



אור חדש

New Light Congregation

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New Light News July 2024

The Flashlight

July is a difficult month to preach positive sermons. Coming up with summer fun sermons based on the Book of Numbers is hard because the content is all about betrayal, punishment, suspicion, divisiveness, anger, power plays, control, and unreasonable complaints. Everybody is a target for anger. Nobody seems to trust each other. God is not even excluded from distrust.

I always felt sorry for Jewish educators at summer camps. What do they do when they want to teach the Torah portion of the week and the principal lesson is one of negativity? Miriam and Aaron gossip about Moses. The people complain about the manna and say the food was better in Egypt. Tribal leaders sabotage Moses' and God's plans to move forward into the Promised Land. Cousin Korach accuses Moses of nepotism in appointing Aaron as the High Priest. The list goes on. Plus, the main holiday of the summer is the dismal retelling of the destruction of the Temple and the two exiles the Jews had to contend with based on their misbehavior and sins. How can kids have any fun on Shabbat or during the week when bitterness is all around?

This month Beth and I will visit Camp Stone, a B'nai Akiva-Zionist camp, up in the northern Pennsylvania woods. Camp Stone has been a favored camp of Yael and Ada. I have lost track of the number of summers they enjoyed at this informal-educational centered camp that makes Judaism fun. Ada is on staff this summer leading the wilderness adventure part of the camp (Machal). It is supposed to be akin to boot camp in the army. What joy! I wish I was a kid again.

But back to the negative Torah lessons. Jewish education is pitched at different levels of understanding. A good educator knows that the staff are also included in an activity that can produce a good spiritual outcome for their age level. Teens and college students are at the age where introspection is important. The dark stories of the Torah can bring to mind emotions and ethical questions that young adults struggle with. This is part of the total camp experience.

We adults read these moral tales on yet another level. No matter how negative, there is a part of us that smiles when the silver lining of a rebellion is revealed or when the irony of the Torah's language is exposed. The authors of the midrashim and the commentaries compete with one another for the interpretation that gets at the spiritual or emotional truths of the matter. For example, I have come to read the story of the exodus through the lens of developmental psychology. The Egyptians beat the hides of the Israelite slaves and the Israelites escaped like wounded children. In little over a year, the Israelites create a golden calf, complain about the manna, complain about the yoke of the commandments, and complain for no reason at all. Simply put, they remained children. The Author of the stories hands us the flashlight and invites us to look at the darker part of our repressed childhood selves. Weren't we the ones in the back seat on a car trip that kvetched: "Mom, Dad, Are we there yet?"

I invite you to shul on Shabbat morning in July to delve into the darker parts of the Torah. Free will was given as a necessary gift to Adam and Eve when they ate from the tree of knowledge. That free will remains, as the Children of Israel find their bearings in the wilderness. Join us on their journey!

Shalom,
Rabbi



Presidents' Report

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

At our Congregational Meeting on June 2, 2024, the following officers and Board Members were elected:

- Co-Presidents: Barbara Caplan, Stephen Cohen
- Social VP/Yahrzeits: Barbara Caplan
- Cemetery/Website: Stephen Cohen
- Financial Secretary: Carl Solomon
- Membership: Debi Salvin
- Sisterhood: Sharyn Stein
- Treasurer: Harold Caplan
- Men's Club: Harold Caplan
- Simcha Tree/Plaques: Ileen Portnoy
- Religious Committee: Eric Cohen, Bruce Hyde
- Recording Secretary: Karen Coburn
- Corresponding Secretary: Janet Cohen
- Calendar: Janet Cohen

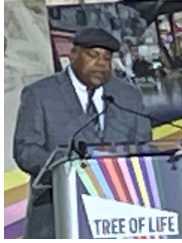
Board members:

Carol Black	Judy Blumenfeld	Karen Coburn
Janet Cohen	Bruce Hyde	Marilyn Kaufman
Ethel Kubitz	Shari Kubitz	Ann Notovitz
Jake Notovitz	Ileen Portnoy	Debbie Rosen
Debi Salvin	Rachelle Sands	Karen Shapiro
Aryeh Sherman	Eileen Snider	Carl Solomon
Sharyn Stein	Arthur Weinrach	Barry Werber

TREE OF LIFE GROUNDBREAKING

On Sunday, June 23, 2024, Tree of Life Inc. held a groundbreaking ceremony for the new, reimagined building. In the immediate aftermath of October 27, there was consensus in the community that the Tree of Life Congregation must rebuild their building. But the vision of the Tree of Life went far beyond simply renovating their sanctuary, school and social hall. They saw as their obligation the need to create a response to the hate filled antisemitic rantings of the shooter; as well as to teach and educate about the history of antisemitism in America. Only by exposing the underpinnings of this hate can future generations be "stronger than hate."

