As I began writing this month’s article, I at first thought that Thanksgiving this year would mark an amazing milestone – 400 years since the very first Thanksgiving in Plymouth, MA. But I checked with the “Google Encyclopedia” and found out that the first Thanksgiving was observed in 1621. Oh well, this year is only the 399th anniversary of the meal the Pilgrims had with Wampanoag native American tribe.

Aside from the history, I did want to comment about the significance of giving thanks. How can we give thanks when our lives are still upended by the virus? How can we celebrate when we can’t return to our shul sanctuary? How can we gather with family when we are still required to wear masks and remain 6 feet apart?

As Jews, we’re used to this already. We’ve already gone through all the major Jewish holidays (Passover back in April, Shavuot in May, the High Holidays and Sukkot back in September and October). We got used to gathering over Zoom for seder and services and other meals and we’re nearly experts with the technology! So, doing Thanksgiving should be a piece of cake.

But, the idea that we should be thankful is at first disconcerting. We don’t seem to be in the mood to be thankful – until we actually spend a few moments and realize we have a lot for which to be thankful.

We are grateful to all the EMTs, doctors, nurses and scientists who are working around the clock with COVID patients in the hospital and in the lab seeking a vaccine. They are at times risking their lives so that our family members, friends and fellow Americans can be treated with care and compassion. They are working diligently so that a vaccine can be developed that will be proven to be effective and safe. Our hearts and prayers go out to them and they deserve our eternal gratitude.

We are grateful that we have support systems in place to which we can turn for love and help. Many of us are blessed with family at home or nearby; with close friends who check in on us; with our shul’s Chesed Committee.

A few weeks ago, when I was reading the newspaper, the sports section particularly, I came upon an article about a soccer team coached by Landon Donovan. Donovan is regarded as one of the greatest US soccer players of all time. He’s retired now and coaches a team from San Diego.

One of his players reported to Donovan that during the first half of the game a player for the other team made a homophobic insult directed at one of Donovan’s players. That player is openly gay. Donovan first asked both the referee and the other team’s coach to remove that player for the second half of the game. They declined.

Donovan spoke to his players about the incident during half time; and when the team returned to the field for the second half, they all “took a knee” and then left the field – forfeiting a playoff game that they were ahead in at the time. It’s reported that every one of Donovan’s players supported that decision.

When I read the article, I said to myself that I thought that the story should be the subject of my next article in the Shofar – because of the character shown by Donovan and his entire team. They each were clearly giving up something of value to make a public statement about what’s right and wrong; and hopefully their actions will have a positive effect on many others. They demonstrated integrity.

Then I started thinking about all of the people who on a daily basis demonstrate moral and ethical behavior that no one ever knows about it. That includes all of the people who wear masks during this pandemic, practice social distancing, stay at home and give up seeing loved ones. It also includes everyone who supports equal justice for everyone, support the LGBTQ communities, feed and care for the less fortunate and numerous other social justice activities. These people are heroes. They perform - Tikkun Olam. They improve our society and they repair the world – and we are all better off for knowing them regardless of whether or not we know of their specific actions.
Thanksgiving

May you have a very happy and meaningful Thanksgiving.

Rabbi Jonah Layman

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We hope that this Fall season finds you and your family in good health and feeling safe.

The Covid Pandemic has certainly emphasized now more than ever the need and importance to be part of a community. Shaare Tefila Membership Committee has continued to reach out and keep contact with our members. Whether by phone, emails or Zoom gatherings, we want to make sure that everyone stays connected and feels a part of our synagogue family.

Our Chavurah/Friendship groups have jump started their get-togethers on Zoom. Some meet weekly, bi-monthly or monthly. Chavurah members have shared feelings of joy, happiness, friendship and support when describing their experiences of their virtual gatherings.

Chavurah groups set up their own meeting times and themes. I myself participate in three Chavurah groups and we have had discussions about our favorite hobbies, vacation spots, family gathering, books, theater and concerts, to name a few.

At a recent Chavurah group, Anita Okrend shared her favorite hobby of “Bobbin Lace.” No one in the group had heard of this hobby so Anita taught us all about the art of Bobbin Lace. Below is a photo and a short explanation of her hobby, Enjoy. Anita has invited all of us in the group to come and learn her hobby in person when the pandemic is over, we are looking forward to that day!

