



Imagining Virtual High Holidays

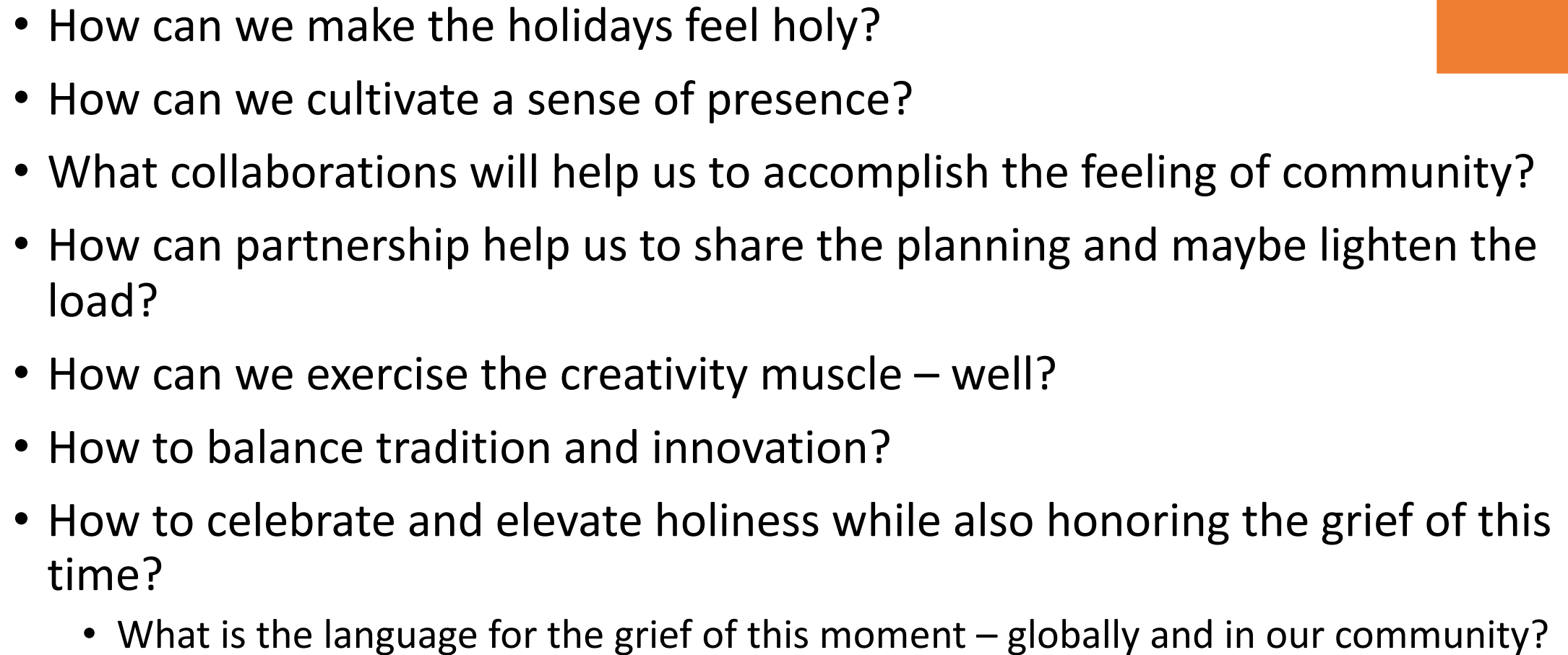
Rabbi Amy Joy Small

July 16, 2020



What is the Ikkar for each service?

- Study -- chevruta to tease out what is most essential
- Select -- carefully to retain what is most meaningful and essential
- Think: **Short!**
- What is the story we need to tell?
- Consider moving some segments to later in the day or even another day (e.g., Shofar sounding–Tashlich, YK Martyrology, etc.)
- What is the core – what are the **highlighted themes and goals** for each part of the holidays: Elul, Selichot, RH, 10 days, YK?
- How can our learning and services achieve these goals?
- How can service segments be broken up or timed to use the 10 days well?

- 
- How can we make the holidays feel holy?
 - How can we cultivate a sense of presence?
 - What collaborations will help us to accomplish the feeling of community?
 - How can partnership help us to share the planning and maybe lighten the load?
 - How can we exercise the creativity muscle – well?
 - How to balance tradition and innovation?
 - How to celebrate and elevate holiness while also honoring the grief of this time?
 - What is the language for the grief of this moment – globally and in our community?

