

A Rabbinic Perspective *By Rabbi Seymour Rosenbloom*

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Shabbat Across AJ



Last month, I wrote of the challenge Dr. Ismar Schorsch, the Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, has placed before us, to work harder at “transforming acts of religious duty into songs of spiritual joy.”

This month, with our new *Shabbat* initiative, *Shabbat Across AJ*, we are giving you a concrete way to do that.

Just before *Hanukkah*, you received a wonderful gift from the synagogue. It is a beautiful CD called

Kabbalat Shabbat at Congregation Adath Jeshurun with the music of our Friday night *Kabbalat Shabbat* Service presented by **Hazzan Howard K. Glantz**. It is soulful and passionate and a project of love by the Hazzan. It is representative of the spirit and music of our *Shabbat Rockin' Eve* Services, which are accompanied by a full rock band; however, most of the melodies are used, *a capella*, at AJ each Friday night as the Hazzan leads us in worship to introduce the *Shabbat* into our midst.

Our CD, *Kabbalat Shabbat at Congregation Adath Jeshurun*, is the stem of *Shabbat Across AJ*. You are the flowers. We would like you to listen to it and start to learn it. Download it to your computer or iPod and play it while you are working. Slip it into the car CD player and listen while you are driving (it will be much less distracting than being on the phone).

Then, once a month, we invite you to *Shabbat Across AJ*, involving all members and all age groups. Don't be afraid to bring your small children. They won't disturb the service. Their presence makes it more joyous.

By learning the service on your own, getting used to the music at your own pace, you will begin to be able to appreciate and participate in the service. Moreover, the *siddur* we use on Friday night, *Friday Night Alive!* has not only a Hebrew text and translation, but a transliterated text as well to aid those who have difficulty reading the Hebrew original.

By coming together for *Shabbat* in a community from all across AJ, these evenings will be an extra special expression of the *Sabbath* and AJ spirit.

Every *Shabbat Across AJ* evening will lead into either a dinner, or cold *hors d'oeuvres*, such as chips and salsa, *crudités* and dips, and beverages, so we can socialize a little more before going our individual ways for *Shabbat*.

The first *Shabbat Across AJ* will be on Friday evening, January 13, 2006, which will be followed by dinner for those who have made reservations. The other four programs for the balance of this year will be on February 10, March 3 (*Shabbat Across America* dinner), April 7 and May 5, 2006. Make a note of them and plan to be with us.

The rabbis teach us that prayer is “*avodah shebalev*,” the service of the heart. Let's use this opportunity to make our prayer heart-felt and joyous, “transforming acts of religious duty into songs of spiritual joy.”

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