



Carnegie Shul Chatter

August 11, 2021



Light candles 8:01pm Shabbat services 9:20am

High Holidays Reservations

Rosh Hashanah 5782 starts at sundown Monday evening, September 6 (also Labor Day), and Yom Kippur starts at sundown on Wednesday, September 15.

The Carnegie Shul will hold in-person services, and reservations are required. We will also stream our services via Zoom. We have upgraded our production capabilities, so both audio and video should be improved. Please see pages 5 and 6 for details, and RSVP today. Space is limited.



High Holidays Olympian

For this year's High Holiday services, the Carnegie Shul is fortunate to have our wonderful guest cantor, A.J. Edelman, returning for a fourth consecutive year.

A.J. is an incredible addition to our services. He has a wonderful voice and a passion for his davening that inspires everyone who attends our services.

A.J.'s story is also highly inspirational. He was born in Massachusetts, raised in a Modern Orthodox home, and attended MIT, from which he earned a degree in Mechanical Engineering. He played ice hockey at MIT, but in 2014, he tried the sliding sport of skeleton for the first time and he immediately became hooked.

Even though he was given an assessment that he would never be competitive, A.J. was determined to succeed, and oh, how he has succeeded.

A.J. emigrated to Israel in 2016, obtained dual American/Israeli citizenship, and competed for Israel in the 2018 Winter Olympics.

From skeleton, A.J. has moved on to bobsledding, and now he is the lead pilot on Israel's national bobsled team, looking to lead Israel to an Olympic bobsledding medal.

A.J. is truly an incredible man, and he is an incredible cantor. Come to our High Holiday services and see for yourself.

Shoftim in a Nutshell

Deuteronomy 16:18–21:9

From Chabad.org

Moses instructs the people of Israel to appoint judges and law enforcement officers in every city. “Justice, justice shall you pursue,” he commands them, and you must administer it without corruption or favoritism. Crimes must be meticulously investigated and evidence thoroughly examined—a minimum of two credible witnesses is required for conviction and punishment.

In every generation, says Moses, there will be those entrusted with the task of interpreting and applying the laws of the Torah. “According to the law that they will teach you, and the judgment they will instruct you, you shall do; you shall not turn away from the thing that they say to you, to the right nor to the left.”

Shoftim also includes the prohibitions against idolatry and sorcery; laws governing the appointment and behavior of a king; and guidelines for the creation of “cities of refuge” for the inadvertent murderer. Also set forth are many of the rules of war: the exemption from battle for one who has just built a home, planted a vineyard, married, or is “afraid and soft-hearted”; the requirement to offer terms of peace before attacking a city; and the prohibition against wanton destruction of something of value, exemplified by the law that forbids to cut down a fruit tree when laying siege (in this context the Torah makes the famous statement, “For man is a tree of the field”).

The Parshah concludes with the law of the eglah arufah—the special procedure to be followed when a person is killed by an unknown murderer and his body is found in a field—which underscores the responsibility of the community and its leaders not only for what they do, but also for what they might have prevented from being done.

In The News

The Carnegie Shul was featured in an article in this week’s Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle. In case you missed it, here is the article:

Despite its small size, The Carnegie Shul remains optimistic

The Conservative congregation, which leans Orthodox in practice — and is lay-led — has made allowances to accommodate modern needs.

By David Rullo August 9, 2021, 3:59 pm

In its heyday in the 1960s, Congregation Ahavath Achim — or, The Carnegie Shul — counted between 100 and 200 families as members and enrolled close to 120 children in its religious school, according to the congregation’s vice president, Rick D’Loss.



But as families moved from the more urban neighborhood of Carnegie to newer suburban communities in nearby Scott Township, Mt. Lebanon and Greentree, membership began to decline.

Part of the attrition was due to younger families joining Beth El Congregation of the South Hills, which moved from its previous location in Beechview in the early 1960s to its current home on Cochran Road, and Temple Emanuel of South Hills on Bower Hill Road, whose membership was rapidly growing.



The Carnegie Shul has been in its current location since 1937. Photo by David Rullo.

“Things started to tail off and we were left with a lot of parents and grandparents whose kids left to go to college or wherever,” said D’Loss, who sits on the Borough of Carnegie Council.

Membership losses continued through the 90s but leveled out in the new millennium.

“It doesn’t matter if you have 200 members or 20 members if you aren’t making minyan,” D’Loss said. “That’s the big thing for us. We have Shabbat services each week and every once in a while, we don’t have enough.”

The Conservative congregation, which leans Orthodox in practice — and is lay-led — has made allowances to accommodate modern needs. It now counts women for a minyan and allows them to be called to the Torah. Due to COVID-19, they streamed services on YouTube, which allowed out-of-town and home-bound members to participate. They have since returned to meeting in person.

The congregation first celebrated the High Holidays in 1896 before it had a regular site, meeting at the Husler Building, now owned by the Historical Society of Carnegie. The shul was incorporated in 1903 and moved to a building on Main Street. That building burned in 1934, and the congregation moved to its current home on Chestnut Street in 1937. Today the building is too large for the congregation’s needs, which has prompted D’Loss to practice creative problem solving, including renting the shul’s bottom floor to the Carnegie Performing Arts Center, a dance and theater studio.

Becoming a landlord enabled the congregation to begin planning building repairs it had postponed due to cost, D’Loss said.

“Over the decades, you need a new this or a new that — a new HVAC or windows — and the contractor says, ‘That’s going to be \$18,000 or \$25,000,’ and you’re thinking, ‘That’s a bit of an issue,’” he said.

