

January 22, 2010

Shabbat Shalom!

I was asked today to complete an online survey today about Tot Shabbat at our congregation, which continues to be a consistent feature of our Family Shabbat celebrations. Yesterday, I invited our 7th Grade class to join me as I led a music session for our Pre-K/Kindergarten/First Grade Class and 2nd-3rd Grade class. I was pleased to see the students at both ends of our religious school age spectrum singing and playing rhythm instruments with enthusiasm! Our Tu Bish'vat Seder next Wednesday will bring the generations in our congregation together to celebrate the Jewish New Year of Trees. At our Shabbat Morning Learner's Service this Saturday, January 23, upcoming B'nei Mitzvah students and their parents and members of our regular Saturday morning worship community will unite their voices in song, prayer and discussion.

These intergenerational moments in Temple life reflect the demand that Moses set before Pharaoh in the beginning of this week's Torah reading, Bo. Moses told Pharaoh that he wanted to take his people to worship God (along with the declaration that non-compliance would result in the plague of locusts). Pharaoh asked who would go, and Moses said, "We will all go, young and old; we will go with our sons and daughters, our flocks and herds." Pharaoh refused, because he believed that if everyone went together into the wilderness to pray to God, they would not return.

In the context of this tale, what Pharaoh was trying to do was to prevent the possibility of intergenerational gathering and education. Little did he know that it was likely that parents (and grandparents) were still teaching children, even while they were slaves. What we have to remember today is that, in the course of our busy lives, gatherings of two, three or four generations that make the Jewish heritage come alive can revitalize us as individuals and as a community. We can come together at Temple, in our homes, through connections in cyberspace, or with extended family and friends. Centuries of Jewish life have shown us that multigenerational celebrations are our strength and our hope for a vibrant future.

-- L'shalom, Rabbi Larry