
the Shofar



Etz Chayim Conservative Synagogue's Monthly Newsletter

OCTOBER, 2020

TISHREI/ CHESHVAN, 5781

REGULAR SERVICES ARE CURRENTLY CANCELLED DUE TO COVID 19.

SERVICE SCHEDULE

Sukkot

Add roof & decorate sukkah at EC	Thursday	October 1	4:00 PM
Virtual evening services	Friday	October 2	7:15 PM
Virtual morning services	Friday-Saturday	October 3-9	9:45 AM
Rabbi Listfield Sukkot virtual gathering	Tuesday	October 6	6:45 PM
Virtual Hoshanah Rabah morning services	Friday	October 9	9:45 AM
Kiddush in EC sukkah daily at noon	Daily		Noon

Shemini Atzeret

Virtual evening services	Friday	October 9	7:15 PM
Virtual morning services	Saturday	October 10	9:45 AM
Yizkor (following Torah service, approx. at)	Saturday	October 10	11:00 AM

Simchat Torah

Virtual evening service	Saturday	October 10	7:15 PM
Virtual evening Hakafot service	Saturday	October 10	8:00 PM

FROM THE RABBI

Sukkot and the Virus

No holiday matches well with coronavirus. But Sukkot has some commonalities with it. Just as we have left our “normal” lives and now live in what we hope is a temporary state, so too on Sukkot we leave our home and live for a week in a temporary shelter.

A sukkah is a fragile structure. So are we fragile. A sukkah has a roof but sometimes the rain can get in. So do we take precautions against the virus, but sometimes dangerous aerosols can penetrate our barriers.

So what is my message as Sukkot rolls around this year? The message is that we ultimately are vulnerable to the vagaries of nature. An ill wind can blow. The ill wind of coronavirus is blowing all around the world.

But the message is also that we must live with gratitude. All festivals are joyous. That is a tautology. But the Torah says that on Sukkot we are to feel exclusively joyous. Precisely because we are finite beings, subject to unpredictable assaults and unseen forces, we choose to thank God for the blessing of every moment that we are alive and well. During Sukkot, we sit in a hut and thank God that we have a wonderful house. We can adapt the lesson. These months we have been sitting in limbo, but we thank God that we have pretty fortunate lives that we will return to. And all I can add is, may that happen soon!

Sukkot begins Friday evening October 2. See our calendar for the schedule of the entire festival — Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, and Simchat Torah. And chag sameach to all.

Stephen Listfield

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

When it came time to write a President’s message for this month, I really struggled for something to say. What I was really struggling with was the motivation to do it; the desire to “get off my butt”. This year, I again have the privilege to chant the Kol Nidre on behalf of our congregation. Up until this point, I’ve needed a good dose of “get off my butt” and get to preparing. I think writing this message is the “kick in the pants” that I’ve needed.

I’m reminded of others this past year who’ve gotten up off their behinds and made things happen. Two in particular are Lynn E. and Natha H. They’ve really stepped up and helped give our shul a makeover. Thank you for that. Our building looks very different and very nice. I’d encourage all of us to thank them when we have a chance. I don’t know if there is some big lesson in this message other than what we see can be accomplished when we stand up and put things into action.

Gary Hall

SISTERHOOD

Shanah Tovah! I hope everyone has had a healthy and happy start to the New

Year. While it wasn't the same gathering that we're used to, it was still very nice to gather via Zoom and join in prayer. Like Gary said in last month's Shofar, we were "bending the rules" in comparison to a traditional High Holiday service, but we were still given the opportunity for aliyot and mitzvot of gathering and praying.

Thanks to all who have picked up their Sisterhood New Year booklets, we hope you enjoyed the sweet honey treat. The remaining booklets that were not handed out have been mailed to your homes. The Sisterhood Board really enjoys putting things together for the Shul (a big thank you to all of our Board members who have contributed their time and effort and donations) and we look forward to doing more in the future.

Amy

DONATIONS

General Fund

From: Christina & Michael Jacobs
A very generous donation in Loving Memory of Ted Roberts

Rabbi Fund

From: Lucy & Charles Fisher

Sisterhood

From: Manya Fuerst
A generous donation for mailing member's New Year Booklets

From: Manya Fuerst
A generous donation in Honor of Millie Rosenthal

Outdoor Lighting Fund

In Memory of Gertrude and Perry Schlein from their daughters Natha Hancock and Robin Slomka and their families.

MASKED MEN AND BEAUTIFUL LADIES AT THE SYNAGOGUE

We want to thank those masked men who came out on a very hot Sunday afternoon to build the Sukkah. Our thanks to Bill Brigadier (and his "Don't scratch me truck"), Bill Goldberg, Gary Hall, Jonathan Persons, Fred Kolchin, and Bob Feigenblatt for their dedicated efforts.

