



אור חדש

New Light Congregation

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New Light News January 2022

From the Desk of Beth Kissileff

Exodus is the book we need to be reading right now. At a time when a plague is spreading with unprecedented rapidity, when we are concerned about global warming and climate change and inflation, the story we read in the forty chapters of Exodus reminds us that, as our tradition tells us, “salvation can come in the blink of an eye.” It seems that this terrible slavery of the Jews in Egypt and their degraded situation has no remedy, when a leader comes, seemingly out of nowhere, to ameliorate it. Moses has not even been raised wholly as a Jew, yet somehow in the milk his mother Yocheved is able to nourish him with even in the palace of the Pharaoh he has imbibed a memory and an understanding of his connection to the Jewish people and his heritage.

It is no accident that the Exodus story has inspired many groups of people over the years; the political scientist Michael Walzer details the influence of the Exodus on a variety of political revolutions in his 1986 book, [Exodus and Revolution](#). One of the most recent of these movements to base its liberation theology on the second book of the Torah is the Civil Rights movement and its most articulate and outspoken leader the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King Jr. We hope to honor the legacy of King and the revolutionary rhetoric he espoused, inspired by Exodus and many other parts of the Bible (who can forget his utterance of Amos 5:24 “But let justice well up like water, Righteousness like an unfailing stream”) with a special speaker at Shabbat morning services on January 15, 2022 the anniversary of Dr. King’s birthday.

We are saddened at the passing of my mother in law Marla Perlman on the 18 of Tevet, December 21, 2021, when we read the opening portion of the book of Exodus. The optimism that the book holds, the idea that even when a Pharaoh decrees something it may not come to pass, is an important legacy that she taught anyone who knew her. She did not let the various difficulties she experienced throughout her life define her; she lived her life full of optimism and buoyancy, creating opportunities for joy and celebration for herself and others. The Jewish people too, as exemplified by the book of Exodus, did not let the degradations of slavery in Egypt define them but instead went on to liberation and ultimately the Promised Land itself. May Marla’s memory be for a blessing. We hope to see everyone who feels comfortable attending in person in synagogue as soon as possible so we can all share the optimism and exuberance of the story of liberation as we journey through the reading of the book of Exodus for the next few weeks.

Beth Kissileff Perlman

New Class Starting in January

DO JEWS BELIEVE IN HEAVEN?

Rabbi Perlman is offering a new class Wednesdays at 7:00 PM starting January 5 and continuing through February 2 (except for January 19). The class will be in-person in the second floor classroom at Beth Shalom and on Zoom. To register contact janet@newlightcongregation.org.

Presidents' Report

NEW LIGHT SERVICE ADJUSTMENT

New Light is unique among non-orthodox congregations: over 50% of our members attend either Friday or Saturday services. Yet due to the pandemic we have had a problem making a minyan. Many of our members cannot attend in person. Without a minyan many parts of the service, in particular the full Torah Service, cannot be conducted.

Two meetings of all regular Shabbat attendees (seventeen members) were held in early December to find a solution. During the first meeting there was unanimous agreement that New Light should conduct a full Torah service every week. The Rabbi was asked to research Halacha to find a solution.

At the second meeting the Rabbi presented a detailed paper explaining the rules governing minyan: what is allowed and what is not.

To conduct a full service there must be a minyan of ten Jewish individuals in person. Individuals on zoom cannot count towards the ten. Only with ten individuals can God's presence reside with the congregation. Therefore, according to the Rabbi, any prayers where God is blessed are prohibited without a minyan. Saying aliyot over the Torah, for example, or the Barachu at the beginning of Schacharit, cannot be said.

But nothing prevents taking the Torah out of the ark, nor reading directly from it nor lifting it. In effect, without an in-person minyan we can still conduct a full Torah service - with modifications.

New Light has identified a unique method for Shabbat services, following the rules laid down by the sages, yet adapted for our small size and the pandemic.

Our new service structure was immediately implemented to the satisfaction of all attendees.

MEMORIALIZATION WORKING GROUP

In October the MWG adopted design criteria for a memorial on the Tree of Life site: that includes an outdoor area and an indoor learning center that is separate from the TOL building and owned and managed by a separate 501c3 organization.

In the beginning of December TOL announced two grants totaling \$6.8 million from the state of Pennsylvania. These grants are to support the rebuild of the synagogue including a commemoration for 10.27.18. On December 7th, Studio Liebskind presented a design idea for the entire property at the TOL site to the working group. The proposed design was also presented to the TOL board. TOL hopes to publicly announce a campaign to raise funds for the rebuild in March or April.

