

CONGREGATION ETZ CHAIM

September - October 2020



Congregation
Etz Chaim

A Reform Jewish Congregation
Fairport, New York

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From the Rabbi's Desk

As I write this, the full moon of Elul is on the wane. Come Friday night Sept. 18, we will usher in the Jewish New Year of 5781. We will say goodbye to 5870, and quite frankly, many of us will be tempted to say, "Good riddance."

But that is not the Jewish way. We have had nightmare years before – 586 BCE, 70 CE, 1096, 1290 (England expels the Jews), 1306 (the great expulsion from France), 1492, 1648-1658 (Chmielnicki massacres, 19th and 20th century pogroms, and of course the nightmare years of 1939-1945.

But this pandemic is not evocative of the external forces that have sought to destroy us. Nor is it evocative of the times in our history such as the Hasmonean era when Jew turned against Jew. It's not even evocative of the Black Death in Europe, when Jews were blamed for a pandemic that was in fact borne by rats.

But it has been a year of suffering nonetheless. Many of us know of individuals close to us who have suffered and died from COVID 19. All of us have had to make major lifestyle sacrifices, down to our most sacred rituals, from Seder to Shiva. As of Rosh HaShanah, we will have been holding all our services, meetings and religious school on line for six months.

The board and clergy have agonized over the upcoming High Holidays, and again we will have to use Zoom to worship as a community. Mountain Rise is allowing in-house worship on a limited basis, but the question the board had to wrestle with was: With a limit on in-house worshipers, whom do we turn away?

Our High Holiday services always have been open to all, regardless of membership, with no tickets sold to non-members. Our doors were always open.

This will be the case again this year. Anyone who has attended High Holiday services in the past will get a Zoom Invitation. And for members or traditional guests who have relatives out of town, please forward us their emails, and we will send them the invite.

We just ask that you do not share the invite that you get. Our Zoom account will accommodate 100 log-ins. We've got a decent sized virtual tent. But we do not want to be "Zoom bombed" with inappropriate images on our holiest days.

So if you have kids at college, or know former members who have moved away and would like to worship in our virtual tent, let a board member know, or contact administrator Ben Slomovic at benetzchaim@gmail.com. We will do all we can to accommodate you.

As clergy, our new soloist Nathan Savant and I will do all we can to facilitate participation and create a meaningful worship climate. We will pray that we are inscribed in the Books of Life and Health. And we will pray for Divine guidance for those in science and medicine to come up with treatments, cures and vaccines to ensure our health.

Until then, let's make our Teshuvah project simple: take care of each other.

Kein y'hi ratzon.

Rabbi David Abrahams

Symbols and Customs of Rosh Hashonah

Whether you spell it Rosh Hashonah or Rosh ha-Shana, the name of this High Holiday translates as "head of the year". It's a time for Jews all over the world to engage in prayer, self-reflection, and repentance. It's also a time when questions may arise about why certain symbols and customs are an important part of this holiday season.

At the erev Rosh Hashonah dinner we recite the *HaMotzi*, not over the usual braided *challah*, but using a round turban-shaped loaf, often studded with raisins. This custom has several explanations. One is that the round shape reflects the ongoing cycle of years and seasons; another is that the circular *challah* reminds us of this opportunity for *t'shuvah* (repentance and new beginnings). Another common interpretation is that the round bread resembles a crown, symbolizing the sovereignty of God – a common theme throughout the High Holidays. The raisins add to the hope for a "sweet" New Year.

Throughout the centuries, Ashkenazi Jews have commonly eaten apples – as well as figs, grapes, and other fruits – dipped in honey to symbolize the hope for sweetness and blessings in the year ahead. Some families also enjoy a pomegranate as a treat before the holiday meal because, according to legend, the number of seeds in the pomegranate reflects the number of good deeds you will do in the coming year.

Made from a ram's horn, the curved and bent shape of the *shofar* symbolizes our humility as we stand before G-d to assess and consider our actions during the past year. The *shofar* is first sounded during the month of Elul as a reminder of the upcoming High Holidays; it's last trumpet marks the conclusion of the final service on Yom Kippur. There are many explanations for blowing the *shofar*. One says it is a cry for spiritual awakening, another that it is a reminder **not** to get lost in the pursuit of material possessions but to remember the important things in life. In ancient times it's sound was used as a battle cry as well as to herald victory. According to the Bible, a *shofar* was blown when Jews received the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai. It's sound also serves as a reminder of the story about Abraham's faith, which is read on Rosh Hashonah, when he substituted a sacrificial ram for his son Isaac.

