THE JEWISH CONGREGATION OF SAN GERONIMO VALLEY

גַּן הַלֵּב Gan HaLev

Garden of the Heart

NEWSLETTER

September-October 2008 | Elul 5768- Tishrei 5769
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Becoming a Part of Gan Halev

Gan HaLev offers individuals and families an opportunity to celebrate and explore Judaism in ways that are meaningful in their lives today. This year we invite and encourage you to become more involved in Gan HaLev. As a congregation, we come together to celebrate Jewish life: to worship, educate, socialize, explore, and to share our religious and cultural heritage. There are many reasons and ways to be connected with Gan HaLev. In this article, I have tried to give you a brief description of some of what we do. Please consider ways in which Gan HaLev can enrich your life by joining Gan HaLev and finding opportunities to connect and participate.

High Holy Days: The Jewish New Year is approaching and we will soon be preparing for the New Year, 5769. We begin our High Holidays with the celebration of Rosh Hashanah at sundown on September 29. It marks the beginning of the 10-day period of prayer, reflection, forgiveness, and celebration that culminates with Yom Kippur, beginning October 8. This 10-day period is referred to as the Days of Awe. This year we are delighted that Rabbi Daniel Kohn will be leading our High Holiday Services. Rabbi Kohn, along with his wife and three children, live in Mill Valley, and have participated in various community events in Marin over the years. Rabbi Kohn has served as spiritual leader and Jewish educator for more than 15 years both here and on the East Coast. Most recently here in the Valley, Rabbi Kohn led a discussion of his latest book, *Emerging Jewish* . . . survival guide for people thinking about converting to Judaism; a manual for people emerging from this very complicated but exciting process. On Saturday, September 6, at 10:00 am Rabbi Kohn will be leading a Shabbat service, mainly for adults and teens, to help us get ready for the High Holidays. "Preparing Spiritually for the High Holidays" will be in Fairfax at a member's home, and a Potluck brunch will follow the service. Help us to welcome Rabbi Kohn as we open ourselves to the New Year.

Celebration and Observance: Throughout the year we plan to celebrate our traditional holidays and Shabbats at the Community Center as well as at family homes. Gan HaLev's warm and inviting gatherings are a wonderful way to connect with others, to enjoy a Shabbat feast and celebrate the peace of the holiday. We offer music, children's services, and food for every occasion. Everyone is welcome

Jewish Education: Our Sunday School, Penina Maier Jewish School, is beginning our 13th year, and focuses on embracing Jewish culture & music, learning Hebrew and sharing traditions and holidays. We offer classes every Sunday for Kindergarten through Middle School. Once again offering Kinder Class once a month led by Renee Goddard, for children 5 and under with their parents, which will focus on movement and music and an early introduction to Jewish studies. Open House for all age students, new and continuing, and their families will be September 7th at 10AM. Regular classes will begin on September 14.

Community Service and Social Activism: Through our grant from Marin Community Foundation/Faiths Initiative, we are continuing to connect our Jewish calendar and the relationship of our holidays with activism and social justice. For each holiday during the year, we will provide a service and/or an action appropriate to giving back to our community. This year we plan to host the 3rd San Geronimo Valley Interfaith Thanksgiving service on November 23, at the Community Center, along with our neighbors from St. Cecilia's Catholic Church, the San Geronimo Valley Community Presbyterian Church, and Spirit Rock. We look forward to a joyous Thanksgiving celebration and continuing our Valley partnerships and projects which support our traditions and values.

Please call me or any of the other Board members whose names and phone numbers are on P.2 of this Newsletter to explore ways that you might become more involved in Gan HaLev.

With best wishes for a joyous and sweet New Year,
Laurie Chorna