



# אור חדש

## New Light Congregation

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### **New Light News May 2023**

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

Last month I walked with my daughters through the archeological garden of the city of Zippori in the lower Galilee. I connected with an expert guide, Avi Ben Hur, who so masterfully guided us on our synagogue trip in 2015. On our visit to Zippori, he shared with us the mosaic floor of the synagogue of Judah the Patriarch and his home when he was leader of the Jewish community in the late Second century and Third centuries of the remnant of the Land of Israel. Chills went down my back as we explored the tomb where Judah and his wife were buried along with his sons Gamliel II and Hillel II in Beit Shearim.

It was Judah the Patriarch and the compilation of oral tradition called the Mishnah that deepened the meaning of Torah for generations living after the Biblical Age and the Age of the Temple in Jerusalem. Torah was no longer only the parchment scroll that we bring out of the Ark to read. Torah is a verb, discovering the meaning of what God teaches or how God has made the world. Torah is a process of discovering the truth that God implanted in the world. There is a Torah to how you live life in addition to the written and oral Torah that emanates from Mt. Sinai. This Torah is living by the right norms and in the right way that the Sages (or Founders) of old discover and embody in their own lives. Torah does not stop with these Sages as the Mishnah and Talmud are books about other generations of teachers, men and women, rabbis, and learned people who are beginners in Jewish study.

I want to share with you the *magnum opus* of Judah the Patriarch, the five chapter section of the Mishnah, called Pirkei Avot, literally the “Chapters of the *Founders*.” I believe that Pirkei Avot was written as an introductory guide to discover the earliest philosophical leanings of Rabbinic Judaism in the ancient towns of Zippori, Tiberius, and Yavne. We re-created ourselves as a People in these places that the Romans permitted us to live in to preserve Judaism for the ages.

The questions of “Why” do not end with the Passover Seder. Taking pride in Jewish heritage is so important in these days where the specter of Jew hatred looms large and the words of “they will not replace us” threaten our very existence. Let’s be proud of the living that our founders set out for us.

Rabbi Jacob Neusner once wrote: “To be a Jew is an act of affirmation, and act of faith, and act of hope. To maintain the faith of Israel is to know how to live in the world as it should be; and, we believe, as in God’s own time, it will be.” So let’s start with Pirke Avot and remind ourselves of the love our founders had for the people Israel and engagement with a Torah that makes sense for today.

In trust and in friendship,  
Rabbi

#### **Pirkei Avot Class**

The class (described in the From the Desk of the Rabbi section) will be held on Wednesdays at 6:15 PM, starting May 3, for approximately three months. It will be in-person in the Lehman Center and on Zoom. Each class will be 45 minutes. Upon conclusion each week we can join Beth Shalom’s evening services in the Homestead Chapel at 7:00 PM. To register contact Janet at [janet@newlightcongregation.org](mailto:janet@newlightcongregation.org). Zoom information will be sent upon registration.

## May 2023 President's Report

Once again, New Light Congregation is the center of media attention. Four and one half years ago, much to our regret, we were the number one news item. As the trial – finally – starts, we are once again receiving attention. But thankfully, there are lots of other stories to occupy the reporters and video crews. We are important, but far from the only important story.

Over the past several weeks we have been interviewed by many media outlets, including the Post-Gazette, Wall Street Journal, the AP and on TV on NewsMax – and requests keep coming. If you are approached directly by anyone in the media, please send us an email about the contact.

Questions fall into two categories: First, can we comment on issues related to the trial. Issues like the death penalty, immigration (legal and otherwise), anti-Semitism, and the guilt (or innocence) of the accused. We have one consistent response: that we do not wish to comment on issues related to the trial. We recommend the same answer.

The second set of questions relate to how we are doing after four years. And here we have a lot to say. We honor and remember those we lost and their contribution to our Congregation. We are family; we are strong, resilient and growing. We continue our mission of serving our religious community through ritual and education. We have successfully encouraged our members to become more active in our ritual observances. We have reached out to other, non-Jewish congregations to learn and pray together. And we have built memorials to those we lost.

Privately, however, we are enmeshed with the day-to-day minutiae of the trial.