Also, thanks to Millie Rosenthal and Shirley Roberts for distributing the prayer books, the Sisterhood New Year Booklets and the very sweet honey. Thanks also to Donna Lyonnais for setting up and selling from the gift shop that same afternoon and to Debra Benko for donating a beautiful menorah.

Max

Sunday, October 25, 4 p.m.

Consort l'ancienne live concert

This Huntsville string ensemble will present a special

Concert of Jewish Liturgical and Traditional Music

at Etz Chayim Conservative Synagogue to benefit the Food Pantry and First Stop.

We will collect monetary donations for food and hygiene items with this fundraising program starting now until October 23, 2020. To make a PayPal donation on the Etz Chayim website go to

<http://www.etzchayim-hsv.org/fooddriveconcert>

We will also collect actual food & hygiene items at 4 PM on October 1 & 25, and at 3 PM on October 4, 11 & 18. Please note that donors will be asked to provide names and email addresses for access to the virtual concert. Masks required if access to the Gift Shop or Synagogue is desired.

Zoom invitations will be sent to the contact information provided on PayPal donations and with actual donations.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- Oct 01 Complete/decorate the EC sukkah, Food Pantry & First Stop collection, both at 4 PM
- Oct 03-09 Sukkot-Kiddush in sukkah daily at Noon. See above for schedule of services.
- Oct 04 Collection time for Food Pantry & First Stop, 3 PM
- Oct 6 Virtual Sukkot gathering with Rabbi Listfield, 6:45 PM
- Oct 10 Virtual Shemini Atzeret & Simchat Torah services-see schedule of services
- Oct 11 Collection time for Food Pantry & First Stop, 3 PM
- Oct 15 Virtual EC Book Club, 11:30 AM
- Oct 18 Collection time for Food Pantry & First Stop, 3 PM
- Oct 25 Consort l'ancienne fundraiser performance and collection for Food Pantry & First Stop at 4 PM

OUR AMAZING BOOK CLUB

How could our Book Club know to pick a topic for the October discussion that would be being discussed by 100 million Americans?

Join us on Thursday, October 15, at 11:30 for a discussion of the life of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the "Notorious RBG". Be you Liberal or Conservative, come and participate in the discussion of this amazing woman.

Contact Barry Meyer or Max Rosenthal for Zoom information and any questions you may have.

INTERFAITH MISSION SERVICE

The Leadership Council meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at 5:30--generally at a church, mosque, or synagogue. Meetings during Social Distancing are via Zoom. The October meeting is scheduled for October 22. The meetings feature a guest speaker and are open to all members of the congregation. Details will be provided when available through Synagogue email subscription and the web-site.

BIRTHDAYS

Oct 03 Zev Roberts
Oct 03 Marc Zelickson
Oct 03 Ellie Meyer
Oct 10 Leigh Miller
Oct 13 Max Rosenthal
Oct 14 David Rosenthal
Oct 16 Jonah Roberts
Oct 20 Marvin Kalachman
Oct 20 Zachary Persons
Oct 21 Ethan Hall
Oct 21 Frederick Kolchin
Oct 23 Paulette Goldstein
Oct 23 Marla Polin
Oct 24 Thomas Jones
Oct 27 Carolyn Palermo

ANNIVERSARIES

Oct 09 Nannette & Gary Schwartz
Oct 09 Susan & Larry Levitt
Oct 24 Carolyn & Bob Palermo
Oct 26 Michelle & Jonathan Persons
Oct 27 Millie & Max Rosenthal

YAHARZEITS**

Oct 01	Tishrei 13	Bernard Fisher
Oct 02	Tishrei 14	Terry Lee Green*
Oct 04	Tishrei 16	Capt. Robert Secher*
Oct 08	Tishrei 20	Randy Sacks*
Oct 08	Tishrei 20	Alex Greenbaum
Oct 08	Tishrei 20	Mariam Wertheim
Oct 14	Tishrei 26	Menahem "Max" Honan
Oct 15	Tishrei 27	Louis Klazmer
Oct 16	Tishrei 28	Bella Flank*
Oct 17	Tishrei 29	Leo Krell
Oct 17	Tishrei 29	Rose Natt*
Oct 18	Tishrei 30	Harold Pizitz
Oct 21	Cheshvan 03	Sarah Goldstein*
Oct 21	Cheshvan 03	Sara Osovsky*
Oct 29	Cheshvan 11	Amby Jean Crocker
Oct 30	Cheshvan 12	Martin Goldner*
Oct 31	Cheshvan 13	Herschel Tzvi Rabinovich

* Plaque

**Light Memorial candle sunset of previous evening

SPECIAL MESSAGE

Howard and I were so moved by the togetherness of our Etz Chayim family adapting new ways to observe Rosh Hashanah, 5781, through virtual technology, on-line communications, social distancing, and transporting needed materials, etc.

