



Carnegie Shul Chatter

September 30, 2020



And so a new year begins...

Yes, it was different. Yes, some stayed home and watched the stream feed of our services instead of attending in person due to Corona. Yes, we missed chatting with our friends.

BUT, yes, this Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur were very special at our beloved Carnegie Shul.

As many as 26 people attended in person (well spaced in our sanctuary that can seat as many as 200), and nearly 20 more attended on-line. The flowers, sponsored by Wendy Panizzi and Geri Ketler, were beautiful. The new LED lighting

The Little Shul That Could

The officers and Board of the Carnegie Shul put quite a bit of effort into planning and executing this year's High Holiday services. Sadly, many Shuls were limited to only on-line services this year. We were determined to have in-person services as well as on-line, and we were determined to have safe services that would still include all of the religiously necessary elements, and, thankfully, we were able to do it.

The services in-house were as good as ever. And, here is what one Shabbos minyan regular, Heather Gilmer, who watched on-line from out of town had to say, "We put it on the TV. It was kind of like being in the women's balcony--see it, not in it, can talk amongst ourselves, and comfy chairs/couches.

(Yes, couches. Sometimes the women's section has couches and comfy stuffed chairs.) Hopefully next year none of this will be necessary."

Yes, hopefully it will not be necessary, but if it is, with your support, the little shul that could will get it done.

was brilliant. The new air conditioning worked very well, Dr. Block's messages were inspirational, Rick D'Loss did a superb job blowing the Shofar, and I can't imagine having a better cantor than A.J. Edelman.

In these trying times, this was exactly what we needed — High Holiday services that reminded us once more of the special relationship that we Jewish people have with our God.

And this Friday evening we welcome the next of our special holidays, Sukkos. We will not be erecting a Sukkah at our Shul this year, and our Sukkos services will be limited to services on Saturday, beginning at 9:20, and we would love to have you join us at Shul — no reservations necessary.

Below are a couple articles from *aish.com* that I hope will put you into the spirit of Sukkos. And if you don't have a Sukkah at your own home, I hope you will be able to find a Sukkah that you can safely visit at least once during the eight days of the festival.

Sukkot

Sukkot (October 3 - 11, 2020) is an especially joyous holiday which celebrates the close relationship we had with God in the desert, when we were sheltered beneath God's Clouds of Glory. We relate to this closeness most now, after the cleansing and rebonding with God of the High Holidays.

Sukkot is also the time when the crops were gathered from the fields in ancient Israel. We thank G-d for our material blessings of the past year and pray for rain for the coming year. We dwell in a Sukkah to commemorate the Clouds of Glory, and we take the four species as part of our supplication for rain.



Sukkot culminates with Simchat Torah, in which we dance and celebrate the completion of our yearly reading the Torah.

Why Sukkot Speaks to Us Now More Than Ever

Sep 30, 2020 | by Slovie Jungreis-Wolff

Three important messages for our time.

People are exhausted, fatigued. Children are in school and then they are not. Tensions within marriages and families are rising. Many feel isolated, lonely and sad. Worry about jobs and financial instability cause sleepless nights. What will be?

It is time for us to build our sukkah of peace. Beneath the stars we have been given the gift of serenity. The holiday of Sukkot comes just as we feel depleted and fills us with renewed energy. We must only stop and listen to the whispers in the night.

Here are three important messages that Sukkot brings us:

Shelter Under the Wings of Faith

We dwell in our sukkah for seven days. We leave our homes and all that is within. The dining room table, the mirrors and lighting, the comfort of our couch and we sit in a temporary hut, a sukkah.

Why a sukkah?

When the Jewish people were taken out of Egypt, God provided them with 'sukkah' booths of shelter. His clouds of glory would be their protection in the harsh desert wilderness.



Why wouldn't God give His nation a more permanent dwelling?

This generation that left Egypt was weak in faith. God wanted His people to know forever that strength and security come not from a beautiful home or a fancy car. It is not about our possessions, security systems, bank accounts, or jobs. It is all about faith.