### ATTENDING THE TRIAL:

The trial is in two parts at the Federal Courthouse on Grant Street. The entrance to the courthouse is in the middle of the building:

1. **Jury Selection (volr dire):** Only the families and victims have pre-assigned seats. Congregation members are considered part of the public and can attend on a first-come-first-seated basis. The U.S. Attorney's office is trying to obtain assigned seats for us. **Each week we will send out an email with available days. If you wish to attend, please respond to [janet@newlightcongregation.org](mailto:janet@newlightcongregation.org).** We will forward your request to the Court. The Court is in session Monday thru Friday, 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM (with breaks throughout the day). There will be an overflow public courtroom that will have an audio and video feed. Jury selection is expected to take between three to four weeks. You must be in your seat by 8:30 AM on the day you select. PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES (such as an electronic watch or tablet) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN THE COURTROOM. LEAVE THEM AT HOME OR IN YOUR CAR. There are two separate security checkpoints – at the entrance to the courthouse and at the entrance to the courtroom.
2. The Trial (Guilt & two separate Penalty Phases). The Guilt phase will begin immediately after jury selection. The Court will be in session Monday thru Friday, 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM (with morning/afternoon breaks and a 45-minute lunch break). There will be an overflow public courtroom that will have an audio and video feed. Media will have a separate room. Families and victims will also have a separate room. There is no food available in the courthouse. The same security arrangements will be in place.

New Light is allocated ONE seat in the main courtroom. We must provide the US Attorney's Office a list of who will be attending by Friday for the entire upcoming week. **If you wish to attend the guilt phase of the trial you must email [janet@newlightcongregation.org](mailto:janet@newlightcongregation.org) the specific day you wish to attend by Friday of the preceding week.** If no one elects to occupy our seat, it will be released to the general public. You must be in your seat by 9 AM on the day you select, or it will be released to the public. You are responsible for finding (and paying) for parking and meals.

Please see the following documents with additional detailed information:

- [Trial Observation Logistics](https://newlightcongregation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Trial_Logistics_for_Congregants.pdf)  
[https://newlightcongregation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Trial\\_Logistics\\_for\\_Congregants.pdf](https://newlightcongregation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Trial_Logistics_for_Congregants.pdf)
- [Court Decorum Order](https://newlightcongregation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Court_Decorum_Trial_Voir_Dire.pdf)  
[https://newlightcongregation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Court\\_Decorum\\_Trial\\_Voir\\_Dire.pdf](https://newlightcongregation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Court_Decorum_Trial_Voir_Dire.pdf)

We will resend an email the week before the Guilt Phase begins so that you can begin to reserve a seat.

### **VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT**

The Board voted unanimously at its March meeting to submit a Victim Impact Statement. Even though the statement will not be needed until late in the trial, it will take some time to craft a thoughtful, carefully considered statement. We would like input from you to help in drafting the Board approved statement. As noted, we do not know when the Victim Impact Statement will need to be submitted. We think late summer, but it might be earlier. Please submit your thoughts about each question (or not) in writing no later than May 15<sup>th</sup>. (Some have already been submitted. Thank You!) We will organize them into a single statement to be submitted to the Congregation at its yearly Congregational Meeting in early June. If by email, please send to [janet@newlightcongregation.org](mailto:janet@newlightcongregation.org); or by snail mail to our office address (5915 Beacon Street).

The U.S. Attorney's Office has provided the following questions to guide the development of our statement.

- 1. Please briefly tell us about your congregation members who were killed or injured and the impact of their loss or injuries on your community.** For example, you may want to include leadership roles they held, duties or service activities they regularly performed, and their relationship with other congregants.
- 2. How have the crimes emotionally impacted your congregation?** Consider the following questions in your response:
  - What additional emotional support have your congregants needed?
  - How have the spiritual needs of your congregation changed?
  - How have attendance levels at your services or events changed?
- 3. Have the crimes financially impacted your congregation? If yes, please explain.** You may wish to include any costs to replace lost or damaged property, relocation costs, changes in membership or donation levels, costs of any increased security, etc.
- 4. What would you like to see happen to the offender? Are there any conditions you would like to see put in place to help protect your congregants' safety?**
- 5. Is there anything else you would like the Judge to know related to sentencing?**

Please direct your questions to Stephen Cohen ([info@newlightcongregation.org](mailto:info@newlightcongregation.org)) or Barbara Caplan ([barbaracaplan@comcast.net](mailto:barbaracaplan@comcast.net)).

