

**November 6, 2009**

***Shabbat Shalom from Toronto!***

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*Just a quick note from your traveling rabbi who will soon be back home. I have learned a lot at the Union for Reform Judaism Biennial so far about interfaith activities, building community, fostering leadership at all levels of Temple membership and, of course, new music. As I think about the Torah readings from last week and this week, I am struck by what they teach us about being a part of a community. In last week's parashah, Lech L'cha, Abram and Sarai leave their home to go to a new land, where, as "strangers," they began to settle in with sense of excitement and optimism. In this week's portion (my Bar Mitzvah portion), Abraham and Sarah welcomed guests who came to their tent with surprising news (Sarah laughed when she found out she was going to have son!). The elements are there of being both the newcomer who looks at new surroundings with hope, and the seasoned resident who opens up a home with generosity and gusto (the Torah says that Abraham, at an advanced age, "ran" to be a good host!). Let us remember to keep the perspective of the hopeful new arrival AND the veteran who remembers being a new arrival and, consequently, offers the best hospitality possible - both views can only help us create a warm home and a vibrant community!*

***-- L'shalom, Rabbi Larry***