

Elul

The Heart of B'nai Shalom

Tapestry #12 Elul: Shalom Bayit/Shalom

Peace in the Home-Peace in the World

9/16/05 Rabbi Amy R. Perlin Shabbat Ki Tetze

Sermon for the first Shabbat with our new tapestries while the artists Bracha and Menachem Lavee are present in our sanctuary

When

we wrap ourselves in a tallit we take on the commandments and wrap ourselves in the Torah. If we imagined wrapping ourselves in tapestries as we prayed, what would be the tallit we would wrap ourselves in? The Sanctuary Beautification committee wonderfully decided that we wanted our TBS Jewish values surrounding and enveloping us, as the values of our congregation and our commitment to living them and teaching them, are the cornerstone of who we are as a congregation.

We

knew we needed twelve 4X8 foot tapestries to help absorb sound practically, and to add color and richness to our blank white walls, aesthetically. We imagined windows to the Jewish world we love and dream about.

So many Jews and artists would have done the 12 tribes – after all it worked for Chagall!~ Well, we incorporated the 12 months as our organizing principle, but the heart of Bracha and Menachem's design were the values of TBS… the heart of TBS, and Bracha brilliantly realized in listening to how we live as a temple that the months of the year come alive for us in our observance of holidays and life cycles in our own unique B'nai Shalom ways. The Heart of our Congregation is our Values.

- Pursuing

Justice/ Being a Community of Prayer (High Holy days) Tishre – You will hear more from me about that one on Rosh Hashanah

- Welcoming the Stranger (Sukkot/Simchat Torah) Heshvan has no holidays so we shared the wealth of Tishre with her. (Mar)

- Mazon-Feeding the Hungry and Thanksgiving Hoda’ah and our wonderful relationship with Abiding Presence(Kislev)

- Dedication to Temple and the Jewish Home (Chanukat HaBayit) (Tevet, as Chanukah spreads over two months)

- Tikkun Olam and Care for the Environment (Tu B’shvat) (Shevat)

- Simcha/Joy (Purim and all of our life cycles where we lift the cup of wine) (Adar)

- L’dor Vador/Telling the Story of the Jewish People and the importance of reading the Torah … (Pesach) (Nissan)

- Love for Israel/The Importance of Memory ‐Yom Ha’atzmaut and Yom HaShoah (Iyar)

- You shall teach your children Torah/The light of Torah (Shavuot and Confirmation) (Sivan)

- Love
for America/ Independence Day (Tammuz) even including our Pentagon as
our 9/11 reminder and choosing the Statue of Liberty instead of the
Liberty Bell because she was the symbol so many of our grandparents
embraced as freedom when they arrived on the boats from Europe.

- Keeping Shabbat (V’shamru congregation) (Av), but also remembering Tisha B’av

- Shalom
Bayit/Shalom in the World- Peace in the Jewish Home and Peace in the
World through Love of our fellow human beings—Elul the Month of Love

Awesome, good and beautiful is this eternal teaching!

Each month, I will talk and teach about one of the tapestries.

We are tonight on the 13th day of Elul:

1-Elul

is the month of love – “I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine.” Ani ’dodi, v’dodi li… originally the relationship in Song of Songs between God and the People of Israel. Today, the embodiment of the loving relationship as they stand under the chuppah.

As a

congregation we embrace all who love and make it possible for every Jewish couple to sanctify their love under our chuppah ignoring prejudice and discrimination that may plague our state and country at this time. So we changed the original design from man and woman to truly embrace a value that we cherish.

Next Sat night,

I will wrap Adam and Jennifer in a tallit symbolic of the Jewish home they create together. The original chuppah was a tallit. For to have a truly Jewish home, one must embrace the Torah and the values and the teachings of our tradition symbolized by the tallit.

2-Elul is the month when we prepare for the High Holy days and traditionally have blown the shofar each day for the entire month.

3- Where

does Peace reside? In the human heart. We were each given all the peace we need in our world. We will have peace when we all share our share of peace as our primary task as humans. When every family and every heart puts peace first, it will be. Love and peace go hand in hand as our Haftarah this week (quoted on your service folder teaches:

Isaiah 54:10

Though the mountains may depart and the hills be removed,

My love shall never depart from you,

and My covenant of peace shall not be removed – says the One who loves you, the Eternal. (Haftarat Ki Tetze)

The

olive branch so close to the shofar reminds us that our tradition teaches that our final redemption, the Messianic age, will be heralded with the shofar's blasts proclaiming a world and lifetime of peace.

Our

Torah doesn't want to come to the end of Deuteronomy, just as we are sometimes reluctant to come to the end of a year. But the tapestries remind us that time surrounds us with values and holy days, celebrations, life cycles, joys and sorrows personally and communally. We live in a circle of time that we create together.

This

Shabbat of Elul, may we plant the seeds of love and peace that will bear the flowers of the promise of lasting peace and love. May we envision the children of tomorrow inheriting a world far better for our efforts than the world we see on CNN and read about in the Washington Post. From town to city, couple to couple, family to family, beginning right here in our sanctuary, may we renew our covenant of peace and love with God, as God renews the covenant each day. May we spend the next year renewing our values as a congregation, and may each one of us find them to be the guides and inspiration of our lives.