Barbara & Stephen

### **Board Meeting**

The May board meeting is Monday, May 8 at 7:00 PM. Use the same Zoom connection as for Shabbat.

### **Men's Club**

Please remember to send your Yom Hashoah donations to New Light, to the attention of Harold Caplan.

## Shavuot

Shavuot begins Thursday evening, May 25. New Light will hold services on the first day, Friday, May 26, at 9:45 AM, as well as regular Friday evening services, 7:00 PM. and Shabbat/Shavuot/ Yizkor day 2 at 9:45 AM. All services are in Helfant and on Zoom. Use the same Zoom connection as for Shabbat.

### TIKKUN LEIL SHAVUOT

The annual night of learning will be Thursday, May 25, from 10:00 PM to 1:00 AM at the JCC. Squirrel Hill, Darlington Road entrance. It is free and open to the public. No registration is needed. Cheesecake and coffee will be served. The schedule of classes and instructors can be found at <https://jewishpgh.org/occasion/tikkun/>.

Rabbi Perlman will be teaching *Back on the Rack: How Israel Lost its Right to High End Fashion After the Golden Calf* at the 10:00 PM session. Beth Kissileff will be teaching *Women Talking: Female Conversations in the Book of Ruth* at the 11:00 PM session.

## Carol Black in Indiana

Carol Black was in Fort Wayne Indiana for Yom Hashoa to speak about resiliency and anti-Semitism at four different events: two groups of high school students studying the Holocaust in their history class, the Rotary Club, and the Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne. In each session she recited the names of the eleven victims and requested that they never be forgotten.

Carol is pictured with Mike Rush of the Fort Wayne Jewish Federation.



### May Birthdays

Marvin Feldman  
Rachelle Grobstein  
Aryeh Sherman

### May Anniversaries

Carol & Marvin Feldman  
Jenny & Steve Swerdlow  
Gerry & George Tessler  
Brenda & Barry Werber

## Reminders

- To purchase Memorial Plaques, Simcha Tree Leaves or Stones contact Ileen Portnoy.
- To purchase bricks for our "Garden of Freedom" contact Barbara Caplan.
- To purchase Giant Eagle gift cards contact Karen Coburn.
- For information on our cemetery contact Stephen Cohen.

## NEW LIGHT CONGREGATION

5915 Beacon Street

412-421-1017

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

Rabbi

Co-President/Social VP/Yahrzeits

Co-President/Cemetery/Website

Membership

Sisterhood

Treasurer/Men's Club

Onegs

Recording Secretary/Simcha Tree/Plaques

Religious Committee

Corresponding Secretary/Calendar

Jonathan Perlman

Barbara Caplan

Stephen Cohen

Debbi Salvin

Sharyn Stein

Harold Caplan

Hugh Casper

Ileen Portnoy

Carl Solomon

Janet Cohen

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[janet@newlightcongregation.org](mailto:janet@newlightcongregation.org)

# New Light Congregation May 2023 10 Iyar 5783 - 11 Sivan 5783

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 10 IYAR	2 11 IYAR	3 12 IYAR	4 13 IYAR	5 14 IYAR	6 15 IYAR
7 16 IYAR	8 17 IYAR Board Meeting, 7:00 PM	9 18 IYAR Lag BaOmer	10 19 IYAR Pirkei Avot Class, 6:15 PM	11 20 IYAR	12 21 IYAR 8:06 Services, 7:00 PM	13 22 IYAR Behar - Bechukosai Services, 9:45 AM
14 23 IYAR	15 24 IYAR	16 25 IYAR	17 26 IYAR Pirkei Avot Class, 6:15 PM	18 27 IYAR	19 28 IYAR Yom Yerushalayim 8:13 Services, 7:00 PM	20 29 IYAR Bamidbar Services, 9:45 AM
21 1 SIVAN Rosh Chodesh Sivan	22 2 SIVAN	23 3 SIVAN	24 4 SIVAN Pirkei Avot Class, 6:15 PM	25 5 SIVAN 8:18 Tikkun Leil, 10:00 PM	26 6 SIVAN Shavuot - Day 1 8:19 Services, Shavuot, 9:45 AM Services, 7:00 PM	27 7 SIVAN Shavuot - Day 2 Services, Shavuot/Yizkor 9:45 AM
28 8 SIVAN	29 9 SIVAN Memorial Day	30 10 SIVAN	31 11 SIVAN			