

## SEBASTOPOL JEWISH COMMUNITY ROSH HASHANAH GATHERING

5786

Hello, dear community. Here is the information for our 2025 gathering. The new year will be 5786!

I wanted to clear up one thing first: we sent out an announcement for the new West County Jewish group called Makom Shalom. Steve and I each met with the leader, Zelig, and we welcomed him and his group to Sonoma County. They have land in Occidental at which they plan to build an active congregation. As a courtesy, we sent out their invitation to this list.

We, though, are continuing our beloved tradition (it's a tradition now!) of meeting on the first morning of Rosh Hashanah under the magnificent redwoods in Ragle Park.

Also, we are a disputatious tribe. The stories in the Torah tell of our ancestors arguing with the Universe (or, Adonai) and with each other. A quarrelsome lot. But, things are extraordinarily tender now. We are all living through times we never would have imagined. And, it is taking a toll on us all. No matter where you plant your ideological flag, there are others nearby whose flag is just a bit distant or even on the other side of the world.

We will be gathering to find a moment of peace. Of compassion for ourselves, each other and the people we see as adversaries – whoever they are. So, we will not debate, we will not stake out positions, we will not engage in heated rhetoric. God knows there's plenty of opportunity for that. We will mark a sacred moment in time, a turning and a returning.

I hope to encourage a new understanding of our Rosh Hashanah mission: yes, we have all missed the mark and, yes, we all need to apologize and we all need to forgive. And, yes, there is plenty of stuff there to occupy us for hours on end. But, *this year*, let us gather to give ourselves an openness to a moment of peace, a moment of kindness *for ourselves and for each other*. Let us put down our swords and pick up our plowshares, tilling the ground for what I hope is a bumper crop of peace; peace which starts with each of us granting ourselves gentleness and understanding. We have lived through a very hard time and it is likely to get harder. We need some rest. No better place to get a moment of rest than in the midst of the mighty, sheltering redwoods.

Here's where those redwoods will be found:

- We meet at the **Lions Grove Group Picnic Area**. You can find it by going to the big parking lot next to the tennis courts. The pictures below show the sign and the path that lead to our New Year home.
- There will be a kiddush and we invite you to bring Challah, apples and honey and wine or grape juice. Your own cups, etc., would be great as well.
- We don't plan to share lunch but, I'm sure that, if you bring stuff, it will disappear.

Looking forward to what I think is the 29th year of our Rosh Hashanah tradition!

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Steve Einstein

