



Carnegie Shul Chatter

June 11, 2020



Services Resume this Shabbas

Well, this is it. After three months without services due to the coronavirus pandemic, this Saturday we will be reopening for Shabbas services at 9:20 am.

To insure everyone's health and safety there will be some changes to our normal procedures and to our regular way of conducting services. These are:

1. Enter through the front doors. No access code will be needed.
2. Take your prayer book and tallis to your seat with you. When services are concluded, leave them at your seat, where they will remain until the next time you attend.

Unusual Times

This week Ellen and I returned from Florida, where we have been since October.

We were originally planning to return in mid-April, but the pandemic scuttled those plans, and so we waited until we felt more comfortable driving north. Still, it was not our usual trip. We did not stay in a motel, but drove 17 hours straight though. After all, who knows who slept in a motel room the night before?

We also took a picnic lunch and dinner with us, preferring not to eat inside at a restaurant.

Unusual times and unusual travel.

We actually made our final decision to come home last Thursday, when we were informed by the Jewish Agency on Aging (JAA) that we could visit Ellen's mom, who has been quarantined with all of the other residents at Weinberg Terrace, for the past three month. The rules would be strict, a pre-scheduled 20 -minute visit with everyone wearing masks and no touching, but it was still something we had been yearning for, and we were thrilled.

3. Hand sanitizer will be available.
4. Wear a mask.
5. Sit only in rows that have not been taped off. Do not sit next to anyone unless they reside in your household.
6. During services there will be no parading of Torahs, and we ask you not to shake hands.
7. If you receive an aliyah, you will say the blessings at your seat. No one except Dr. Block will be on the bimah.
8. Gabbis will do their functions from their seats.
9. One person will both lift and wrap the Torah.
10. The procedures with regard to Torah reading have been declared ritually acceptable by Orthodox rabbis.
11. There will be no Kiddush after services. When services are concluded, remain socially distanced from other congregants as you exit the synagogue.

We highly encourage you to attend our services. You probably need a spiritual lift after all that has transpired over the last three months. We miss you and want to see you and pray alongside of you. We need a minyan so that people can say Kaddish. Please help us make that possible.

This Week's Torah Portion

This week's Torah portion is Behaalotecha, which, as we learn from chabad.org, includes, "A Second Passover is instituted in response to the petition, 'Why should we be deprived?' by a group of Jews who were unable to bring the Passover offering in its appointed time because they were ritually impure.

Well, we weren't ritually impure, but for many of us this year's Passover was not exactly the kind of Passover that we are used to or would prefer because we were often socially distanced from our families during the pandemic.

We spent all day Friday making the necessary arrangements to come home, but then on Saturday we received an email from JAA saying that Governor Wolf had ordered that visits such as these would not be permitted for at least 28 more days. Instead, we would have to say hello by waving through the windows at Weinberg Terrace.

Disappointing to be sure, but so far JAA has not had a single resident at any of its facilities affected by the virus, and that is a tribute to the very cautious approach that they have taken and is in sharp contrast to the many lives that have been lost at long term care facilities nationwide.

So, yes it is disappointing, just as missing some of Passover and three months of Shul were disappointing.

But things will get better, a vaccine will be developed (probably by Jewish doctors!) and next year we will have a normal Passover, Baruch Hashem.



2nd Passover

Things are a bit better now as Allegheny County has gone green, but that still does not mean that we should put together a second Seder because the risk of coronavirus infection, though somewhat lessened, is still very real.

And so this week we return to Shul, but with some very important restrictions in place to insure as best we can that we will all be as safe and healthy as possible while praying together.



Recent donations to the Carnegie Shul:

Lois Ash Metlika, for the yahrzeit of William Ash

Myron Roth, for the yahrzeit of Mitzi Roth

Anna Lisa Silberman, for the yahrzeit of Sara Cooper Radman