Tashlich, conducted on the first day of Rosh Hashonah, is a ceremony in which sins are symbolically cast into a moving body of water, such as a river, stream, or ocean. When done together with a synagogue community, this ritual is usually performed in the afternoon, and includes the recitation of verses from Micah and Psalms. According to Micah 7:19, "G-d will take us back in love; G-d will cover up our iniquities, You will hurl all our sins into the depths of the sea." This physical act inspires us to

remember our actions, right our wrongs, and refocus ourselves for the New Year. Customarily, bread has been used to represent our sins, but because it is not the most nutritional food for wildlife, some choose to cast pebbles, wood chips, or bird seed in place of bread.

Shanah Tovah Um'tukah - May you have a good and sweet New Year!

Sources: ReformJudaism.org
www.myjewishlearning.com
Jewish Living: A Guide to Contemporary Reform Practice, by Mark Washofsky

Membership Renewal Packets

Thanks to all who have sent in their membership renewal papers and dues. If you have misplaced the papers or if you know someone who would like to join Etz Chaim, please contact our Administrator, Ben at benetzchaim@gmail.com or 223-5344 and he will get the proper paperwork out to you.

High Holiday Donations

Because services will not be held "in person" at Mountain Rise this season, we will be sending out High Holiday donation forms via e-mail. Thank you in advance for your support of Congregation Etz Chaim!

New Cantorial Soloist

The Board is pleased to announce that Nathan Savant will be joining us as cantorial soloist for this year. A native of Oakland, California, Nathan is a senior at the Eastman School of Music and will be graduating in May 2021 with a Bachelor of Music degree. Nathan has already been a part of several Shabbat Zoom services over the summer, and we look forward to his participation during the High Holidays.

A Rosh Hashana Recipe for a Sweet Beginning: Apfel Kuchen (Apple Cake)

Ingredients:

6 eggs
1 1/3 cups corn oil
1/2 tsp salt
1 3/4 cups sugar
3 cups pastry flour (sifted)
4 tsp baking powder
Grated zest of 1 orange
6 apples, peeled and thinly sliced
1/2 cup raisins

1. Preheat oven to 350°
2. Combine flour, baking powder, salt
3. Beat eggs, sugar, and orange rind until pale yellow. Slowly add oil and beat well. Gradually add flour mixture, beating well after each addition.
4. Pour half the batter into a greased 13" x 9" x 2" pan; quickly spread the apples and raisins over the batter, then spread the remaining batter over all.
5. Bake 1 hr 10 min. Cut in squares when cool. Yields 20-24 servings.

Congratulations to:

Donald Dunn on his Sept. 15 birthday.

Donald and Claire Dunn on their 69th wedding anniversary on September 2.

Wishing Good Health to:

Marv Cohen

Donald Dunn

Sandy Krieger

Donations

General Fund

* From Melissa Giambrone

HIGH HOLIDAYS SCHEDULE

Date	Day	Time	Service	Location
9/18/2020	Friday	7:30 PM	Erev Rosh Hashanah	Mountain Rise
9/19/2020	Saturday	9:30 AM	Rosh Hashanah	Mountain Rise
9/19/2020	Saturday	1:00 PM	Tashlich casting of sins	Boat Launch, Fairport, Ayrault Rd
9/27/2020	Sunday	7:30 PM	Erev Yom Kippur	Mountain Rise
9/28/2020	Monday	9:30 AM	Yom Kippur	Mountain Rise
9/28/2020	Monday	4:00 PM	Yom Kippur Yizkor	Mountain Rise

Please note that all services will be via Zoom this year due to the pandemic.

In order to prevent uninvited guests who might cause disruption, you will need to request an invite to join.

If you would like an invite, please email admin Ben Slomovic at benetzchaim@gmail.com (best method) or call 585-223-5344

Hope to see you there!

Etz Chaim 2020-21 Calendar

Please note: Due to the COVID pandemic, it looks like services, classes, and meetings will be held via Zoom at least until the end of this year. If you would like to join us at a service, please contact our Administrator at benetzchaim@gmail.com or 223-5344 to get the current Zoom link. Also, please continue to watch your e-mail for congregation updates. We appreciate your flexibility and patience as we navigate these unusual times!

