

Spiritual Care Corner



with Chaplain
Hazzan Rob Menes

The Expectation of the Omer

From the second evening of Passover, Jews begin the counting of the Omer, a daily ritual in which each day for seven weeks a measure of barley was brought to the Temple. While the offering is no longer brought, we continue the practice of counting leading up to the holiday of Shavuot. This is a time of expectation and of semi-mourning, since it recalls a plague which devastated a community of scholars. It is a time of reflection and introspection which links the holiday celebrating freedom, to the holiday celebrating revelation.

For many of us, that feeling of expectation and the ritual of counting started when we were told to stay inside, curtail visitors, and maintain our distance. In Judaism, this period is limited: we know when it ends. Our restrictions from the coronavirus are not as clearly defined. However, if we keep our sights on the future as though we are bringing in the harvest, we can reap the benefits of a safe and healthy campus, country, and world.

Turn our captivity, O LORD,
As the streams in the dry land.
They that sow in tears
Shall reap in joy.
Ps. 126

Chaplain Rob Menes