The CPAC’s rent, according to D’Loss, will be used to do renovations on the building’s second floor.

The congregation is also working on attracting new members, according to Rosalyn Hoffman, a board member of the shul. She hopes members of Beth Israel Congregation in Washington County, which won’t be hosting its own High Holiday services this year, might consider giving The Carnegie Shul a try.

The board is also working on developing programming that might attract unaffiliated members of the South Hills Jewish community, Hoffman said, including younger families and students who may not even have noticed the synagogue, which sits across the street from the borough's CVS and GetGo.

While she's generally optimistic about the shul, Hoffman admits she's concerned that COVID-19, and its new variants, might make outreach more difficult.

"It's like, is this the time to try and increase membership, when people are forced back into their homes?" she asked. "We know, though, that there are a lot of people who might not be able to get to Jewish centers or services, and we've talked about reaching out to them."

The Carnegie Shul, with its welcoming community, leadership that doesn't push visitors to become members and "nominal" dues, could be attractive to many people, Hoffman said.

Both D'Loss and Hoffman agree that the High Holidays might be a nice introduction for potential members. The congregation, which held its 125th High Holiday services last year, will once again welcome Cantor A.J. Edelman, an American-born Israeli athlete. He is a four-time Israeli National Champion in skeleton and the first Orthodox Jew to compete in the Winter Olympics. He'll take time out from his training for the 2022 Beijing Olympic Games and serving as the program general manager for the Israel bobsled team to help lead services in Carnegie for the fourth time.

"He's just great and he loves Carnegie," D'Loss said. "He's practically a part of the congregation and we think people would want to be a part of that."

D'Loss believes there are plenty of Jewish options in the South Hills, with each organization fulfilling particular needs.

"We're not duplicating efforts," he said. "I think everyone's offering something that makes a nice, full plate in the South Hills. I'm hopeful we can maintain that. We're setting up for the next 125 years."

High Holidays Schedule

This year we will be conducting High Holiday Services both in Shul and on-line. Sadly, a recent surge in Covid cases in Allegheny County will require that we again have some restrictions on our in Shul services. Advance reservations will be required, masks will be required for all in attendance regardless of vaccination status, aliyah blessings will be recited from your seat rather than going up to the bimah, and Torahs will not be paraded through the sanctuary. We also request that you sit only in your assigned seat.



Seats are assigned to maximize social distancing but last year some congregants sat in seats other than the ones to which they had been assigned, making others feel uncomfortable.

Here are the High Holiday schedules and protocols. Reservations can be made by sending an email to Mike Roteman at mrmike7777@yahoo.com. A streaming link will be provided in the near future.

The following protocols will apply for the High Holiday Services:

- 1. A face mask must be worn properly at all times even if you have been vaccinated. NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- 2. When you enter the Sanctuary, please go directly to your assigned seat. A prayer book will be waiting for you. Please leave the prayer book at your seat when departing from services.**
- 3. Do not walk around the Shul after you have taken your seat.**
- 4. Please bring your own yarmulke and tallis if you have one, and take them with you when you depart at the end of services. If you use one of the synagogue's yarmulkas or tallises, please leave them at your seat at the conclusion of services.**
- 5. Please maintain social distancing as you come and go from the synagogue.**
- 6. Please sanitize hard surfaces in the restrooms before and after each use with materials provided in the bathrooms.**
- 7. There will be no parading or kissing of the Torah. If you are given an Aliyah, you will recite the blessings at your seat, not on the Bimah. The reader will be the only one on the Bimah.**
- 8. The maximum number of participants will be 50. All participants will need to RSVP before the holidays. Seats will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis.**
- 9. Please understand that space is limited. If you cannot attend after you have RSVPed, please let the Carnegie Shul know as soon as possible to allow for someone else to take your place.**
- 10. DO NOT attend services if you are not feeling well or if you have been exposed to someone who is a possible Covid-19 carrier, or if you have underlying health issues that may put you at greater risk of becoming infected.**

If you plan to attend, email Michael Roteman at mrmike7777@yahoo.com as soon as possible but not later than September 1.

Provide your name and the number of people, including yourself, who will be in your group even if they are coming for only one service. We will reserve seats so that your entire group can sit together.

High Holiday Schedule

Rosh Hashanah

Monday, September 6

Evening Services 7:15 pm

Tuesday, September 7

Preliminary Service..... 8:30 am

Shacharis 9:00 am

Torah Reading..... 10:00 am

Sermon 10:45 am

Musaf 11:15 am

Recess 1:15 pm

Tashlich..... 6:15 pm

Minchah 7:00 pm

Maariv 7:15 pm

Wednesday, September 8

Preliminary Service..... 8:30 am

Shacharis 9:00 am

Torah Reading..... 10:00 am

Sermon 10:45 am

Musaf 11:15 am

Recess 1:15 pm

Minchah 7:00 pm

Maariv 7:15 pm

Yom Kippur

Wednesday, September 15

Kol Nidre 7:15 pm

Maariv 7:30 pm

Thursday, September 16

Preliminary Service..... 9:00 am

Shacharis 9:30 am

Torah Reading 10:30 am

Sermon 11:15 am

Yizkor 11:45 am

Musaf 12:15 pm

Recess..... 2:30 pm

Minchah 5:45 pm

Neilah 6:45 pm

Shofar 7:45 pm

Facebook

Did you know that the Carnegie Shul is on Facebook? We actually first created our Facebook page in June 2018, but the page has been dormant recently. But we are now posting once again and ask that you check us out. We are on Facebook as The Carnegie Shul.