



EMANUEL CONGREGATION

Brotherhood

An affiliate of the North American Federation of Temple Brotherhoods

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News From the Brotherhood

Once again, our thoughts turned to celebrating Shavuot with services and the Confirmation of our 10th graders in May. Mazel Tov to all the confirmands. The Brotherhood is very proud and happy each year to present kiddush cups to the confirmands as a token of our feelings and to welcome them to the leadership roles we are certain they will now be filling.

Last year, in this column, we looked at Shavuot as *Zman Matan Torateinu* the Season of the Gift of Torah. We rededicate ourselves to our holy covenant through Torah study and vow to live in a way that reflects that spark of holiness within us.

However, on Shavuot we do more than study Torah. We also read the Book of Ruth. We learn how Ruth refused to leave Naomi's side. Although Ruth was a Moabite, and, like Naomi, was widowed and poor, she declared her commitment to Naomi, to Israel, and to Judaism. When she married Naomi's son, she dedicated herself to his community and refused to renounce that commitment, even when given the opportunity. Although the story ends happily, with Ruth marrying Boaz, she and Naomi are subjected to harsh conditions and treatment both in Moab and in Israel.

At Shavuot, the confirmands are not only given their first opportunity to voice their acceptance of Torah and Judaism as key leaders in the Jewish community, like Ruth, they also declare their connection to that community.

We men and women of Emanuel must remember that we also may choose to support our families, our connection to Israel, and the Jewish community everywhere.

It is important to support the Jewish community as a whole, but we must also remember that there are smaller communities that need to band together. Through this uniting, we can often give more to the larger community than if we do not recognize and use the smaller community. Although we, the leadership of the Emanuel Brotherhood, have many times emphasized the contributions the men of Emanuel can make by taking advantage of our own unique perspectives and talents, there are other communities that can join as smaller groups to do the same for the larger community.

Some of these groups reflect the life cycles that we will all pass through. In addition to the older youth of Emanuel, with whom we celebrated at Shavuot, there is also the young adult community, the religious school parents, the empty nesters, the senior community, and the elderly. Every one of these special communities has opportunities to contribute their unique insights to the Jewish community and to the other smaller communities as well.

The elderly remind us that we have a history rich with accomplishment and impact. The senior community is fresh from a lifetime of experience that can now be applied to problems that Emanuel faces. Each group needs to reach up and reach back to each other to enhance the quality of life for the other groups.

We must rededicate ourselves. We must strive to find the holiness inside and our commitment to each other.

David Fleischman and Barry Glaser
Brotherhood Co-Presidents