

Temple House of Israel Bulletin

A Member Congregation of the Union for Reform Judaism
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Our mission is to perpetuate Jewish life and identity through a welcoming community of spirituality, learning, service, joy and worship

JANUARY 2017 / KISLEV - TEVET 5777



President's Message

Dear Temple House of Israel,

I work at the Augusta Health welcome desk on Tuesday mornings with a woman who has lived in the area her entire life. I am the first Jewish person she has ever known. Her ignorance about Judaism is appalling, but she keeps asking questions, and I answer them. Lately she has wanted to know what we do during the Christmas holidays since we don't celebrate the birth of Christ. I told her about providing dinner at the regional clinic and about providing and serving at the Mission on Christmas Eve. I told her about Chanukah happenings and ritual. And I believe she is beginning to understand how we function in an over-whelmingly Christian community. We care about those around us and are willing to help when we can even though our religious beliefs are different.

I feel proud of us at THOI when I talk to her. I have lent her a book that explains the basics of Jewish history and beliefs. The more she knows, the more impressed I hope she will be. I am always proud of the ethics of Judaism. I hope you are, too.

Best wishes and much hope as we enter 2017.

Many thanks to those in the women's group who provided food for the Augusta Regional Clinic on December 22. Thanks also to all who provided food and to those who attended, served and interacted at the Mission on December 24. Thanks also to those who attend the Chanukah event and service on December 30. We are small but mighty!

Rosalie Waterman, temple president

From the Rabbi's Desk

Dear Temple House of Israel Congregants and Friends,

A "Happy Sylvestre!" as one might hear in Israel at this time of year, wishing you a good secular new year. I hope that your year is off to a good start, and that things improve as time passes. As we move through Chanukah for this year, I hope that yours is/was/will be lovely, a time of light and uplift at this darkest time of the year, in all possible ways.

Looking forward:

The next **Death Café** event for this year will be January 4th at Beth El Congregation in Harrisonburg from 7-9 pm. After that we will meet on March 1st at THOI from 7-9 pm. All are welcome to these Wednesday evening conversations. Free. Come talk about death. Break the taboo. Join the conversation. Enjoy some light refreshments and good company.

The next **Tot Shabbat** at Beth El will be January 6th at 5:30 pm. Contact Morah Allison for information at Allison.s.kaye@gmail.com.

The next **Biblical Hebrew** course is beginning on Sunday, January 15th. It is a perfect time for anyone who wishes to jump into this class to do so – we will be starting fresh, and would be happy to have you join us. Ideally students will be able to 'decode' Hebrew, but fluency is not a prerequisite. Bring a Tanakh or other Bible with you. The course will meet 8 times, continuing January 29th and February 19th into March, April and May. The meeting times are all 4–5:30 pm at THOI. Contact Rabbi Joe for further information or with any questions.

From the Rabbi's Desk Con't.

In outreach and interfaith work, I continue to visit or have groups visit us from the community, and to respond to many calls and emails. I will be representing the congregation at the Mary Baldwin University Faith Fair, and engaging in some friendly religious trivia competition with Rev. Katherine Low in front of students.

Don't forget to include Tu B'Shevat Seder at THOI in your plans for Saturday, February 11th.

Torah and Calendar

The Torah Parashiot for the coming weeks are: Miketz, Vayigash, Vayechi, Shemot, Vaera, Bo and Beshalach. We are in year 1 of the triennial cycle (the first of the three divisions of the cycle of Torah readings). Rosh Chodesh for Tevet will be December 30. Rosh Chodesh for Shevat is January 28th.

Erev Chanukah was on December 24 and the eight days of Chanukah run from sundown December 24th to January 1st at sundown. January 18th is the sunup to sundown fast day of the 10th of Tevet, commemorating the siege of Jerusalem that lead up to the destruction of the Temple. January 27th is the secular day on which Holocaust Remembrance is noted; the Jewish event is Yom HaShoah, which follows Pesach.

Rabbi's Message

As you read this, we are in the midst of Chanukah, our festival of light. This holiday lends a bit of cheer and brightness to a time of year that often seems dark, cold, and dreary. May your Chanukah light not only the room, but your heart and soul, bringing light and warmth where it will be meaningful and shared, and may the start of the secular year inspire us to redouble our efforts to fulfill our mission to carry that light forth and be a light to the world. May peace, love and wellbeing be the gifts that we give to each other, and to those who need them most desperately.

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). Please note this number. 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.

Welcome New Members

Buffy Shapiro is originally from Buffalo, NY, and moved to Northern Virginia in 1997. She had several careers, the last at Navy Federal Credit Union and retired in 2014. She and her sister Carol bought a house on Sears Hill four years ago to see if they liked Staunton, spending time here every month or so. This past spring they sold that house, and moved full time into their new (old) home. She's looking to volunteer, preferably with infants, but hasn't found anything yet. She has two grown daughters, one in Northern Virginia and one finishing her Masters at VCU.

Carol Shapiro is also originally from Buffalo (fancy that!). She lived in NoVA for 45 years and worked for Navy Federal Credit Union for 39 years. Four of those years she lived in Greece. She and her sister Buffy have lived in Staunton on and off since 2012 and since this past July are here full time. They've spent the past 8 months renovating their 1894 Victorian home and it's finally finished! Travel, both domestic and international, is a big part of her life. She loves spending time with friends... both new and old.

