

**Additional Readings for Shabbat –  
May 26, 2023 -- Temple Solel, Bowie MD  
Rabbi Steve Weisman**

**Joel Magram, Soloist**

**Opening Prayer**

Tonight, O God, we enter the sanctuary – Your sanctuary, our sanctuary –  
whether in person or virtually, to celebrate Shabbat, as we do every week.

*Tonight is not merely Shabbat.*

*For some it is the very end, others the start of the second day of Shavu'ot*

*Our Festival, celebrating Your gift of Torah to us at Sinai,*

*The establishment of Your covenant with the entire Jewish people.*

We always seek to express our gratitude to You, O God,  
when we gather in worship.

Tonight our thanks are increased –

For the gift of Your Torah – laws and rules by which to live our lives,  
Foundation of the covenant You entered with those who came before us

That You maintain with us for their sake as well as ours.

*We seek to emulate the lesson of the Midrash –*

*That all of us, from every generation, stood together at Sinai –*

*Hearing Your words, feeling the power of the moment.*

*Help us to continue to strive to bring Your teaching to all people.*

And especially on this Shabbat, help us to remember

That You gave us Shabbat, in part, not only to refresh ourselves,

But as a symbol of our covenant with You.

*Help us to find the rest and the joy, the peace and the hope of Shabbat*

*And to use it to bring peace and hope and joy to all the world, now and  
always.*

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### **Reading For *Ahavat Olam* (p. 33)**

We stood together at the base of the mountain,  
We who had just been freed from the servitude of Egypt,  
We who were still learning what it meant to be a free people.  
For three days we had prepared, as Moses instructed us on Your behalf,  
To be fully ready for this moment.

But can anyone ever be completely prepared to stand in Your presence, O God?

*We awoke that morning, not sure what to expect.*

*We made our way slowly towards the mountain,*

*Already its peak disguised by the clouds and smoke,*

*Already the lightning crackling above – spectacular to watch,*

*Yet removed enough to avoid the usual fear it evoked,*

*But still fearsome to behold,*

*Already the thunder rumbling loud all around us, echoing,*

*Shaking the ground beneath our feet.*

We barely noticed the generations that would come to be,

Joining us in that place and in that moment,

First-hand witnesses with us to the events about to unfold,

So that generations later, none would need to tell of this moment

By staring out by saying: I heard it from my grandparents...

And then the voice – it sounded so human, so familiar – called out:

*I am Adonai, your God, Who brought you out of Egypt.*

*You shall have no other Gods – before Me, with Me, instead of Me.*

*You shall make no molded or sculpted or graven image of Me to worship.*

*You shall not take My name in vain.*

*You shall remember the Sabbath day, and make it holy.*

*Honor your parents in all that you do.*

*You shall not take the life of another.*

*You shall not commit adultery.*

*You shall not steal.*

*You shall not bear false witness against another.*

*You shall not covet what is not yours.*

We remember it all again tonight, as if we were at the mountain still,

As we declare our faith in You!

**English Reading for V'Ahavta (p. 36)**

You – individually and collectively – shall love Adonai, your God

With every part of your being – body and soul, spirit and mind.

Take these words – that we recite together now, that remind us of

    The Commandments we experienced so long ago, and repeated just now,

And place them on your heart – to consider, to be moved to action by them.

Repeat them often to your children and grandchildren – by word and deed –

Speaking of them wherever you go, whatever you do, all day, every day.

Bind them as a sign on your hands –

    so that the work of your hands teaches these truths;

Let them be a symbol between your eyes,

    So you always see the world through the lens of these Commandments.

Inscribe them on the doorposts of your house –

    That all who enter may know to expect a Jewish home,

And on your gates --

    That even those who just pass by can be elevated by them.

*So that we may each and all remember, and do all Your Commandments,*

*In that way becoming holy to You, our God.*

*For as we have just affirmed in the Sh'ma –*

*You are Adonai, our God, the One Who brought us out from Egypt,*

*So that You could be our God, and we could be Your people, saying:*

*“I am Adonai, your God!”*