"Come!" God beckons. "Leave all your fears behind. I will shelter you beneath My wings. You will find your faith, you will discover serenity. Our connection will endure forever. Greater than any 'thing' is the knowledge that you do not live life alone. Find your fortress of faith."

Reflecting on our sukkah helps open our eyes to the definition of true trust in God. Sukkot asks us to think: What matters in life? What sustains me? Whatever is important is right here with me. Everything else is temporary. The shelter of the Divine is the only shelter that remains forever.

These past few months we have learned how little we know. We have seen how much is out of our control. A virus, a miniscule germ, has brought the world to its knees.

Our sukkah reminds us that there was a time our people, too, felt helpless. Just as God sustained us and nourished both our bodies and souls, so too, will we find our sustenance. God will never abandon His people. As difficult as life seems, remember this teaching well. We have gone through an incredible journey, exiled throughout the four corners of the world. Given up for dead. And yet, here we are! Sitting in the sukkah booths as our forefathers did in the desert. The legacy remains alive. We are a miracle.

Renew your strength and courage. Inspire yourself. Ignite the spark that lies within your soul.

Plug Into Your Roots

If we don't know where we come from we don't know where we are going. We are clueless to the power that lies within.

What are my hidden strengths? What is my potential?

Just as we have physical genes so, too, we possess spiritual genes. Our fathers and mothers who walked before us paved the way. They travailed, overcame obstacles, were tried and tested, all so that we their children find the resilience to go through our own moments of difficulty.

The Zohar writes that when the Jewish people leave their homes and enter their sukkahs, they

merit to welcome the Divine presence along with seven guests. Seven shepherds descend from the heavens above and come as our 'ushpizin' guests.

The seven exalted ushpizin are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, and David.

It is customary when entering the sukkah to invite them to join us with a special prayer.

When we sit in our sukkah and feel overwhelmed with what is happening in our lives, let us plug into the power of our roots. Our spiritual guests went through incredible challenges. They suffered mightily. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob stood strong holding onto their faith as the whole world stood against them. Joseph was sold into slavery, thrown into prison and disgraced. Jacob thought he'd never see his son again. The grief was insurmountable. Moses and Aaron dealt with the pain of bondage, led the people through the desert for forty years but tragically never got to enter their beloved land of Israel. David was subject to rebellion, shame and his own son rebelled against him and threw him out of his royal palace. He never got to build the Temple in Jerusalem which had been his lifelong dream.

And yet.

These faithful shepherds sought only to bring kindness and truth into the world. They never lost their faithfulness, their compassion, their desire to make this world a better place.

God says: "You My children are shepherds, here to tend this world with love. It is therefore fitting for the faithful shepherds of old to dwell in the shelter of faith together with you, their faithful children."

We are empowered knowing that we come from greatness, that we have the potential to overcome obstacles just as our forefathers did. Bring blessing into the world. Invite the ushpizin in.

Strength Comes from Unity

On the morning of the first day of Sukkot (when it is not Shabbat), we rise early and recite blessings on the four species. (Shehecheyanu blessing is only recited the first day, the remaining blessing recited the other days). The four species taken are: the beautiful fruit, the esrog; the palm frond, the lulav; the branch of a myrtle tree, the hadas; and the branches of the willow tree, the aravah. The four species together comprise one mitzvah. If one of the species is missing, the mitzvah is not fulfilled.



Each species represents another type of Jew. God says that we are to hold all four together as one. Each is necessary.

Whoever fulfills this mitzvah brings peace and harmony to himself and to the entire world.

These days, we need unity more than ever. Stop judging. Start loving. Call someone you know who is alone. Reach out to another Jew who is not like you. Give a good word, a smile.

God grants us peace when there is peace amongst us. Take the four species and seize the moment. Unity brings peace. Peace brings strength.

Find joy in your shelter of faith.