Gail Davis was born in Oak Park, a suburb of Chicago and attended West Suburban Temple Har Zion as a child. "My husband is not Jewish, but we raised our children with basic Jewish cultural awareness. We lived in California while our children were young, then moved to Skokie, IL about 15 years ago, to be closer to my family. My husband went to college with Joe Kristoff, Marsha Pillet's husband, which is how we found Staunton and fell in love with the Valley, and chose to retire here! My main hobby is making beaded jewelry. (I also repair beaded jewelry.) If anyone is interested in a Yiddish group, I would be most interested in that! I only know the basic courses, but would like to learn more. I retired from home visiting nursing (public health and hospice) after 40 years. I also am a lactation consultant, if that is useful to anyone. I used to have a private practice, but now I just help people because I love it! I look forward to meeting all of you.

Social Action

Do you want to know how we, as individuals, and as a congregation can protect and promote core Jewish values? The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC) is working to engage us. The RAC's [Urgency of Now Resource Center](#), which is being updated in real-time, contains a variety of ways to take action, including filling out legislative and transition-related action alerts, signing up for RAC emails to stay informed, registering for training webinars, and reading the latest press statements that have been issued on transition related matters such as appointments, the Affordable Care Act, climate change and more. Check out their website to get more information.

News from the Pews

- Mazel Tov to proud grandparents Patty and Larry Sutker on the birth on their granddaughter, Evelyn Winter, on December 16th.
- Refuah Shelema to Vera Flint who slipped on black ice and fractured vertebrae.
- Refuah Shelema also to Adam Clark, Leah Farmer, Ken Schwartz and Ellen Werther.
- Mi Sheberach prayers for healing and wholeness to Steve Guberman, Jacquie Jacobs, Sue Solomon, Dan Schorsch, David Waterman and Nancy Witt.

Women's Group

The Women's Group **Chanukah Party and Potluck is this Friday**. Details are below. We will provide a cake and music for a festive dinner. Plan to stay for the 7:30 service with an oneg to follow!

In addition ...

- We will host a **Book and Bake Sale** on **Sunday, January 29, 1:00– 3:00 pm**. We are collecting fiction and nonfiction books (no textbooks or encyclopedias) as well as baked goods and quarts of soup. If you are interested in making soup, quart size Mason jars will be available at the next meeting or Bonny can drop some off to you. Book donations will be accepted Friday, January 13 evening during services, Sunday, January 15 from 2-4 pm and Friday, January 27 during the evening service.
- 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. If you're willing to commit, a January 11th deadline would make life easier for Deb.

If you are interested in helping plan, please join the Women's Group for our **next meeting on Sunday, January 15th at 2 pm**.

Chanukah party and potluck

Join us for our annual **Chanukah potluck dinner and candle-lighting** prior to services **this Friday, December 30th, 6:15 pm**

this is a planned as a meat meal

(this means anything is okay as long as it doesn't have milk or milk products in it)

People with last names beginning with C – G: please bring a main dish.

Everyone else, please bring a side dish or latkes.

Bring your menorahs and plenty of candles – this will be the 7th night of Chanukah.



Happy Hanukkah



SHORTY

SHORTY will be having their annual ski weekend February 10 and 11, 2017. Other youth groups will arrive at 5 pm. Dinner will be at 6 and a SHORTY-led service will follow with a Harry Potter theme. There will be a shul-in followed by a day on Massanutten Mountain followed by Havdalah and dinner. If you know of any teen who would be interested in SHORTY and/or the ski weekend, have them contact Becky Mintzer at 540-908-7947.

Religious School

Religious School just welcomed five students who are new this year at our Religious School Shabbat and Consecration service. Hurray for them! We're ready to begin 2017.

January Birthdays



Michael Degen on the 6th
 Rich Young on the 16th
 Riff Blair on the 27th
 Dennis Ward on the 29th
 Doug Degen on the 31st

January Yahrzeits

Flora Barth	Joseph Barth	Louis Belfor	David Brownold
Hannah Degen	Anne Goldberg	Rose Greenfield	Aaron Harris
Morris Degen	Sophie Cohen	A. David Biatch	Robert Davis
Marjorie Edelman	Milton Finkel	Leah Frank	Arthur Kaufman
Pauline Prince	Emily Schorsch	Daniel Seligmann	Morton Sloane
Lamartine Strauss	Augusta Switzer	Roberta Weber	Abraham Weinberg
Abraham Weinberg	Ethel Weinberg	Johanna Weinberg	Flora Switzer
Solomon Switzer			

Donations

Thank you to these people for their recent donations to our temple:

Latifa Kropf	for use of Torah
Simona Aronow	for use of Torah
Sherry Lowe	in memory of Paul Lowe
David and Kari Oblon	for general fund
Jim Osborne	for the building fund
Janne and Daniel Heifetz	for the Valley Mission dinner
Ann Cohen and Stuart Davidson	for the Valley Mission dinner
Beth and Rich Young	for the Valley Mission dinner

Board Contacts

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Trustee	Richard Young	885-1481	richardfyoung@gmail.com
Rabbi	Joe Blair	925-272-8573	RabbiJoeB@hotmail.com

JANUARY 2017

1 Happy New Year!	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 THOI board meeting at 7:00	12	13 7:30 Shabbat Services	14
15 2 pm Women's Group Biblical Hebrew 4:00-5:30	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27 7:30 Shabbat Services	28
29 Biblical Hebrew 4:00-5:30 Book and Bake Sale 1-3	30	31	28	29	30	31