

Yom Kippur: To meet or not to meet

By Steven Blumrosen

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We are a secular political club in our non-sectarian civil society. We try to acknowledge, learn about and embrace the diversity of the “stew” that forms US culture. We’ve been Coming to America a long time! (<https://binged.it/2oZ6Njv>).

Judaism uses a lunar calendar, so days start at sunset. Yom Kippur is the holiest of holy days in Judaism. In 2019, it ends about 7:30 PM, October 9. The Club Board decided to hold our meeting at the usual time for the practical reason that we are a small club and it is difficult for some members when we change our meeting times and places.

George Washington said in a letter to Touro Synagogue: “It is now no more that toleration is spoken of as if it were the indulgence of one class of people that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights, for, happily, the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens in giving it on all occasions their effectual support.”

<https://www.tourosynagogue.org/history-learning/gw-letter> [Touro Synagogue, 1790].

See, also, (<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-06-02-0135> [National Archives] and <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/touro-synagogue/> [Mt. Vernon].

“Effectual support” means we meet when necessary to prevent the US from devolving into dictatorship, as have other Democracies (like Rome, Greece and the Weimar Republic). This is crucial for Jews in SW Florida. Our state has become the state that sends Republicans to the White House since Al Gore chose Sen. Joe Lieberman as his running mate. Less than a thousand votes separated Gore/Lieberman from Bush/Cheney. Enough votes to change the outcome were not contested from overseas and Black voters.

Last year, 5 voters/precinct might have sent Bill Nelson back to the Senate and Andrew Gillum to the Governor’s mansion. The ERA needs just one more state to pass. Just a few states are needed by the movement to rip apart our Constitution and possibly take away our protections, including the right to vote, a bicameral legislature, an independent judiciary, a free press, learning-enabled public education, and the right and comfort level to question authority. (<https://www.commoncause.org/resource/u-s-constitution-threatened-as-article-v-convention-movement-nears-success/> and <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R42589.pdf> [Congressional Research Service]).

The last time there was a Constitutional Convention, delegates scraped the old constitution and wrote a new one. Can you imagine a US Constitution like the one Stalin used? I chose to attend this Club meeting because politics and Club meetings are that important.

Some Board members commented that this is about electing Democrats and stopping Republican one party rule. We would meet on Christmas or Ramadan if they fell on our usual meeting date. And, we would learn from and embrace our members who chose their need to worship over attending a meeting.