



High Holidays 2006

Hard to believe, but this year's High Holidays will soon be upon us. We've had a busy year, and the coming weeks and months promise to bring new challenges and opportunities.

We hope you'll consider joining us for services again. The schedule is as follows:

Friday, September 22	Erev Rosh Hashana	7:00 p.m.
Saturday, September 23	First day of Rosh Hashana	9:30 a.m.
	Rosh Hashana children's service	10:30 a.m.
Sunday, September 24	Second day Rosh Hashana	10:00 a.m.
Sunday, October 1	Kol Nidre	7:00 p.m.
Monday, October 2	Yom Kippur	9:30 a.m.
	Yom Kippur young adults' service	10:30 a.m.
	Concluding service (Ne-ilah)	6:00 p.m.

In order to keep pace with the DJC's growth as a community and an organization, we've set the fee schedule for 2006-07 as follows:

- \$450 Family (*two adults and children up to the age of 22*)
- \$225 Individual/Single parent (*One-adult households and children up to the age of 22*)
- \$125 Senior 65 and older
- \$100 Full-time student 23 and older
- \$75 One service: evening or day

Watch your mail box for this year's registration package, which features more helpful information, and is also available on our web site at djctoronto.com/participate/joinus.php.

Mark Zaret, President, DJC

Editor's note: We're also looking for children and adults who would like to participate in this year's children's service on Rosh Hashana. If there's someone in your house – or in your life – who would like to do a reading, please contact Diane Wise at wisetill@rogers.com.

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Note from Rabbi Eli: A rose by any other name...



As some of you may have heard, I marked my ordination as a rabbi by beginning to use a new name, Eli Rose Kukla. Like many things Jewish it is both something old and something new. Eli is a childhood nickname which I decided to reclaim as I feel like it suits me better. Rose is a new name, as in this next phase of my life as a rabbi and social justice activist I hope to have both gentleness and a few thorns! Thank you for supporting me in these changes and please let me know if you have any questions. L'Shalom.



The Month of Av: A Time of Grief and Renewal

In the middle of summer, when the days are at their longest and the sun is the fiercest, we are actually marking the darkest time in the Jewish calendar. *Tisha b'Av*, the 9th of Av, which we observed on August 2, is the Jewish day of mourning when we grieve for all the violence and oppression we have experienced as individuals and as a people.

Modern psychologists who study grief remark on how Jewish mourning rituals, which were developed over a thousand years, match today's understandings of the grieving process and the most effective ways to recover from loss. People must be encouraged to grieve. But after grieving we need to be supported, and expected to gradually return to life.

During most of the Jewish year the *haftarah*, prophetic reading, is linked to the Torah portion of the week. But in the three weeks leading up to Tisha B'Av we read special *haftarot* (prophetic readings) that are not connected to the Torah cycle, instead they center around preparing for the fast day by remembering the human capacity for violence. After Tisha B'Av there are seven weeks known as "Sabbaths of Comfort" when we read special *haftarot*, with messages of comfort. In the weeks leading up to *Tisha B'Av* each of us is asked to feel the depth of our own pain, to acknowledge all of the loss that we have experienced. However, in these days and weeks following *Tisha B'Av* we must respond to suffering with comfort. Comfort asks us first and foremost to reach out to other people's pain and be attentive to their needs.

Right now in the face of the tragic events in the Middle East it is easy to understand the need for collective weeping. But the structure of this season asks us not only to mourn our own losses, but also to comfort others. What would the world look like if we really believed that our own pain can be healed by comforting others? Can we imagine what it would be like to respond to our own experiences of violence, with empathy for other people's suffering?



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This seven week cycle of comfort that we are now in is a path that leads us all the way up to Rosh Hashana, the new year. The renewal of Rosh Hashana is directly connected to the destructions of Tisha B'Av. Destruction – if nothing else – creates space and where there is space there is the room to build. In these weeks leading up to the Rosh Hashana, may each of us have the vision to see all the expansive possibilities to build a world of radical empathy in the new year!