We want to extend our personal, loving accolades to Rabbi Listfield and our Synagogue Leaders, Readers, Cantors, Torah and Haftorah Participants, and those behind the scenes who made it all possible.

The live Tashlich and Shofar blowing services on Sunday at Aldridge Creek were memorable.

Prayers for Peace and Thankfulness are, and forevermore will be, unending.

Our little Etz Chayim Synagogue is so precious and blessed.

Diana & Howard Polin

THE ORIGINAL SUCCOT CELEBRATION

By Ted Roberts, the *SCRIBBLER ON THE ROOF*

Succot, like perfect sweet and sour cabbage soup, has two flavors. A single holiday with two themes. We celebrate the bounty of the grape and olive harvest in the Promised Land; also we commemorate 40 hungry years of wanderings in that huge sand pile – the Sinai Peninsula – a garden that can only grow rocks.

The Chumash commands us to relive our wilderness days. “Ye shall dwell in booths seven days...that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths” when he took us out of Egypt. This holiday is one of the three special ones when the Israelite male was required to show up at the Temple.

A booth, a succah, must have been a challenge on those chilly Sinai nights. It’s cold as only a desert can be bone-cold at night. So you can bet most adults were drawn to the social warmth of the campfire. Conversation, maybe a little music from a homemade flute, and somebody might be passing around a skin of fermented goat’s milk.

Some sages say that the Jewish love for books and literature was born on those long Sinai nights. You see, Moses and

Aaron and their Levite kinfolk had plenty of time to sit around and talk since there was yet no temple to attend to. Moses, himself, didn’t have the leisure of his brother Levites since he was busy as a Goshen scribe putting down all that he heard on the mountaintop. You remember he spent 40 days and nights listening to the Master Magistrate lay down the law.

And sitting around the fire, Moses passed on the message from the mountaintop. Those five books were full of tales of love and adventure. But full of rules, too, which occasionally brought on heavy eyelids and deep breathing to the nighttime audience huddled close around the fire. “Ten is enough,” they groaned. “613? We can’t even remember them. Let’s go back to Genesis. Tell us some more about that garden.” The men especially loved the story of Eve and the snake.

(Mark Twain, a spiritual skeptic who had a remarkable short attention span and therefore never went to synagogue on Yom Kippur, remarked that nobody heard a word a preacher said after the first ten minutes. He would have hated my synagogue.)

So, the first and greatest prophet of Israel, blessed with divine understanding of human inattention and the human temptation to doze off when anyone lectured for over ten minutes, knew he had to vary his curriculum. So, he told stories, the best of which found their way into the oral tradition.

Moses was careful to only repeat the best, the most fabulous tales. He knew he had a tough audience. Often he told

the story of Malcha, who invited the handsome, but weary traveler into her succah and quenched his thirst and put a platter of lamb chops in front of him. Too late did the innocent victim find that her succah was a chupah. The men hated this story. But you can bet that once in a while, when Moshe told the same story for the fifth time, some creative Israelite got up and told one of his own inventions. It was like the Improv where freshmen storytellers tried their skills.

But the mystics tell us that on those star-glittered nights when Moshe cut back on the adventure tales and went back to his revelation of the Word of G-d to Israel, the desert creatures beyond the light of the campfire, quietly listened. No night birds sang, and even the desert fox refrained from calling his mate.

Time, as still as Horeb itself, ceased to exist so that the prophet could look both before and after. Did he not tell of history that was, and would be? Some say the scroll of time stood before him like a giant Torah as he recited to the people the oral tradition. Moses and the people talked. Many, many words – outnumbering the stars – filled the night. They talked 'til the moon grew pale and weary. And I think that's why the ancestors of these wanderers predominate in today's world of words.

Historians, sociologists, anthropologists still today, wonder about this mystery of Judaism. I mean, how could it be that we're about .025 percent of the world's population, but we write about 20% of the books. (Check the best seller lists.) Why do we win all the Pulitzer Prizes? Why do we dominate in the world of entertainment, movies, and television?

Jewish themes, Jewish scriptwriters, Jewish producers, Jewish actors,

What is it about words and their sequencing into literary art – like jewels on a bracelet – that attracts the former Children of Israel – now known as Jews?

It's almost like the old-fashioned anti-semites used to say. Wherever you look, you see the Jew. Well, in the world of ideas it's as true as the wisdom in Proverbs. Where stories are told, you'll find Jews. But why?

I say it was those wild Sinai nights around the campfire when Moses told his tales. When the audience trooped back to their succahs, their wilderness huts, they had plenty to think about. Oh the dreaming that went on in those succahs. And it still goes on and on.