



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

SUMMER 2017 / SIVAN - TAMMUZ – AV 5777

BREAKING NEWS

- We will have **lay led services on July 14 and August 18**, both at 7:30. These will be English-emphasis services with a Torah discussion and, of course, an oneg. Please share your ideas and talents, get involved in planning future services and consider how you might like to be a part of the service. Call or text your input to Bonny Strassler at bonstrassler@comcast.net or 540-885-8715.
- There's going to be a picnic! Please join us for our first **Know Your Neighbor (KYN) picnic on July 23, 5:30-7:30 at Oakdale Park in Bridgewater**. All congregants from AME Allen Chapel, Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Islamic Center of the Shenandoah Valley, Temple House of Israel and Trinity Episcopal Church are invited. Details are on the flyer attached.

New Officers

Congratulations to our new Temple House of Israel Board

President:	Bonny Strassler
VP Buildings:	Ellen Boden
VP Membership:	Ellen Werther
Secretary:	Ruth Chodrow
Treasurer:	Patty Sutker
At-Large:	TBD
At-Large:	Larry Sutker
Trustee:	Doug Degen
Trustee:	Alan Goldenberg
Trustee:	Richard Young

Thank you again to Doug Degen for serving as our nominating committee.

Out-going President

Dear THOI,

Thanks to all who attended the annual meeting on Sunday, May 21 at the temple. After a lovely meal, we had a brief meeting and a vote, which confirmed the new board for 2017-2018. My hope is that you, the members, will rise to the occasion and help us strengthen the organization of THOI that has persisted for so long. Bonny, our new president, has a vision of inclusiveness that we can run with into the new year. Please help her and the new board. It has been my privilege to serve you for almost 4 years. Thanks to all past board members, to the rabbi, and to the trustees.

Rosalie Waterman, outgoing president

President's Message

Dear temple members,
As we transition to a lazy summer and the start of a new year of temple life filled with activities and services, I wanted to convey how honored I am to be the temple president. We have much to be grateful for: a beautiful building and cemetery grounds, a membership dedicated to the proliferation of our small Jewish community, pastoral support and care offered freely if needed or asked for, and an active group of women that pulls together to keep us socially engaged with each other and the greater community. We are a small congregation with a common goal of participating in a fulfilling and meaningful Jewish life and as with most communities the process of getting there is different for everyone. Our varied knowledge and experiences are a strength from which we may continue to grow and meet the diverse needs of us all. I look forward to planning and working with fellow board members and the congregation to nurture and grow our temple.

Bonny Strassler, Temple President

From the Rabbi's Desk

Dear Temple House of Israel Congregants and Friends,
I can't believe it is time for the summer bulletin! I am writing this article days ahead of the annual congregational meeting in May, which means the congregational calendar year is approaching an end (June 30th). And that means we are already looking ahead to the coming year. It seems that the year just started, but here we are starting again!

I am not going to try to recap the year here—I touched on that in the report to the congregation which was distributed prior to the annual meeting. If you have any questions, thoughts, or suggestions, please call or email me. So, short and sweet.

Rabbi's Message

As I wrote this article, I was thinking about the Torah reading for the Shabbat of May 19th-20th. In the cycle of Torah readings for this year, we read the combined parashot of Behar Sinai (on Mount Sinai) and Be'chukotai (in or with my ordinances). This is the final reading in the book of Vayikra/Leviticus. The following week we began the book of Bamidbar/Numbers, so we had arrived at a pause and a gap in the story we read as we moved from one to another of the books in our ongoing reading.

In the face of considering this pause or movement, what came to mind for me is that there is a tradition and custom that is not usually discussed. You may know that it is customary upon completing a public reading of one of the books of the Torah (the Five Books of Moses), that the congregation stands and calls out "Chazak! Chazak! Venitchazak!" which translates as "Be strong! Be strong! And may we be strengthened! That Shabbat, we completed the book of Leviticus, and said these words.

Let me hasten to say, however, that when they say them, the congregation is NOT saying these words to the Torah reader, nor to the Gabbai (the MC for the Torah service), nor to the rabbi. They are, instead, all saying them to each other—and therefore also to themselves. What is that about?

This phrase actually repeats the same Hebrew root three times, Chet-zayin-kuf. Literally, the phrase is 'strong, strong, and we are made strong', or in more proper English, 'strong, be strong, and we shall be strengthened'. One understanding of the thrice repeated root is that it references the past, the present and the future, so it would mean 'you were strong, remain strong, and you shall be strengthened'. So far as the usual situation, most people in the congregation have been sitting in the pews, listening to the reading of Torah. Not a picture of striving or effort in most cases. So why do we recite this phrase at the end of each of the books of Torah?