Anita writes:

“In 2001, at the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair, I saw a woman making handmade lace, called Bobbin Lace. I was so enthralled by it, that I arranged for her to teach me how to do it, and it has become my favorite craft. Bobbin Lace is a hand weaving performed on a firm pillow with thread wound on small sticks called bobbins. Using the bobbins, the threads are passed over and under each other making stitches. The stitches are held in place with straight pins until the stitches are stable enough to be released from the pillow. It is amazing to see a beautiful fabric evolve from the simple act of passing one bobbin thread over another. I find it extremely relaxing and calming.”

Stay healthy, safe and connected to your Shaare Tefila community and family! Know that Rabbi Layman and your Shaare Tefila family care about you and your family. If you know anyone who is searching to be part of our wonderful synagogue please contact me or have him/her contact me at Cgrosberg58@gmail.com or phone at 301-452-5443.

Wishing you and your family a healthy and wonderful Thanksgiving!

CILLA GROSBERG
VP MEMBERSHIP
In a season of surveys being conducted, the one I am curious to do would ask you to rate on a scale of 1 to 10 how weary you are now. I might safely wager that 60% of you would rate yourselves at least a 6 on the scale, (not much of a betting gal). Weary, as in: drained of one’s energy, tapped out, exhausted in strength, pooped. The British say: knackered.

**If for some reason you have remained the picture of vim and vigor**, there is likely someone at N.I.H. that would love to study you, and ask for a DNA sample. How can it be otherwise? Even if we are coping reasonably well, doing so requires considerable energy to maintain equilibrium, to extend outwards towards others, to remain hopeful and grateful in the face of all that is uncertain every day.

In **Jewish time**, we have traveled through the month of Elul, engaged in the spiritual work of self-reflection, prayer, acts of asking for and giving forgiveness, and teshuvah, both repentance and returning home to ourselves. Towards who we want to be going forward in the New Year. If we do this work, we experience the “high” in High Holidays through Tishrei, and the series of Chagim arriving at Z’mahn Simchateynu, the Time of our Joy, during Sukkot through Simchat Torah which we have completed, but this year, doing it all as we have never had to do so before, providing us all with many glimpses into so much we may have previously taken for granted. May that awareness remain with us when, with Hashem’s help, we can be together in person again.

We are now in **Cheshvan**, the month singular for having no holidays other than Shabbat. (Makes for grateful congregational Rabbis.) Divine design indeed, our Jewish calendar. We need to re-enter ‘ordinary life’ when no holiday preparations are necessary. Just as the leaves have fallen, the ground fallow, so too we need some quiet time in the daily round to begin birthing the intentions we made for the New Year in the practice of how we show up in our lives. Engage in activities that revitalize the soul, because let’s face it, there’s a lot of tikkun work ahead of us in our country, and in the world. We can fortify ourselves with gratitude. Approaching ourselves and each other with chesed and rachamim, kindness and compassion, seems like a good direction. A sense of humor, dark chocolate and naps never hurt. Kislev will show up in November too.

**Susan** facilitates the monthly Rosh Chodesh Women’s Circle Discussion.

**Joel Friedman** will celebrate the 50th anniversary of becoming a Bar Mitzvah when he is called to the Torah on Shabbat, November 28, *Parshat Veyeiote*.

Now that the High Holiday season is over, let’s take care of some business and have some fun. First I hope that you all enjoyed our Zoom meeting “Live From The Hive.” I know I found it to be very enlightening.

Secondly, have you paid your Sisterhood dues for the current year yet? What are you waiting for, a personal invitation? Well here it is: Please join Sisterhood this year. We have many events planned and as a member, you can take advantage of discounted attendance options.

Coming up, on November 18 at 8 pm, Baltimore based farmer, Yosef Hertsmark, will speak about all kinds of grains and breads during his presentation - “From Growing the Grain(s) to Putting the Loaf on the Table.” This event is open to all women of Shaare Tefilia at no cost. Please RSVP in advance to relaybenns@gmail.com to get the Zoom link. This will be our last event that will be free for Sisterhood non-members.

Lastly, December 20, we will have a Bingo event via Zoom. You will need to be a Sisterhood member for the year 5781. RSVP to Jackie relaybenns@gmail.com.

**B’NAI MITZVAH AT SHAARE TEFILA**

Joel Friedman will celebrate the 50th anniversary of becoming a Bar Mitzvah when he is called to the Torah on Shabbat, November 28, *Parshat Veyeiote*.

Joel resides in Silver Spring with his wife, Sandy. They have an empty house, four adult children and two grandchildren. Because the kids have graduated, Joel no longer attends school. He and Sandy are Capitals fans and look forward to attending games again. Joel enjoys driving his convertible. He also is passionate about food (cooking, eating and feeding others) and music. And, of course, he loves a good “dad joke,” even if his kids don’t.

