

April 13, 2013 – Tazria-Metzora

This double portion is often considered the most unpleasant in the Torah. It deals with what makes women or men ritually impure, often translated as “unclean.” We shared the Torah study with three pastors, since this was Interfaith Weekend, and their contribution was much appreciated. We discussed the possible reasons why there should be a requirement that people maintain a certain level of ritual purity, reflecting on what difference it might make, and what it meant at the time Leviticus was written. Then we explored what it might be possible for us, today, to learn from these verses. What meaning could they have for our religious services, far removed from the observances at the Temple in Jerusalem or the Tent of Meeting in the desert?

Finally, we also looked at the difference between a woman’s impure time when giving birth to a male child as opposed to a female child, and the disparity in early Judaism between the role of a woman and that of a man.