Rabbi's Message (con't)

Tradition tells us that the learning and study of Torah requires us to engage 'with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength' - "bechol le'avacha, u'vechol nafshecha, u'vechol me'odecha" as we recite the Ve'avhatah. When we truly engage with the Torah, we expend energy—emotionally, intellectually, philosophically, psychically, religiously, and even, perhaps, physically. The effort of full engagement, of engaging with the text and its meanings, of truly striving with it—even, or perhaps most, when it is troublesome or disturbing—is an incredible investment of energy and attention, and it can be draining, even exhausting.

In this light, reaching the end of a book of Torah is an accomplishment and a milestone. We have 'wrestled' with G-d and with Torah and with ourselves in the journey through the text. After a significant effort, it is natural to want to pause and rest, but in regard to Torah, that is not what we are asked to do. Instead, we are to plow ahead, to continue and jump right in to engage with the next book. The engagement is never-ending and requires that we muster our strength and energy to continue. The phrase we recite is an acknowledgement of what we have done, an appreciation for the task we now face, and an encouragement that we will have the strength and the courage to proceed and succeed with the next book, and the next, and so on, as we cycle through the books of the Torah time and again throughout life. It is each of us urging other Jews on, and in turn being urged on—a communal 'high five' and pat on the back, if you will, for what we have done, and a collective 'let's all do it' as we move on. It is one of the ways in which we are connected to each other in our congregation, as a larger Jewish community, as an extended kehilah kadosha, and as Am Yisra'el. And reciting this phrase is something that we all do for each other, whether here locally, in our region, in our nation, or throughout the world.

Chazak, chazak, venitchazeik—we have been strong, we remain strong, and we shall be strengthened.

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 phone number is 925-272-8563 (925-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.

Good-bye

Kyle Leister has served us literally and figuratively and definitely wonderfully for the past 7 years as our go-to person in the kitchen. What started as "a little extra" for her daughter's spending money, turned into a long-term helping hand wherever she was needed. She stayed because she really enjoyed it and we enjoyed having her. We'll miss her!

Debby Austin will still be with us with her smiling face and helpful manner, ready to find and serve whatever it is we're looking for.

Women's Group

As we did in 2016, THOI Women's Group will walk as TEAM TIKVAH in the 2017 **Greater Augusta Out of the Darkness Walk** at Gypsy Hill Park on Saturday October 21st. Last year we walked in memory of Leah's granddaughter Skyward and we raised over \$1700 for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention which funnels a portion of the funds into suicide prevention programs in our community. Our area is definitely not immune to the suicide crisis, so it is imperative that we respond to this call to action. Between now and October, our team will be seeking donations from fellow congregants, friends, neighbors, and our families. Your generosity will certainly be appreciated and we welcome anyone to join our team! (If interested in joining and you'd like a team t-shirt, please let Debbie know). In addition, we are seeking other ways to raise funds including finding restaurants that will donate a portion of one day's revenue to our team. If you know any restaurants that would be willing to do this, please contact Debbie and she will follow up with them. Reach her at (540) 688-8058 or deb1130@hotmail.com. Other creative fundraising ideas are welcome! In addition, there will be a silent auction and cake walk sometime prior to 10/21—if you would like to donate an item or cake, please let Debbie know. In advance, a special thank you to each and every one of you for your support.

The **Caring Committee** is once again up and running. We have had many opportunities to bring a smile and care for those in our congregation who needed a little lift. Please contact Ellen Schorsch ellenschorsch@gmail.com if you know of members the committee should contact.

Women's Group treasurer and president needed! Please consider filling the post of treasurer. Elizabeth Schwartz promises that the job is easy and all the books are in fine order. Please contact Bonny Strassler bonstrassler@comcast.net if you are willing to take on this fun and rewarding job.

Our **next meeting will be August 12 at 2:00 pm** in the social hall.

Wonderful events earlier this summer

- The **temple social** held in June was a very, very nice affair! Thanks to Carol Shapiro who chaired the event with thanks to her sister Buffy, Bonny Strassler for the beautiful flower arrangements and to all those whose yummy hors' d'oeuvres were eagerly enjoyed. Sponsored by the Women's Group, it was certainly an event for the entire congregation to repeat!
- Mary Ann Stripling's **Ducks in a Row** program guided participants through preparing a will and medical directives, necessary financial planning, organizing memorabilia and belongings along with sharing family histories. It was a worth-while program for all. If you missed it, a copy of the workbook and text are **available for loan at the temple library**.

