

A Green Shabbat Candle for a Greener Earth: The Shabbat Eco-Candle



Something new has been added to our Friday night services in the Chapel. For years, every *Shabbat* evening, we have put out a tray of candles so that individuals who are coming to *Shabbat* services will have an opportunity to light the *Shabbat* candles before beginning their *Shabbat* worship.

Recently, some of you may have noticed a sign next to the candles. In green lettering it announced "*Shabbat* Eco-Candle — A renewable light for a renewable world."

These are special candles. They are made from soybeans grown in the United States and are a renewable source of energy that supports the American farmer. And they are a first step in an effort launched recently by the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs called "*Shomrei Ha'aretz*," or "Stewards of the Land." It is also endorsed by the Women's League for Conservative Judaism. AJ has been asked to be a pilot congregation for this project, and with our long record of concern for ecology and the environment, we will be a leading force in the effort, involving many groups in our congregation.

The *Shabbat* Eco-candles burn clean, with no environmental pollution, whereas more traditional candles, made of paraffin and wax, are believed to leave a sooty residue that may be imperceptible, but can nonetheless be harmful.

Right now, the candles are available only as tea candles, which come in a recyclable metal container with a lead-free wick. Eventually they will be available in the more traditional *Shabbat* size format. These candles do burn for three hours, and meet the *halachic* requirements for *Shabbat* candles. They are available in boxes of 18 candles, at \$5.00 per box. Contact the synagogue office to purchase one or more boxes.

The *Shomrei Ha'aretz* program has four prongs. In addition to the soy *Shabbat* candles, congregations are encouraged to install a solar *Ner Tamid*, Eternal Light, for the Sanctuary or Chapel. This is a wonderful demonstration of our commitment to the eternity of God's earth and our role in preserving it. We are also encouraged to be mindful of renewability when purchasing consumable paper and plastic utensils for food service and office needs. Finally, we are encouraged to participate in the carbon offset program of the Jewish National Fund. In recent years, we have become acutely aware of the impact of human society on the ability of our earth to continue to provide a hospitable home to humanity. We also know that our actions can make a difference.

In this new year, I urge you to make mindful steps to preserve our environment by the choices we all make. Buy, and regularly light, the *Shabbat* Eco-candles in your own home on *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov*. Look for recycled and renewable products when you shop for consumables. Recycle responsibly.

And expect environmental sensitivity from the community, in your place of business, schools, institutions of government and volunteer associations.

We are, each of us, "*Shomrei Ha'aretz*," "Stewards of the Earth." Let us take our role seriously, for us and for future generations.

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