaracaplan@comcast.net">barbaracaplan@comcast.net</a>
Co-President/Cemetery/Website	Stephen Cohen	412-421-3999	<a href="mailto:info@newlightcongregation.org">info@newlightcongregation.org</a>
Membership	Debbi Salvin	724-444-6324	<a href="mailto:dgsalvin@pobox.com">dgsalvin@pobox.com</a>
Sisterhood	Sharyn Stein	412-521-5231	
Treasurer/Men's Club	Harold Caplan	412-521-4332	<a href="mailto:haroldcaplan@comcast.net">haroldcaplan@comcast.net</a>
Onegs	Hugh Casper	412-421-7619	
Recording Secretary/Simcha Tree/Plaques	Ileen Portnoy	412-683-7985	<a href="mailto:ileenportnoy@gmail.com">ileenportnoy@gmail.com</a>
Religious Committee	Carl Solomon	412-421-2165	
Corresponding Secretary/Calendar	Janet Cohen	412-512-0949	<a href="mailto:janet@newlightcongregation.org">janet@newlightcongregation.org</a>

# Welcome the Month of Elul with Inspiration and Community

Please join the **10.27 Healing Partnership** for our 3rd annual **Rosh Chodesh Elul** program. This event is dedicated to helping community members prepare for the coming of the **High Holy Days** and anticipate the arrival of the **3rd commemoration of 10/27/18**.

**Sunday, August 8th**  
**2:30 pm - 5:00 pm**  
**Temple Sinai in Squirrel Hill**  
**5505 Forbes Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15217**

A diverse group of community scholars and teachers will hold sessions inspiring participants to be awake, prepared and grounded as we head into this spiritual and reflective time.

## Speakers:

Sara Stock Mayo, Co-Leader of Keshet Pittsburgh  
Cantor Julie Newman, President, Tiferet  
Eric Lidji, Rauh Jewish Archives  
Rabbi Doris Dyen and Deane Root  
Rabbi Moishe Mayir Vogel, Executive Director of the Aleph Institute  
Robert and Stephanie Miller, Music for Life of Pittsburgh, LLC

Join us and The Joint Jewish Education Program (J-JEP) at 5:15 for a community-wide sounding of the shofar at the stairs of the **Sixth Presbyterian Church** (Forbes and Murray)  
**Bring your own shofar! (Don't have a shofar? You'll be announcing the calls!)**

**Contact:** Ranisa Davidson @ 412-339-5424  
rdavidson@1027healingpartnership.org



**Register @** <https://bit.ly/3Bd1gH0>



**Open to all who want to attend. Children's programming available.**

# New Light Congregation August 2021

23 Av 5781 - 23 Elul 5781

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Board Meeting, 10:30 AM	2	3	4 Maimonides, 7:00 PM	5	6 8:09 Services, 7:00 PM	7 Re'eh Services, 9:45 AM
8 Rosh Chodesh Elul - Day 1	9 Rosh Chodesh Elul - Day 2	10	11 Maimonides, 7:00 PM	12	13 8:00 Services, 7:00 PM	14 Shoftim Services, 9:45 AM
15	16	17 Sisterhood Meeting, 1:00 PM	18 Maimonides, 7:00 PM	19	20 7:50 Services, 7:00 PM	21 Ki Seitzei Services, 9:45 AM
22	23	24	25 Maimonides, 7:00 PM	26	27 7:39 Services, 7:00 PM	28 Ki Savo Services, 9:45 AM
29 Selichos Begin	30	31				