

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey

Journal

PO Box 2, 115 Youmans Avenue, Washington, NJ 07882
(908) 689-0762
www.jcnwj.org

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Rabbi's Message

Dear Friends,

As we prepare to complete our yearly cycle of reading Torah, (while Simchat Torah, technically speaking, occurred already on October 1, as per JCNWJ custom, we will be celebrating as a community on Friday night, October 5), it seems only appropriate to look back, as Moses did at the end of the Book of Deuteronomy, to remember where we've been. Unlike Moses, however, who reviewed 40 years of wandering in his final words to Israel, I'll take opportunity here to remind us simply of where we were last week when, following Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we celebrated Sukkot, a week-long holiday with its origins in Torah. What follows is a primer of sorts for the holiday:

*"On the fifteenth day of this seventh month there shall be the **Feast of Booths** to the Lord, [to last] seven days. The first day shall be a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations; seven days you shall bring offerings by fire to the Lord. On the eighth day you shall observe a sacred occasion and bring an offering by fire to the Lord; it is a solemn gathering: you shall not work at your occupations."*
– Leviticus 23:34-36

Just to be sure we're all on the same page, let me offer a clarify some vocabulary related to this holiday.

The common noun, *sukkah* refers a "temporary hut-like structure."

The common noun *sukkot* is simply the plural of *sukkah*, so it means "many temporary hut-like structures."

The proper noun, *Sukkot* is the name of the holiday itself.

(continued on next page)

Mark Your Calendar

- **Friday, October 5th**
7:30 pm – Shabbat Service
- **Sunday, October 14th**
9:30 am – Sunday School
10:30 am – Sisterhood
- **Friday, October 19th**
7:30 pm – Shabbat Service
- **Saturday, October 20th**
10:30 am – Torah Study
- **Sunday, October 21st**
9:30 am – Sunday School
- **Monday, October 22nd**
7:30 pm – Book Club
- **Sunday, October 28th**
9:30 am – Sunday School
9:30 am – Blood Drive
11:00 am – Daffodil Project
- **Friday, November 2nd**
7:30 pm – Shabbat Service
Kristallnacht Commemoration
- **Sunday, November 4th**
9:30 am – Sunday School
- **Monday, November 5th**
7:00 pm – Board of Trustees Mtg.

Rabbi's Message (cont.)

Hopefully you were able to enjoy the JCNWJ *sukkah* which, once again this year, was put up by Karl Gross. Helping Karl were Marsha Gross and Sandy Kahan. Interior decorations were created and put up by the children and *madrichim* of our Mike Weiner School of Jewish Learning. On behalf of our entire JCNWJ family, we thank all of you with most sincere gratitude.

This holiday actually goes by a few different names. In addition to the Feast of Booths (*Sukkot*), we sometimes call it "The Festival of Ingathering" (*Hag Ha-Asif*) because on Sukkot we celebrate the harvest (see: Exodus 23:16). It is also called the "Time of our Happiness" (*Z'man Simchateinu*) because we celebrate the dual completion of harvest and also the precarious period of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Sukkot is one of three pilgrimage festivals when Torah commands Israel to bring sacrifices to the Great Temple in Jerusalem, the other two being Passover (when we celebrate the Exodus from Egypt) and Shavuot (when we celebrate the giving of Torah and commandments).

There are three principle reasons we build *sukkot*:

- To commemorate the huts that farmers used to live in during the harvest season at this time of year (hence, Sukkot is a harvest holiday)
- To commemorate the huts that the Children of Israel used for shelter during our 40 years of wandering through the desert
- To commemorate the huts that Israelites used for shelter during the week-long pilgrimage festival in Jerusalem

During Sukkot, we engage in the waving of two ritual objects: the *lulav* and *etrog*. The *lulav* is comprised of a palm branch, a myrtle branch, and a willow branch all bunched together. The *etrog* is a citron that looks kind of like an oversized, pear-shaped, bumpy lemon. During Sukkot we hold the *lulav* and *etrog* and then, after saying the appropriate blessing, wave them in "all" six directions (east, south, west, north, above, and below). According to rabbinic tradition, these specific four species were chosen because of their physical similarities to various human body parts (palm branch resembles the spine; myrtle leaf resembles the eyes; willow leaf resembles the mouth, and the *etrog* resembles the heart). As such, one of the lessons from Sukkot is that we should worship God in every direction with our entire body.

