



Westchester Community for Humanistic Judaism Rabbi Frank Tamburello, showing Humanistic Tu B'Shevat Seder fruit plate.

Westchester Community for Humanistic Judaism Presents Humanistic Tu B'Shevat Seder

By Stephen E. Lipken

The Westchester Community for Humanistic Judaism presented a Humanistic Tu B'Shevat Seder, conducted by Rabbi Frank Tamburello on Saturday, February 6th at the Community Unitarian Universalist Congregation, White Plains.

A small group attended, including the sister Humanistic Jewish Congregation of Queens.

"Humanistic Judaism is cultural Judaism without reliance upon a Divine Source to guide our lives," Rabbi Tamburello stated. "Our services are non-Theistic, so we do not supplicate a G-d.

We celebrate all the Jewish holidays in the spirit which they are supposed to be: Rosh Hashanah, forgiving each other; Chanukah to be dedicated to each other.

"Purim tells us we need to defend people that are weaker; Yom Kippur, we have to change our lives and learn how to forgive ourselves and other people. All that can be done without invoking a Deity. Rather than Biblical verses, children want materials to guide them."

"A Concise Tu B'Shevat Haggadah" was distributed which reads, "In the 16th century, Kabbalists, the Jewish mystics created this Seder with songs, readings, wine and fruits.

Like the Passover Seder, this one uses experiential learning, four cups of wine and special foods.

"Each cup of wine represents different aspects of the fruit tree and of ourselves. As the seder progresses, we change the color of the wine in the cups...from the whiteness of winter to the fullness of spring. The color gets more and more red, and we look forward to the fully red wine of the Passover Seder."

Tamburello noted that there are actually four Jewish New Year's: 1) Passover, celebrating the formation of the Jewish people; 2) Rosh Hashanah, beginning of the Jewish calendar year/creation of the world; 3) 15th of Shevat, taxing of orchards; 4) Summer, taxing of animals.