Virtual Services Structure

- Record (professionally) highlighted segments of each High Holy Day service as modules with rabbi and cantor and videographer in shul sanctuary
- Streaming camera to be installed for viewing during the services and afterwards (You Tube)
- Service will be live on Zoom during the holidays, with timed segments, allowing folks to join when desired
- Zoom service from sanctuary with rabbi, cantor and tech support only
- Recorded modules will be integrated into Zoom during the service to allow for live elements to weave the parts together
 - One Poem/Reading for each module
- High Holiday Working Group processing big picture decisions

Elul Learning

- A teaching a day to be created and distributed
- Weekly Classes
- Collaborate offerings with Temple Sinai
- Teshuvah, Tefillah and Tzedakah themes
 - Include poem, art and song modalities – working with a team of lay people to assemble resources to share
 - Classes/workshops
- Four Classes, one for each week during Elul
 - Collaborate offerings with Temple Sinai -- – each teacher teaches Rabbi, Cantor and Temple Sinai Rabbi to take turns – fourth week will be co-led by all clergy
 - Include poem, art and song modalities

For Elul or 10 days:

- Brainstorm the prayer themes for this time
- Sample:
 - Courage
 - Wisdom
 - Clarity
 - Patience
 - Compassion
 - Kindness
 - Break through helplessness
 - Health for everyone

The Days Between...

Aseret Y'mei Teshuvah עשרת ימי תשובה

- Create tool kits for individuals, families and small groups for discussion, learning, and creative projects
 - Working with two lay leaders to assemble short selections of poetry, recordings of song, prayer, dance to be shared during the Ten Days
- Recruit lay leaders to organize small study groups

Aseret Y'mei Teshuvah Conversations

”Podcast-like” recordings for the Ten Days,

Rabbi with select laypeople, to be shared with the congregation

T'SHUVA

In this particular time, when we are unable to be together in person, in the context of the fearsome Covid-19 pandemic, with all of its attendant losses and uncertainties, compounded by the upcoming presidential election, with painfully polarized political points of view; how do we, the OZ Community meaningfully engage and participate in these 10 Days of T'Shuva; how do we love, forgive and turn back toward ourselves and one another?

How do we listen to our deep inner voices, the core source of our being, that part of us that is created in the image of Gd, however we understand that to mean; and also listen and relate to each other, who likewise comes from the same source of all being?

A series of conversations among fellow congregants.

Tool kit for 10 days

- Teshuva related texts
- Create individual Poem/art/song to express our own teshuvah needs
- How can we respond to the brokenness in the world?
- Study of Sefer Yonah
- Write your own vidui
- What are my questions?
- What is the meaning of our suffering – find texts
- Racial justice theme
- Honoring caregivers, medical professionals and frontline workers – letters, poetry, art

- Tech
 - Equipment
 - Sound system upgrades
 - Ethernet and wifi in sanctuary
 - Laptop
 - Microphones/cameras
 - Apps for singing and broadcast
 - Tech support professionals
 - Pre-holiday video preparation: Upload videos and recorded service
 - In-person support on holiday
 - Coordinate with our facilities manager

Special Service Segments

- Shofar Soundings
- Kol Nidre
 - Collaborating with Temple Sinai to create three textures for 3 pre-recorded Kol Nidre: Cantor Steve, Mark Leopold/Rabbi Edleson, choral recording
- Temple Sinai Song swap: each record something special to share with each other
- Yizkor photo slide show – recruited teens to produce
- Photos from the bima – add to streaming of Torah service
- Avodah story --recruit -- record teen readers
- Martyrology – recruit -- record teen readers
- Unetaneh Tokef – Yair Rosenblum melody
- Kids sounding shofar at end of Yom Kippur – recorded and shared at that time

Selichot

Together with Temple Sinai, virtual program

- Begin with film relating to social justice
 - Breakout room discussion
- Singing led by cantors
- Shortened Selichot Service – with highlight of “*high holiday hit parade*”

Caring for the Community

- Challah, Apples and Honey Delivery to seniors
- Team to organize and staff member pick-up of *machzorim* at the shul (outside)
- Shofar Sounding Car Caravans
- Shared Virtual Shabbat Shuva Kabbalat Shabbat with Jewish Communities of Vermont
- Honor Front-line workers, medical professionals and caregivers
- Provide Zoom schmooze time between/after units

Music

- Work with apps for recording/mixing
 - A Capella
 - Create choral pieces
- Recruit singer-songwriter for a song or a chant
- Integrate choral pieces
- Pre-recording many musical selections to be woven into the services

Break Fast

- Break Fast Zoom with Bagel
- Break out rooms for schmooze
- Note: We considered preparing food boxes to distribute break fast meals, but our committee felt it was too much to take on

Overall goals

- Inspiring messages of teshuvah, tefillah and tzedakah
- Powerful major segments
- Shortened, timed segments to be moving, accessible for screen experience
- Community experience – meaningful opportunities for community to be together. Preserve the “front steps” feeling – the annual “check in” and feeling like we are in community – Zoom blocks for hanging out with each other.
- Flexibility and options for folks to have their own experience
- Give people an experience of RH and YK in this era that they can hold onto. As best as possible w/o being together physically
- Healing and Hope

Sukkot and Simchat Torah

Include children and Hebrew school segment in our Zoom service for Simchat Torah

Sukkot plans

Share lunches for small groups in Sukkah

To be planned