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## A holiday of repentance

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**As Halloween and Thanksgiving approach, many people begin to think about pumpkins, candy, turkey and presents. But members of the Loudoun Jewish Congregation have something else on their minds and hearts --Yom Kippur.**

"The holiday of Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the Jewish year," explains Rabbi Jason Miller of the Loudoun Jewish Congregation. "The full 25-hour fast encourages the congregation to reflect and find time for introspection on the past year."

Yom Kippur, a full Sabbath holiday with fasting and no work that began at sundown Sunday, means "Day of Atonement." It is a day set aside to reflect on sins and wrongdoings of the past year.

There are two types of teshuva, or repentance. The first is between God and man. The second is between men.

"It is this [second] endeavor that is more difficult for us to achieve," said Miller.

The rabbi, in his sermon Monday, explained to his congregation that the best way to meet someone from whom you are asking forgiveness is to meet them face to face.

"The time has come for us to face off with each other. We must look deeply into the countenance of others, and not just take them at face value, but really place value," said Miller.

"We are all created in the image of God. And yet, as we know, we all look different. We all have starkly different-looking faces. We know people by their face. And by their eye color. It's time we get to know their soul by their face, too."

Even though Yom Kippur's purpose is for "spiritual cleansing and ritual atonement," Miller points out, as an aside, that this time of fasting shows the congregation what it is like not to have food.

"For many Americans, we throw around words like 'hungry' and 'starving' without considering the millions who really are," he said. "Chances are that we don't have any close friends or family who are truly without food to eat."

"But there are hungry people in our midst. We need to open our eyes to the ever-increasing rate of poverty in our country."

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