You might be interested to know, by the way, that Jewish tradition teaches the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden was actually an *etrog* tree.

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Rabbi's Message (cont.)

During Sukkot, there are three principal *mitzvot* (commandments) that we are meant to fulfill. We are to:

- Dwell (or eat) in a sukkah
- Wave the four species (lulav & etrog)
- Rejoice (my favorite!)

There are, of course, many spiritual concepts we should consider during Sukkot as well, chief among them are hunger and homelessness, as represented by the temporary shelter in which we live that is decorated with symbols of the harvest. This is indeed the time of year when temperatures begin to dip and both homelessness and hunger prepare to do their worst damage. I pray that we, as a community, will be up to the task of helping those in need.

I write this message having just fulfilled some of our Sukkot responsibilities by harvesting tomatoes for those in need at America's Grow a Row (<https://www.americagrowarow.org>) with Sisterhood and the Religious School. It was a wonderful experience, but this alone is not enough. I encourage you please to continue donating to our ongoing food drive at the temple. And when the time comes to collect and donate whatever other items can be put to good use by those who need them most, I know we will be able to count on every one of us to do what we can. Sukkot 5779 may now be over, but the need will become only more severe in the coming months. I pray that together, we will continue to make a difference in the lives of others, because when we do, I believe that brings a smile, anthropomorphically speaking, to God's face.

Blessings to all

Rabbi Dubin



President's Message

Shalom temple members,

The board voted last night to be part of the Daffodil Project. You can get more information at www.daffodilproject.net

The idea behind the project is to create a garden around the world of 1.5 million daffodils to honor the memory of the 1.5 million children who were murdered during the Holocaust. We will have a ceremony and plant 500 daffodils at the temple on October 28th, probably around 11 AM.

I ask for all of you to help by:

(1) coming to the temple to plant some daffodil bulbs and spreading some soil and mulch over the daffodils.

(2) Supporting this project financially with a donation to help defray the cost of the daffodils, plaque stand, soil and mulch.

As of last count, over 470,000 daffodils have been planted.

I am so excited about this event.

Love Howie



Sisterhood

NEWS & UPCOMING EVENTS

Please join us for the first official meeting of the year on October 14, 2018 at the Temple at 10:30 AM. We will make some plans, enjoy some breakfast, and socialize. If you have not yet joined the Sisterhood, you may bring dues for the year, \$18, to the meeting. You can also come to just find out if you would like to be a part of the fun.

Upcoming Schedule:

October 14 @ 10:30 – at the Temple

November 18 @ 10:30 – at the Temple

A Reminder from the Sunshine Committee



Please let us know when someone has passed away, is ill or otherwise in need of a little sunshine so that the Jewish Center may be there to support and assist as best we can. Please contact Ruth Schutzbank at (908) 329-6036 or Howie.ruth@hotmail.com.

Updates & Events

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Students recently celebrated Sukkot by decorating the Temple Sukkah and taking part in the rituals of the Lulav and Etrog. We also participated in America's Grow a Row. A reminder that there will be no Sunday School on October 7th.

Upcoming Schedule:

- October 14th
- October 21st
- October 28th



TORAH STUDY

Torah Study continues at the JCNWJ. Read more about our group on Pg. 9. Our schedule for the year is:

- October 20
- November 10
- December 15
- January 12
- February 23
- March 16
- April 13
- May 11
- June 22

BUILDING UPDATE

Kitchen and Bathroom supplies

If you notice that any kitchen or bathroom supplies are getting low, please email Iris Hirsch at irishirsch@comcast.net.

MAH JONGG

Mah Jongg continues at the JCNWJ. Contact Rhonda Jordan at helpmerhonda171@yahoo.com if interested!

Updates & Events

BLOOD DRIVE

The JCNWJ will be holding a blood drive in honor of Gil Braunstein on October 28, 2018 at the temple. Please consider participating in this important cause. You can register in advance at

https://donor.giveapint.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/43032

Thank you for supporting our blood drive and your community. We look forward to seeing you soon.