2020

September	4	Friday	Shabbat service	7:30 p.m.	Zoom
	13	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m.- noon	Zoom
	18	Friday	Erev Rosh Hashana	7:30 p.m.	Zoom
	19	Saturday	Rosh Hashana	9:30 a.m.	Zoom
			Followed by bagel brunch, then Tashlich		
	20	Sunday	Board meeting	7 p.m.	Zoom
	27	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m. - noon	Zoom
	27	Sunday	Kol Nidre	7:30 p.m.	Zoom
	28	Monday	Yom Kippur	9:30 a.m.	Zoom
	28	Monday	Yom Kippur/Yizkor	4 p.m.	Zoom
October	2	Friday	Sukkot potluck	6 p.m.	Zoom
	10	Saturday	Simchat Torah	9:30 a.m.	Zoom
			Bar Mitzvah of Harper Peterson		
	16	Friday	Shabbat service	7:30 p.m.	Zoom
	18	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m.. - noon	Zoom
	18	Sunday	Board meeting	7 p.m.	Zoom
	25	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m. - noon	Zoom
November	1	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m. - noon	Zoom
	6	Friday	Shabbat service	7:30 p.m.	Zoom
	8	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m. - noon	Zoom
	15	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m. - noon	Zoom
	15	Sunday	Board meeting	7 p.m.	Zoom
	20	Friday	Shabbat service	7:30 p.m.	Zoom
	22	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m. - noon	Zoom
December	4	Friday	Shabbat service	7:30 p.m.	Zoom
	6	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m. - noon	Zoom
	11	Friday	Chanukah potluck	6 p.m.	Zoom
	13	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m. - noon	Zoom
	18	Friday	Shabbat service	7:30 p.m.	Zoom
	20	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m. - noon	Zoom
	20	Sunday	Board meeting	7 p.m.	Zoom

2021

January	3	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m. - noon	JCC
	8	Friday	Shabbat service	7:30 p.m.	Mountain Rise
	10	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m.- noon	JCC
	17	Sunday	Board meeting	7 p.m.	Mountain Rise
	22	Friday	Tu B'Shvat service	7:30 p.m.	Mountain Rise
	24	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m. - noon	JCC
	31	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m. - noon	JCC
February	5	Friday	Shabbat service	7:30 p.m.	Mountain Rise
	7	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m. - noon	JCC
	21	Sunday	Board meeting	7 p.m.	Mountain Rise
	26	Friday	Purim potluck	6 p.m.	Mountain Rise
	28	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m. - noon	JCC
March	5	Friday	Shabbat service	7:30 p.m.	Mountain Rise
	7	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m. - noon	JCC
	14	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m. - noon	JCC
	19	Friday	Shabbat service	7:30 p.m.	Mountain Rise
	21	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m. - noon	JCC
	21	Sunday	Board meeting	7 p.m.	Mountain Rise
	28	Sunday	Community seder	6 p.m.	Mountain Rise
April	2	Friday	Shabbat service	7:30 p.m.	Mountain Rise
	11	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m. - noon	JCC
	16	Friday	Shabbat service	7:30 p.m.	Mountain Rise
	18	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m. - noon	JCC
	18	Sunday	Annual Meeting	6 p.m.	Mountain Rise
	25	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m. - noon	JCC
May	2	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m. - noon	JCC
	7	Friday	Shabbat service	7:30 p.m.	Mountain Rise
	16	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m – noon	JCC
	16	Sunday	Shavuot service (Ice cream social)	7 p.m.	Mountain Rise
	21	Friday	Shabbat service	7:30 p.m.	Mountain Rise
	30	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m. - noon	JCC
	30	Sunday	Planning meeting	7 p.m.	Mountain Rise
June	6	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m. - noon	JCC
	13	Sunday	Religious school	9 a.m. - noon	JCC
	18	Friday	Shabbat service	6 p.m.	Mountain Rise
	27	Sunday	Picnic, religious school graduation Board meeting	7 p.m.	Mountain Rise
July	16	Friday	Shabbat picnic	6 p.m.	Mountain Rise
	18	Sunday	Board meeting	7 p.m.	Mountain Rise