



Temple House of Israel Bulletin

A Member Congregation of the Union for Reform Judaism
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www.thoi.org

Our mission is to perpetuate Jewish life and identity through a welcoming community of spirituality, learning, service, joy and worship

FEBRUARY 2017 / SHEVAT – ADAR 5777

SPECIAL
EVENT #1

Sunday, January 29, noon – 3:00 pm.

BOOK, SOUP and BAKE Sale

fiction and nonfiction books

baked goods

HOMEMADE SOUP by the quart.

Come buy a quart (or 3 or 4) of homemade soup to keep you warm this month and at the same time, select some winter reading from our collection of gently used books.

SPECIAL
EVENT #2

Tu B'Shevat

New Year for Trees

Saturday, February 11

7:30 pm

Temple House of Israel

15 N. Market Street

All are welcome!

Join us for a Tu B'Shevat celebration to mark the new year for trees as we taste the fruit that is yet to come. Enjoy fresh and dried fruits and nuts, wine, grape juice and select desserts.

Members free

Non-members \$5

Call Bonny Strassler for more information at (540) 885-8715

President's Message

Dear Temple House of Israel,

The tally is in, Folks. Because of our generous anonymous donor, we were able to double our building fund amount during 2016. Consequently we have added \$16,000 for our building's needs! Congratulations to us all. Of course, we send heartfelt thanks to our benefactor.

What the building needed this year besides a new furnace/air conditioner unit for the social hall? Recently we had several roof leaks repaired. Now a plasterer is repairing damage from those leaks, soon to be followed by painting the repaired areas. With an old building, something always needs repair.

Good news about the cemetery. The fence is being fabricated and will be installed when the weather is more congenial. Many thanks go to the trustees for their on-going efforts. Onward into 2017!

Rosalie Waterman, temple president

From the Rabbi's Desk

Dear Temple House of Israel Congregants and Friends,

Apparently, the weather can't decide what season it is! We have run the gamut. But the nice days and warmer weather have been lovely and a lift to spirits.

The congregational year is moving quickly ahead. In a few days we will have a **Tu Be'Shevat Seder** (think a sort of Jewish Arbor Day, Earth Day and celebration of Spring), then the Spring **Community Awareness Shabbat service** – invite your friends and neighbors to ask questions and see what we do. Then we'll be rushing towards Purim and Passover! It is all coming so quickly. Check the activity calendar on page 6.

The Spring 2017 **Elementary Biblical Hebrew** course kicked off with fourteen students, most of whom were at the first meeting on January 15th. It was a fun and lively conversation. We are using the Book of Job as the text beginning with a recap of Chapter 1. If you are interested, please join us for the next class or contact me. See the calendar for dates.

I was again cited in an article in the Forward that appeared on January 20th in connection with funeral industry matters due to my work with Kavod v'Nichum, the group that advocates for Jewish rituals, funerals, and burials at end of life.

I had the pleasure of representing THOI at the Mary Baldwin Faith Fair where I had a chance to speak to many students. I was also asked to participate again with a team of students in the Mary Baldwin Interfaith and Diversity event sponsored by the Quest group with Rev. Katherine Low and her team of students.

Torah and Calendar

The Torah Parashiot for the coming weeks are Vaera (and Rosh Chodesh for Shevat), Bo, Beshalach, Yitro, Mishpatim (Shabat Shekalim) and Terumah.

Rosh Chodesh for Adar will be February 26-27.

Rabbi's Message

This month I had something I have known for a long time called more sharply into focus. I want to share with you what I was reminded about recently, because it is about you (collectively). A great deal of what I do is not 'public'. It includes conversations, visits, meetings, and appointments with people, often one on one. As I go about these activities, speaking to congregants and others in the larger community, I am allowed and invited to share in and hear about the events in many people's lives. Obviously, sharing in joys and simchas is a pleasure and celebrating moments of nachas with families is a source of happiness.

