

Rabbi's Report June 5774

Meaningful Observance:

Our formal Friday night services for the season are now concluded. However, summer is the ideal time to experiment. At the request of members we will try one Friday night service a month. The hope is that these will provide continuity and a chance to reconnect. They will be more laid back, in members' homes with a potluck, dairy dinner. They will also give us the opportunity to try Likrat Shabbat again as a community.

We will also celebrate Shavuot with a Tikkun L'eil Shavuot focusing on the Book of Ruth, Tuesday night, June 3 at 7PM. Yizkor will happen on June 5 at 8 AM. We will start with a brief pesukei d'zimra, then do Yizkor and then the Torah Service. Yizkor will have additional readings and reflections to make it a more meaningful observance.

June begins the preparation for the High Holidays. The cantorial soloist and I will be meeting. The choir may begin rehearsing.

Lifelong Learning:

Introduction to Judaism continues. There are two more sessions. Planning is now underway for the fall.

One of the best things that I did this reporting period was attend a workshop sponsored by JUF and the Synagogue Commission as professional development for me, Zahava and Nina. We then had a dinner meeting to model warm and welcoming behavior and to begin to brainstorm ways that we can be even better at this important topic.

Part of my ongoing learning will be around the topics of who is a Jew and how. Come be part of the discussion. It starts with the study session for Shavuot on the Book of Ruth. She was a Moabite woman who converts—but without mikveh or a beit din—and yet she is the one who becomes the grandmother of King David and from whom the Messiah will eventually come.

Embracing Diversity:

I said this last time. I repeat it here in bold:

We need to continue to build an institution that is more than warm and welcoming. It needs to be a place that is safe and non-judgmental. It needs to be a place where gossip does not occur and bullying is not tolerated. It needs to be a place where any Jew, every Jew will feel respected the moment they walk in the door for the first time.

We cannot just give lip service to those words. All are welcome. Period. Any questions, have them come see me. Period.

Building Community:

Building community is the glue that holds it all together. It is about deepening engagements and deepening relationships. It is about meeting people where they are—within our walls or beyond our walls. It is about warm and welcoming and accessibility. Getting a handicapped accessible bathroom and making sure the transliteration guides are available. It is about making people feel comfortable. It is about being non-judgmental. It is about good food for Oneg Shabbat and Kiddush so that people want to stay longer and schmooze. It is about translating everything so that language is not a barrier to entry. A synagogue is not a country club or a health club. There should not be barriers to enter.

Respectfully submitted, Rabbi Margaret Frisch Klein