– *Rabbi Eli Rose Kukla*

Rabbi Eli will be available for appointments on a more regular basis after High Holidays, on Wednesday evenings and Thursday mornings. She would like to meet and accommodate all who want an appointment, so please submit your requests as soon as possible.

If you'd like to schedule an appointment with Rabbi Eli, please contact Kathy by e-mail at info@djctoronto.com or by phone at 416-580-6303.

Called to read: Adult B'nai Mitzvot

Do you have a yearning to have the Bar or Bat Mitzvah you never got to have? To enhance your sense of ownership of Judaism? To experience the enrichment of Torah study? To build the ritual skill level amongst our congregants for future DJC services? To learn to chant Torah (even if you *can't* sing!)? This year the DJC is offering congregants the opportunity to be a part of an adult B'nai Mitzvah group that will study with Rabbi Eli in preparation for being called to the Torah on Sat., June 2, 2007. Participants will meet monthly, on Thursday evenings between 7 and 8:30 pm, from November 2006 until May 2007. With books and tapes in hand, we will practice (where possible, in pairs) between sessions. Our first meeting – to define the vision and provide feedback – will be on Thursday, Oct. 5 at 7 pm. It is essential that group members have some ability to read Hebrew (i.e. sound out letters but not necessarily comprehend). If you intend to come on Oct. 5, or if you have any questions, please e-mail Temi at temi@judaicamaven.ca to ensure notification of where participants will meet.



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Update on Eastminster United Church

Editor's note: Recently there has been much discussion, in the media and elsewhere, about the position of the United Church with respect to the situation in the Middle East. Here is an edited excerpt from a letter written to the DJC to clarify the church's position. The full text is available at djctoronto.com/communicate/newsletter.php.

“Recently there have been concerns regarding the United Church and its policy towards Israel. Specifically, (comments) made by Rev. Lawrence Pushee created much confusion about United Church policy towards Israel.

“The United Church does not have any official policy towards Israel, although it did create a document in 2003 called *Ethical Investment for Peace in Palestine and Israel*. In an article carried in the National Post on August 6th Rev. Dr. Jim Sinclair, General Secretary, General Council, United Church of Canada says that this has been a regrettable moment in the life of our church.

“The Danforth Jewish Circle has enjoyed a long and friendly relationship with Eastminster United Church. I feel that the Church has taken the appropriate action in disciplining Rev. Pushee and believe that all members of the DJC should feel comfortable and welcome to attend our upcoming services at Eastminster.”

More information is also available at www.united-church.ca/gco/060808.shtm



Mosaic Outdoor Club of Ontario

Enjoy being active? Love the outdoors? Want to meet other like-minded people? Then Mosaic is for you!

Mosaic Outdoor Club of Ontario is a volunteer-driven, not-for-profit organization. It's a community of Jewish people who embrace nature, who participate in activities, and who love to explore the great outdoors.

What type of activities do we do? We hike the beautiful Bruce Trail and Oak Ridges Moraine; we take city walks along the ravines; we play tennis indoors and out; we go cycling along the Humber or out in the country; we ski the stunning cross country trails of southern Ontario; we snowshoe and skate; we plant trees; we enjoy bowling; we feature running clinics; we test our archery skills; we play baseball; and we dance and sing. And if that isn't enough, we usually get together for coffee and socializing afterwards.

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MOCO also hosts fabulous weekend getaways up north summer and winter, complete with bonfires, singsongs and other fun outdoor activities. Our MOPACK club organizes amazing canoe and camping trips to spectacular sites throughout Ontario. Mosaic also has chapters in many other North American cities, and the annual Labour Day event is a fabulous fun-filled weekend with opportunities to meet others who love the outdoors just like you!

