

From the Rabbi's Desk

July-August 2018

As I'm writing this, summer has barely started. There are still a few more important things to go before my "summer" can truly begin. By the time you read this, we will have celebrated the B'nei Mitzvah of Spencer Haynes and Owen Grant. The last student from this class, Alexis Fenton, will become a Bat Mitzvah on October 13. But, even before that, our emissary, Ziv Lavi, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on August 4.

Summer is a time to slow down, take a breath, and refocus. For me, it is time to focus on the coming year. I look forward with excitement to some new things that are just beginning to take shape. As we work out the details, I want to just give you a taste so that you can look forward as well.

As we did last year, our spiritual preparations for the High Holy Days will be enhanced by the use of our new prayer book, Mishkan Halev – Prayers for S'lichot and the Month of Elul. S'lichot will occur a little early this year, on Saturday evening, September 1. We'll change over our Torah mantles to the High Holy Day white at that time. Rosh Hashanah begins Sunday evening Sept. 9, and Yom Kippur, Tuesday evening Sept 18. I'm hungry for break-the-fast already!

I'm looking forward to resuming our First Fridays in the fall. Friday, October 5 will be extremely special as we honor the years of dedication of our outgoing religious school co-administrators, Barbara Kallan and Marc Goldsmith as well as many of our dedicated teachers. Make sure to join us to honor them for all that they have done for us.

First Fridays will be just a little different in the upcoming year. Starting this fall, we will begin First Friday evenings with Shir Shabbat at 5:30 P.M. This will be an interactive Kabbalat Shabbat for all ages – expect a lot of singing, clapping, instruments,

and maybe even dancing. All the ruach (spirit) will make it especially friendly for everyone. It is the perfect way to set the mood for Shabbat dinner at 6pm. Have Shabbat dinner with friends and make some new ones – enjoy good food, take in the Shabbat spirit, and don't worry about the dishes! Following dinner will be a shorter evening Shabbat service beginning at 7 P.M. followed by oneg. First Fridays are the crossroads of our community. Meet us there.

Lastly, as I've mentioned several times in my weekly messages, please mark your calendars for October 26-28. That weekend, we will have two very special guests from Israel, Rabbi Or Zohar and his wife Feliza Bascara-Zohar. Based in the Galilee, they have been sharing their original sacred music for over a decade, using it as a powerful tool for bringing people together and promoting a more pluralistic and progressive society in Israel. Rabbi Or Zohar is a musician, teacher of Judaism and Kabbalah, and community builder in the Israeli Reform Movement. He serves as the rabbi of two Reform congregations in the Galilee: Ma'alot Tivon and Misgav Regional Council. Feliza Zohar is a singer-songwriter, song leader, artist and choreographer. There will be programming with Rabbi Or and Feliza throughout the weekend including a special Shabbat service on Friday evening, concert Saturday night, and teaching on Saturday and Sunday including working with our religious school students. Don't miss this. Put all of these things on your calendar. We'll remind you as well.