In addition to the proposed design, TOL described the new governance structure for the site. The intent is that organizations utilizing the site have a say in the governance of the site. The proposed structure allocated four seats to TOL, two to the Holocaust Center and one for the MWG. The chair is a non-TOL individual.

The MWG anticipates further discussions.

Barbara & Stephen

Thank you from the Caplans

Thank you for all the good wishes, prayers and phone calls for a successful surgery and speedy recovery. Harold is getting there little by little and is stronger day by day. As we have always believed family is important and helps speed that recovery. We are both grateful to our New Light family who are always there for us when we need them

January Board Meeting

The next board meeting is Sunday, January 2, at 10:30 AM. Use the same Zoom connection as for Shabbat.

New Covid Policy to be Proposed to the Board on January 2

The board will be asked to consider the following policy at the January 2 meeting:

Due to the significant increase in COVID-19 infections due to the new variant, the joint New Light-Beth Shalom COVID-19 task force strongly recommends the following: Starting on **Friday, January 5, 2022**, only those individuals who are fully vaccinated, including if eligible, the third booster dose of either the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine, are allowed in-person at New Light Congregation gatherings/religious services. In addition, if you contract COVID, you may not attend in-person services until after a ten day quarantine period. Everyone must wear a mask. No bandanas or neck gaiters are allowed. You are required to keep your mask securely over your nose and mouth the entire time you are indoors.

As in the past, we are not asking for written verification, but will accept your word as your bond. We truly appreciate your patience and understanding during this most difficult time. Please continue to physically distance yourself from others.

As always, the decision to participate via Zoom or to attend in person is yours to make.

10.27 Healing Partnership January Program

The 10.27 HP is excited to announce a 4-week Restorative Yoga class that will take place on Fridays in January from noon-1 in the 10.27 Healing Partnership Suite. Come experience the physical and emotional benefits of stretching, relaxing and restoring your mind and your body. This deeply calming practice will leave your body, mind and spirit feeling energized, rested and renewed. Led by a certified yoga instructor, Pam Shugerman, this class is suitable for participants of all levels and abilities. All materials will be provided, though you are welcome to bring a mat or blanket if you wish. This class will occur on January 7, 14, 21 and 28. More information can be found here: <https://1027healingpartnership.org/event/restorative-yoga/2022-01-07/>.

January Birthdays

Larry Kanterman
Judy Pearlman
Beth Perlman
Debbie Salvin
Carl Solomon

January Anniversaries

Rachelle & Stephen Grobstein
Michelle & Joel Reisz

THE CENTENNIAL OF THE FIRST BAT MITZVAH

A PITTSBURGH COMMUNITY CELEBRATION SPONSORED BY CONGREGATION DOR HADASH

March 2022 is the 100th anniversary of the first modern Bat Mitzvah ceremony, which marked Judith Kaplan Eisenstein's transition to Jewish adulthood. Eventually, the Bat Mitzvah ceremony became a standard lifecycle event for Jewish girls around the world, transforming what Jewish women and girls could expect from their religious communities.

Judith Kaplan Eisenstein, the first Bat Mitzvah, was the daughter of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, the intellectual founder of Reconstructionist Judaism. As the Reconstructionist congregation in southwest Pennsylvania, Dor Hadash wants to share the celebration of this transformative moment in Jewish history with as many congregations and Jewish organizations in the region as possible. Dor Hadash invites congregations to celebrate this milestone within their services on Saturday, March 19.

In addition, on Sunday, March 20, in collaboration with the Jewish Studies program of the University of Pittsburgh, Dor Hadash will host a gala luncheon and educational program for the Jewish community at Temple Rodef Shalom. Distinguished historian Rabbi Deborah Waxman, the President of Reconstructing Judaism, will be the keynote speaker, offering attendees a history of the first Bat Mitzvah and its lasting impact on Judaism around the world. A series of panel discussions and interactive activities will follow the luncheon, including a discussion of early Bat Mitzvah practices in the city of Pittsburgh; a panel on how b'mitzvah ceremonies for trans and non-binary Jews continue to expand gender inclusivity in Jewish lifecycle ceremonies; and a panel of Jewish women who recently celebrated or are planning their own adult bat mitzvah ceremonies.

Jewish Scholarship Services

The 2022-2023 application is now available. See <http://www.jfcspgh.org/scholarships> for details.

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

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