On the other hand, hearing about the troubles and worries and tsuris that afflict those in our community might be thought to be a weight and a source of distress, and to a degree it is, because I care about and empathize with these people. At the same time, I was reminded again as I spoke to someone, these difficulties and events offer a source of uplift: clearly, not the difficulties themselves, but the responses of those with whom I speak to those challenges.

I am constantly buoyed and energized by the opportunity to see the strength, courage, fortitude and energy with which people I meet are able to face things that seem so heavy to hear, let alone experience. I am often amazed, and always feel honored to be allowed this privilege of seeing these people, our community members and friends, at very vulnerable times, and yet watching them acting and choosing hope and courage, and living meaningfully and in relationship with others through it all. I don't think they (read you) know just how incredibly amazing they (you) are. Knowing the little I do of these circumstances, and seeing how they (you) carry on is inspiring, and fills me with admiration and awe.

May they, and we, continue in this fashion, and move, as we recite at the end of each book of the Torah, "Chazak, Chazak, veNitchazaik" – from strength to strength, we will be strengthened. With this strength, may we face the obstacles that we encounter, and continue to live meaningful lives, as fully as we can, striving to be our highest selves and making the world better for our having been in it.

Rabbi Joe Blair

Contacting the Rabbi

Please Note: Rabbi Joe may be reached by email at RabbiJoeB@hotmail.com. Other email addresses may not reach him in a timely fashion or at all. He reads email regularly, except on Jewish Holidays or Shabbat, when he does not use the computer. His cell number is 925-272-8563 (925-2-RAVJOE). Telephone messages left at the Congregation number are only checked sporadically

PLEASE CALL if you have any urgent messages or in case of an emergency and please let Rabbi Joe know if you or anyone you know is ill or would want a call or visit for any reason.

You are also invited to contact Rabbi Joe to arrange an appointment to meet. Rabbi Joe will be happy to make an appointment to speak with you, so that he can offer you his full, undivided attention.

Winter Class

Does Moral Truth Exist? Join us for a follow-up on our very successful 2016 Winter Series 'The Anthropology of Evil' with a new series presented by Stephen Kenamer. Open to the whole community, we will meet on **Wednesdays at 6:30 – 8:30 for five (5) weeks with the 2nd session on January 25th and continuing February 1st, February 8th and 15th**. The course description follows:

"The most common view among scientists and philosophers is that moral truth does not exist – only moral opinion. Our ethical "absolutes" merely express our emotions or attitudes of approval and disapproval. Darwinian fundamentalists argue that any behavior we call moral is just a gene expressing itself. Self-styled "realists" equate morality with expediency. We will examine the phenomenon of morality: its origin and development, how we arrive at our personal morality, why systems of morality may be immoral, and whether the universe implies or supports any particular ethical stance. Our perspectives will be historical, philosophical, psychological and spiritual." JOIN US!

RSVP if possible, to Ellen Boden championsresource@hotmail.com or 703-401-2939. Drop-ins are welcome. Pay what you will.

Welcome New Member

Heidi Yalowitz Lasser moved to Mount Sidney with her spouse, Suzanne, on December 1st. Heidi is originally from Gary, Indiana, but lived in Toronto for many years before returning to the US. She attended Jewish schools in the south side of Chicago and Toronto through 8th grade. This experience was followed by several decades in which she was essentially non-practicing. Within the past decade, Heidi reconnected with her Jewish roots and joined a Conservative congregation that offered classes on Jewish traditions and Hebrew. Following the dissolution of the group, she joined a Renewal congregation that introduced her to fresh perspectives on Torah parashiot and observances. Suzanne is a non-practicing Episcopalian who has been known to kindle the Shabbat candles if Heidi is not home on time.