Joel thanks his original tutor, Gershon Levin z”l, and all who have helped him get to this milestone, particularly his father, Leon Friedman z”l, whom he lost in July 2019.

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**SPARKS IN OCTOBER**

**CONTRIBUTOR: SUSAN J. RUBENSTEIN**

**SISTERHOOD PRESIDENT**

**JACKIE BENN**

relaybenns@gmail.com

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(Continued from p.1)

While I think that what Landon Donovan and his team did was commendable and a great example for everyone, many of the real heroes are people who we never hear about and who go about their lives and constantly improve the lives of others.

There’s a famous quote (and I’m not really sure who said it) about integrity. “Integrity is doing the right thing when no one is watching.”

We should all be thankful that there are so many people who daily do random acts of kindness, do the right thing, and demonstrate what integrity is all about.
Our Chavaya program got back into a regular schedule once all the chagim (holidays) were over in October. In classes, all the children are currently spending time learning about the idea of a Sukkat Shalom/Shelter of Peace and what that means, first to them personally, and second how they can design that space during difficult times to create a sense of safety.

All the children received bags of supplies for Chavaya, so when they meet online they have what they need for the hands-on learning they will do together. Everyone from K-11th grade received his/her own whiteboard, dry-erase marker & eraser, a pencil, scissors, markers and a glue stick. Children in K-5th grade also received crayons and children in 6th-11th grade received color pencils. There were also special supplies for the Kitah Alef (K/1st gr) & Kitah Bet (2nd/3rd gr) classes for Sukkat Shalom studies, including fabric & fabric markers, shrinky dink plastic sheets and bottles of glycerin & dish soap.

By the time you read this our 3rd-7th grade students will be working with their Hebrew tutors for one-on-one, weekly sessions. The curriculum, centered around learning to read and chant t’filot/prayers, has been updated this year to include apps that have games to supplement what the child is studying; the program was developed by our friends at Torah Aura Publications, and the apps are available on all computer and handheld device operating systems.

B’Shalom,
Babette
Shaare Tefila and Kaledeiscope Comedy
Host
Christmas Eve Virtual Comedy Show
"Jewish Hams telling Jokes: A Kosher Style Comedy Night"

- A great evening of laughs and comedy by professional A+ comedians.
- When: Thursday, December 24, 2020; 8:00 pm to 9:00 pm
- Enjoy top comedians in the intimate and cozy setting of your home.
- Invite your family, friends and co-workers to join in.
- With our Zoom show you can invite guests from anywhere in the country!
- Comedian line up, details of the show and sign up instructions to follow.

REOPENING AT SHAARE TEFILA
CONTRIBUTORS: PERRY SANDLER, PRESIDENT
JONAH LAYMAN, RABBI
JONATHAN COHEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Since March of this year, Shaare Tefila, like many communities, has dealt with the Coronavirus pandemic. Saying this has been a challenge, would be an understatement. However, it is a challenge that our community has taken head on. With Zoom services, Virtual Comedy Nights, Chavurot and Sisterhood remotely, and High Holy Days from home, Shaare Tefila has continued to answer the needs of its congregants. As some of you may be aware, Governor Larry Hogan recently announced that Maryland would be moving into Phase III. However, the individual counties of the state were still permitted to have more restrictive rules. Montgomery County has been one of the those counties, but recently stated that it would begin loosening the restrictions regarding in-person activities of religious organizations. As such, the Reopening Committee of the synagogue met to discuss the possibility of reopening and hosting in-person services and events. It was the unanimous opinion of the committee that Shaare Tefila should continue to host services and events remotely via Zoom. While the spiritual needs of our congregation are paramount, likewise, the health and safety of our congregation is as well.

Our community will continue to reassess the situation in the near future and use sound judgment regarding the possibility of in-person gatherings. For right now, however, we feel this is the most prudent and responsible course of action. May you continue to stay safe.
The Shofar

MEN’S DISCUSSION GROUP ON ZOOM
Wednesday, November 11 at 10:00 am
Arnie Greenland will lead a discussion on Social Media
All Men Are Invited

MORNING MINYAN
ON ZOOM
SUNDAY, MONDAY AND THURSDAY
AT 8:45 AM

WOMEN’S ROCH CHODESH CIRCLE
LED BY: SUSAN RUBENSTEIN
CLICK HERE FOR THE ZOOM LINK

Meeting Time Begins at 4:00 pm
Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan - Sunday, November 1
Meeting Time Begins at 3:00 pm
Rosh Chodesh Kislev - Sunday, November 22
Rosh Chodesh Tevet - Sunday, December 27
Rosh Chodesh Shevat - Sunday, January 24
Rosh Chodesh Adar - Sunday, February 21
Rosh Chodesh Nisan - Sunday, March 21
Rosh Chodesh Iyyar - Sunday, April 25
Rosh Chodesh Sivan - Sunday, May 23