Check out our website at www.mosaictoronto.org. You'll quickly learn how easy it is to sign up for our free weekly newsletter that lets you know what events are coming up. Better still, why not join our club? Membership is open to Jewish adults 19 years of age and older. Children may participate in specified events when accompanied by an adult. Mosaic is for singles, couples and the young-at-heart.

And (almost) finally...

Please note our new phone numbers, and update your records accordingly:

DJC: 416-580-6303
Jewish Studies: 416-580-1233
Rabbi Eli Kukla: 416-580-7011

Sizing up the future: Where do we go from here?

The last newsletter contained a short note about the DJC Planning day, basically to let everyone know that it happened and that it was a huge success. *(Please also see the pictures from the day, posted at djctoronto.com/participate/future_planning/pages/fp06-01.php)* More than 70 members of our community spent the day together on Sunday, June 4th to share their thoughts and feelings about the past, present and future of the DJC. In this issue we'll tell you more about what was discussed during the day, what we believe we learned, and what we can do about it.

The Questions

Expertly guided by Diane Abbey-Livingstone and illustrated by Sara Heppner-Waldston, we explored four questions:

- What do you appreciate most about the DJC and want to preserve?
- What do you want to see in the future?
- What resources do we have to draw upon?
- What barriers will we need to overcome to succeed?

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The Four Questions

The discussions were instructive, open, and on occasion, quite powerful for participants. One thing is certain: the DJC plays an important role in many of our lives, and caring for it and preserving it is a high priority for many, many people. What is the best way for us to do this? This is our goal. The answers to the four questions tell an important story or perhaps set of stories about who we are as a community and where we are headed. By listening to each other and by adding our own voices to the discussion, we will stay in touch with our evolving needs and continue to make fitting choices that reflect what we collectively wish and believe.

The Answers

1. What do you appreciate most about the DJC and want to preserve
2. What do you want to see in the future?

For this exercise the group began by generating the set of categories you see in the chart below and indicated preferences using coloured dots (each person had 5 dots). Since the graphic is a little hard to read, here is a summary of the top interests:

- Leadership (including Rabbi) (21)
- Rituals, community support & loss/mourning (18)
- Keep DJC values – inclusiveness & diversity (14)
- Processes to keep young adults involved (9)
- Lifecycle changes (10)
- Spirituality of focus (9)
- Non-religious social activities (7)
- Tikun Olam (8)

3. What resources do we have to draw upon?

Answers to this and the following question are drawn from afternoon discussion groups organized around the top future interests. There were many, many resources identified! Here are the ones mentioned most frequently:

- Diverse and talented DJC membership
- The rabbi
- Our cantor and musicianship
- The DJC school, teachers, leadership and education committee
- Social workers among the members (a skill base to draw on for various forms of leadership and support)
- The liturgy and rituals committee
- The website and newsletter



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- The various religious and secular events like Friday night services, pot luck dinners, fund-raisers

4. What barriers will we need to overcome to succeed?

- Money (this was raised in the context of particular interests and initiatives)
- Diversity uncertainty regarding community needs
- Inaccessibility of our rabbi
- Hard to depend on volunteers – need lay leader/organizer
- Time – people are busy
- Space
- Lack of a clear community strategy
- Difficult to get things started

Advice, Issues and Actions

Each discussion group created a set of recommendations for achieving their purpose. These are in the summary notes and are well worth reading. The board is carefully sifting through these and will come forward with proposals to the membership over the coming months. In general, the advice is to:

- Preserve the informal and spiritual core of the DJC; this is number one!
- Resist pressures to formalize or bureaucratize ourselves
- Draw on lay and member leadership to accomplish our goals, working in concert with the rabbi who brings the religious and spiritual element
- Stay inclusive

Look forward to initiatives from the board that will help us to achieve the ends that have been identified as priorities, and please, join in with your ideas, time and hopes to help make the DJC the kind of spiritual community that you want to be part of for years to come.

Deadline for next issue: September 8

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