News from the Pews

- Mazel Tov to Elaine Smith and Steve Goldfarb on their wedding.
- Refuah Shelema speedy recovery for Linda Blazer, Ken Schwartz, Doug Degen, Vera Flint and Lynne Landsberg.
- Mi Sheberach prayers for healing and wholeness to Adam Clark, Steve Guberman, Jacquie Jacobs, Sherry Lowe, Sue Solomon, Dan Schorsch, David Waterman and Nancy Witt.

Women's Group

- Come **this Sunday** to buy a **quart of soup, baked goods** and pick up a gently used **book** while you're at the temple, noon – 3:00.
- The **Tu B'Shevat Seder** is being sponsored by the Women's Group on Saturday, **February 11 at 7:30**. See our flashy card on the first page – did you miss it?
- The re-scheduled **self-defense instructional class** taught by Phil Kennedy will take place on Sunday afternoons 2-4 pm, **April 23 and May 7** in our own social hall. Contact Debbie Jacobs deb1130@hotmail.com to reserve your spot. The cost for both classes is \$40 and the registration/payment deadline is March 1st. We need a minimum of 10 people to hold the class so please let Debbie know your intent.
- We will be offering a 3-session class in May offered by Mary Ann Stripling entitled **"Ducks in a Row: Getting Your Affairs in Order"**. Look for more information in the next bulletin

If you are interested in helping plan our activities or have ideas for new ones, please join the Women's Group for our **next meeting on Sunday, February 12th at 2 pm**.

Religious School

We're keeping busy at Religious School with lots of great discussions and projects in our classes. Religious School is looking forward to celebrating Tu Be'Shevat with a seder during Religious School on February 12th at 11:30. There is a field trip for the Daled class to the Ellis Island Simulation on February 26th in Fairfax. If you have any interest in finding out more about Religious School instruction for Kindergarten through 7th grade, please contact Morah Dara at mddmhall@verizon.net.

SHORTY

Ski weekend is coming! SHORTY is preparing to host youth in grades 7-12 the weekend of February 10-11th. SHORTY will host services on Friday night at Beth El. Please join us in welcoming our guests. If you have any youth interested in joining us, please contact Becky for details at rem82398@gmail.com or 540-908-7947.

Celebrations

★HAPPY★
BIRTHDAY!

Jesse Brand celebrates his birthday on February 2nd

Sara Brody celebrates her birthday on February 13th

Vera Flint will be eighty-what? on February 17th

David Waterman celebrates every four years on February 29th
and

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY to Ken and Elizabeth Schwartz

February Yahrzeits

Melvin Berman	Moshe Cohen	B. Edelman	Irving Goldberg
David Goldstein	Henrietta Goldstein	Fannie Greenstone	Hyman Greenstone
Oscar Mindell	Hiah Neuger	Harry Patterson	Betty Robins
Leah Schneider	Jerome Seligmann	Beckie Shapiro	Dorothy Sragovitz
Regina Strauss	Mae Suskins	Minnie Switzer	Albert Williams
Rose Zultowski			

Donations

Todoh Rabah - Thank you to these people for their recent generous donations to Temple House of Israel:

For the building fund which was matched dollar for dollar through 2016

Anonymous

Linda Blazer and Jim Osborne

Ruth Chodrow

Lynne Landsberg and Dennis Ward

Ken and Elizabeth Schwartz

Rich and Beth Young

For the Hebrew class

Angela Daniel

Board Contacts

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If you have any comments or suggestions for the bulletin, please contact

Beth Young at bydesign1993@gmail.com or 885-1481

FEBRUARY 2017

January 29 Book and Bake Sale 1-3 Biblical Hebrew 4:00-5:30	30	31	February 1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 THOI board meeting at 7:00	9	10	11 Tu'B'Shevat Seder 7:30 pm
12 2 pm Women's Group	13	14	15	16	17 7:30 Community Awareness Shabbat	18
19 Biblical Hebrew 4:00-5:30	20	21	22	23	24	25 10:00 Shabbat Services
26	27	28	March 1 Death Café 7-9 pm	2	3	4