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

NOVEMBER
November 1: Women’s Rosh Chodesh Circle - Chodesh Cheshvan
November 5: Shaare Tefila Social - Coffee Hour
November 7: Havdalah Experience
November 12: Shaare Tefila Social - Happy Hour
November 18: Sisterhood Event - “From Growing the Grain(s) to Putting the Loaf on the Table.”
November 22: Women’s Rosh Chodesh Circle - Chodesh Kislev
November 22: Makers & Bakers

DECEMBER
December 3: Shaare Tefila Social - Coffee Hour
December 18: Shaare Tefila Social - Happy Hour
December 10: Chanukah First Candle
December 20: Sisterhood “Bingo”
December 24: “Christmas Eve Virtual Comedy Show”
December 27: Women’s Rosh Chodesh Circle - Chodesh Tevet

JOIN US
We are very grateful to our Shaare Tefila Community for your generosity during our “Season of Tikun Olam.” We are heartened by your response to our call for donations three months in a row to three worthy organizations. Over 123 pounds of toiletries, food items, laundry pods, toilet paper and plastic cutlery were donated to the Rainbow Place Shelter in Rockville. In addition, checks totaling $528 were delivered to the director of the shelter as well. How fantastic is that?

The Social Action Committee is very pleased to announce that thanks to your generosity and kindness, Shaare Tefila has the longest-running relationship with the Rainbow Place Shelter of any of our other facilities like this. This is our tenth year, and we are proud of our commitment to this organization and its goals.

Many thanks to those of you who took the time and extra effort to participate in this project. In these days of the pandemic, nothing seems easy, but Shaare Tefila’s efforts are to be applauded.

We look forward to our final project of the season, donating to the Interfaith Works, located in downtown Silver Spring.

Our monetary donations and contributions in-kind to National Center for Children and families, Rainbow Shelter and Interfaith Works were all very much appreciated, especially in this time of unprecedented need.

The Social Action Committee plans to continue to offer opportunities for giving as well as programming, albeit virtual, in the upcoming months. Toward that end, we have joined the JCRC’s MD Social Action Network. The JCRC (Jewish Community Relations Council) has created a comprehensive response and “toolkit” on social justice issues, particularly racial justice. In forming this new Network, it has brought together Social Action chairs from synagogues across the area. I am honored to be part of the steering committee for this Network, to brainstorm ideas and create an agenda. The group will provide us with resources. Each synagogue can program in its own unique way and can take advantage of collaborating with other synagogue partners in the Network. It’s a win-win situation for all of us.

At our last meeting, we discussed that there are many pathways into learning about and affecting change on the subject of racial justice. There’s education, food insecurity, housing, etc. As a group, we decided to first address education. Our committee will be hearing from an expert on racial (in)equity in education. I look forward to sharing what I learn and bringing related programming to our congregation very soon.
Shaare Tefila Cemetery Plots for Sale at Mount Lebanon Cemetery

Shaare Tefila offers an option for Jewish burial with two sections of available plots at Mount Lebanon Cemetery in Adelphi, MD which are owned by our congregation. Whether you opt for a marker or monument, our cemetery’s prices are highly competitive with plots starting as low as $940. In addition, 100% of all proceeds from the sale will go to Shaare Tefila Congregation. Please contact, Jonathan Cohen, Executive Director, for more details.

SCHOLARSTREAM

AN INITIATIVE OF THE RA, USCJ, JTS, AND ZIEGLER

Hidden Histories and Untold Stories

Join JTS scholars as they uncover the hidden context around biblical figures and important eras in Jewish history.

When: Tuesdays at 8:00 pm

Nov. 10: Dr. David Fishman “How religious pre-Holocaust Eastern European Jewry actually was-or wasn’t.”

Nov. 17: Dr. Alan Cooper “Why we stopped caring about Moses’s descendants.”

Dec. 1: Dr. Sarah Wolf “How foreign the beit midrash would feel to the early Rabbis.”

Dec. 8: Dr. Amy Kalmanofsky “What the Bible really had against Jezebel.”

JTS Registration Link: The lectures are free.

enter code “OlneyFall20” when you register.
The Shofar

Tributes
September 1, 2020 - September 30, 2020
Thank You to Our Donors

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HAPPY THANKSGIVING