*Howie Hirsch
Volunteer Drive Coordinator*

THANK YOU

I would like to give a huge thank you to the congregation. Because of everyone's generosity, I was able to deliver 40 bags of much needed food to the food pantry that I volunteer at. It was truly appreciated!

-Iris

FOOD DRIVE

The High Holiday food drive may be over, but our congregation continues to donate food all year round to the food pantry. The Jewish Center is collecting non-perishable items such as canned soup, pasta, and cereal on an ongoing basis to help out those in need.

WEBSITE

Members Only!

The JCNWJ website has a section for temple members only. Here you'll find the latest membership list and other documents not for public consumption.

To access, go to www.jcnwj.org/members/ and enter the user name jcnwjmember and password. Forgot the password? E-mail website@jcnwj.org.

Wanted: Advertisers for JCNWJ Journal

Kindly take note of the ads at the end of our Journal and whenever possible, support these establishments with your patronage. It's also a good idea to mention that you saw their Temple ad. If there are any businesses that you use regularly that might be interested in taking an ad in the Journal, please contact Rita Berkowitz (berk721@aol.com) or Ruth Schutzbank (Howie.ruth@hotmail.com). You can also go to our homepage, print out an advertising form and give it directly to them to mail in.

Donations

For Donating High Holy Day Prayer Books
– Temple Beth El (Huntington, NY)

In Honor of the High Holy Days
– Jill Gilkeson

In Honor of the High Holy Days
– Rhonda Jordan

In Honor of the High Holy Days
– Rochelle and Tom Ostefeld

In Honor of the High Holy Days
– Sue and Marty Miller

In Honor of the High Holy Days
– Teri Stanton

In Honor of the High Holy Days
– Nancy and Dr. Bernard Robins

In Honor of the High Holy Days
– Lydia and George Cotz

In Honor of the High Holy Days
– Marsha Torine

In Celebration of Edythe Herson's Birthday
– Alison and Andrew Shelofsky

In Memory of Chas McGee
– Helen and John Mattson

In Memory of Chas McGee
– Rita and Jerry Berkowitz

In Memory of Donald B. Cohen
– Debra Cohen

In Memory of Philip Weinstein
– Roseann and Edward Weinstein

On the Yahrzeit for Abraham S. Pinn
– Helen and John Mattson

On the Yahrzeit for Belle F. Shure
– Helen and John Mattson

On the Yahrzeit for Ethel L. Mattson
– Helen and John Mattson

On the Yahrzeit of David Tarlowe
– Laura and Paul Tarlowe

On the Yahrzeit of Steve Tarlowe
– Laura and Paul Tarlowe

In Memory of Donald Cohen
– Debra Cohen

Torah Study

This month marks the 20th anniversary of the JCNWJ's Torah study group. Three members in our current group were there at the inception in the fall of 1998. We remember with great fondness those of our original members who have passed away: Eric Edelstein, Charlotte Fels, Paul Leitner (who joined a few years later), Rona and Stanley Schick. Fortunately, new participants continue to join our ranks, contributing their unique experiences and insights to our discussions. We are enhanced by their presence and encourage any and all to join us.

We meet at 10:30 for two hours on Saturday mornings in the simcha room. Our study focuses on the Torah text that we have read verse by verse from the beginning of Genesis to where we are now, in the middle of the book of Deuteronomy. Our discussions usually lead us in multiple directions, touching on contemporary events and long-ago history, infused and enriched with personal stories and Jewish traditions, culture, and memory.

In September we read Deuteronomy 13:2-19, eighteen verses that talk about "false prophets" and what is required of us when we encounter one. This led to, among other things, the current political situation in Washington, a reassessment of the Akeda (which we first read in our second or third year of study while reading Genesis, and keep coming back to), God, politics in the ancient Near East, and under what circumstances, if any, it is permissible to take the life of another person.

If you are curious, if you want to learn, if you want to enjoy the camaraderie of fellow congregants on a Shabbat morning, come join us. What makes the study group so stimulating and rewarding, so unique, is that we all come from different places, different backgrounds, different experiences, and in this milieu, we all learn from one another. As one member said this past session, the study group is the most wonderful part of our Jewish Center.

-Judy May and Sharon Herson

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