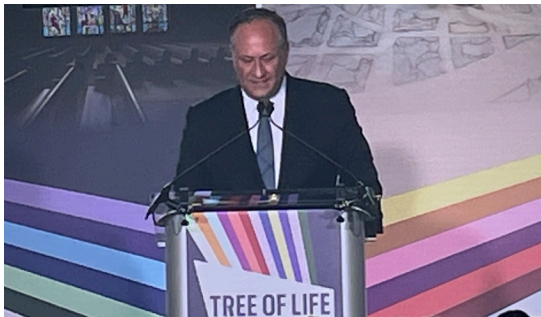
Creating a first-of-its-kind museum in America requires a national (if not world-wide) campaign. And under the leadership of Michael Bernstein and Carole Zawatsky, they have created just such a national effort. In attendance at the groundbreaking was a long list of national political leaders. Both Second Gentleman, Douglas Emhoff and Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro spoke of the rise of antisemitism in America and the need to combat hate. Others in attendance included Senators Bob Casey, Mayor Ed Gainey and many Allegheny County and Pittsburgh local leaders. Still others, including Senator John Fetterman, were featured in a video.



Erik Ward, activist, author, Western State’s Executive Director, Senior Fellow of Southern Poverty Law Center and Race Forward, and member of the Tree of Life Academic Advisory Committee made perhaps the most provocative statement when he rose to equate anti-Semitism with racism. Jews, he noted, are often considered a separate “race;” therefore, hatred of Jews is the ultimate form of racism. His words were of compassion and a true understanding of hatred, racism and antisemitism.

Just as a wedding ends with the breaking of a wine glass, the groundbreaking ended with the families of the victims, survivors and everyone directly impacted gathering on stage to break replica glass houses which will be used to create specially crafted mezzuzot to grace the doors of the building.

The building is scheduled to open by Hanukkah, 2026.



Douglas Emhoff, Second Gentleman of the United States



Victims’ families, survivors, first responders and others breaking the glass houses

Board Meeting

The July board meeting will be held on Sunday, July 7, 10:30 AM in Helfant Chapel and on Zoom. Use the same Zoom connection as for Shabbat.

Why We Do What We Do

After the board meeting Rabbi Perlman will hold his class. Please submit your questions to him directly or email them to janet@newlightcongregation.org.

A Message from the Werber Family

From Barry: “Thank you all for the kindness and prayers that have been shown to Brenda and Myself on the loss of our son Steven Of Blessed Memory. I have said it before and say it again: we are family and I love my Family’

July Birthdays

Barbara Kleyman
Thomas Kleyman
Ethel Kubitz
Howard Kubitz
Jacob Notovitz
Michelle Reisz
Rachelle Sands
Aryeh Sherman

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.

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Rabbi

Co-President/Social VP/Yahrzeits

Co-President/Cemetery/Website

Membership

Sisterhood

Treasurer/Men’s Club

Simcha Tree/Plaques

Religious Committee

Recording Secretary

Corresponding Secretary/Calendar

Jonathan Perlman rabbi@newlightcongregation.org

Barbara Caplan barbaracaplan@comcast.net

Stephen Cohen info@newlightcongregation.org

Debi Salvin dgsalvin@pobox.com

Sharyn Stein

Harold Caplan haroldcaplan@comcast.net

Ileen Portnoy ileenportnoy@gmail.com

Eric Cohen, Bruce Hyde

Karen Coburn

Janet Cohen janet@newlightcongregation.org



New Light Congregation July 2024 25 Sivan 5784 - 25 Tammuz 5784

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	25 SIVAN	26 SIVAN	27 SIVAN	28 SIVAN	29 SIVAN	30 SIVAN
				Independence Day	8:33 Services, 6:00 PM	Rosh Chodesh Tammuz - Day 1 Korach Services, 9:45 AM
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1 TAMMUZ	2 TAMMUZ	3 TAMMUZ	4 TAMMUZ	5 TAMMUZ	6 TAMMUZ	7 TAMMUZ
Rosh Chodesh Tammuz - Day 2 Board Meeting, 10:30 AM Why We Do What We Do					8:30 Services, 6:00 PM	Chukas Services, 9:45 AM
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
8 TAMMUZ	9 TAMMUZ	10 TAMMUZ	11 TAMMUZ	12 TAMMUZ	13 TAMMUZ	14 TAMMUZ
					8:26 Services, 6:00 PM	Balak Services, 9:45 AM
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
15 TAMMUZ	16 TAMMUZ	17 TAMMUZ	18 TAMMUZ	19 TAMMUZ	20 TAMMUZ	21 TAMMUZ
		Fast of the Seventeenth of Tammuz			8:20 Services, 6:00 PM	Pinchas Services, 9:45 AM
28	29	30	31			
22 TAMMUZ	23 TAMMUZ	24 TAMMUZ	25 TAMMUZ			