Donations

Thank you for the following people who have made donations to Temple House of Israel:

For the Rabbi's discretionary fund Simona Aranow and Stephen Shaffer
To the general fund Ed and Martha Misker
In honor of Lynne Landsberg to the building fund The Women's Group
In memory of Dorothy Bresky Vicki Goldenberg

News from the Pews

- **Refuah Shelemach:** Wishing and praying for a speedy and full recovery for Leah Farmer, Greg Cizek, Vera Flint, Dennis Ward and Rabbi Lynne Landsberg.
- **Prayers for healing and wholeness** to Adam Clark, Michelle and Jim Clark, Nancy Witt, Dianne Mason, Steve Guberman, Sue Solomon, Shirley Brand, Dan Schorsch, David Waterman, Sherry Lowe, Tom Davis (Gail's husband), Joanne Simons (Carla Donley's aunt) and Ken Schwartz.
- **Mazal Tov:** to Laurie Berman on the continuing success of the Alleghany Mountain Institute. to Larry and Patty Sutker on their newest grandchild to Linda Blazer on performing in a variety of venues over the last several months to Steve Guberman on the graduation of his daughter and her new job.
- **Vera Flint** would like to thank everyone who sent good thoughts, cards and flowers during her recent hospital stay. Thanks also to those who called and visited. She is making good progress at home, using a walker (but we suspect not for long!) and will be doing physical therapy for a while. She says "it feels great to be home".
- **Thanks** also from Beth Young to all those who brought food, sent flowers and called or visited while she recuperated from a bicycle accident over Memorial Day weekend. Six weeks later, she is mostly pain free.
- Congratulations to **Bonny Strassler** on her new position as the Special Education Teacher at Shelburne Middle School. She's cut her commute to a fraction, is looking forward to her new position and they're lucky to have her.

June Celebrations

Happy Birthdays to:

Karen Blair celebrated her birthday on June 1st
Sam Brown celebrated on June 2nd
Nancy Witt on June 13th
Mike Brown on the 25th
Shirley Brand on the 28th
Ellen Schorsch on June 30th

Happy Anniversary to:

Alan and Vicki Goldenberg on June 6th
Ellen and Dan Schorsch on June 14th

July Celebrations

Happy Birthdays to:

Kate Goldenberg celebrated on July 3rd
Sarah Young celebrates on July 10th
Byron Grove Humphries on July 14th
Elana Brody celebrates on July 24th
Steve Rosenberg on July 26th

Happy Anniversary to:

Larry and Patty Sutker on July 4th
Doug and Martha Degen celebrating on July 30



Religious School and SHORTY

This has been a fabulous year for both Religious School and SHORTY! Thank you so much to all of the wonderful teachers, children and teens, parents, community members, and of course, Rabbi Joe, who have helped to make the year so special. We ended the year with fun-tastic Lag Be'Omer games for all of our students hosted by our SHORTY youth and a picnic for our families. However, even though Religious School is over for the year, the learning will continue. Our Daled students will join our SHORTY members for a field trip on June 4th to the Richmond Holocaust Museum.

If you know of any new K-7th grade children interested in joining us for Religious School in the fall, please contact Dara Hall at mddmhall@verizon.net. If you know of any teens interested in participating in SHORTY—we will have events all summer long! - please contact Becky Mintzer at rem82398@aol.com.

****NEW**** next year 2017-2018: If you know of any young children and parents or grandparents who want to attend our new pre-school next year (more information coming soon), please contact Dara Hall at mddmhall@verizon.net and she will pass on your information and interest to the organizers/facilitators—Bekah and Jessica!!

We honor the memories of our loved ones at this season

Gertrude Barber	Charles Becher	Bertha Brand
Elan Brand	Don Chodrow	Bernard Bresky
Frederick Cohn	Howard Goldenberg	Fannie Goldstein
Henry Heilbronner	Aaron Hewitt	Samuel Jacobsen
Mollie Kamerman	Samuel Kamerman	Bernard Kaplan
Herbert Kaslow	Dora Klotz	Bessie Landsberg
Philip Levin	Infant Sam Levy	Bertha Mindell
Freida Mordetsky	Archie Prince	Bess Rosen
Ida Rosen	Jerry Schwartz	Dr. Sol Simon
Betty Jo Snyder	Erwin Solomon	Abraham Switzer
Harry Witt		

Leah Barber	Edith Belfor	David Gutnick
Ruby Bornstein	Abe Bressman	Maurice Cohen
Jerome Degen	Vera Duken	Bernice Fox
Eva Geller	Mollie Hoffman	Jacob Kaplan
Delores Levy	Joseph Loener	Ben Raybin
Betty Rosenthal	Richard Roth	Simon Sachs
Frances Schwartz	Sara Helen Seltzer	Morton Shor
Abraham Suskins	Samuel Weinberg	Jessie Masnikoff

June Yahrzeits

July Yahrzeits

Board of Directors

President	Bonny Strassler	289-3004	bonstrassler@comcast.net
VP Member	Ellen Werther	430-4343	junetenth1935@gmail.com
VP Bldgs	Ellen Boden	703-401-2939	championsresource@hotmail.com
Secretary	Ruth Chodrow	886-2252	rchodrow@gmail.com
Treasurer	Patty Sutker	456-6647	lpsutker@yahoo.com
At-Large	TBD		
At-Large	Larry Sutker	456-6647	ceolhs@gmail.com
Trustee	Doug Degen	996-8651	dbd@ntelos.net
Trustee	Alan Goldenberg	885-6878	adgvlg@gmail.com
Trustee	Richard Young	885-1481	richardfyoung@gmail.com
Rabbi	Joe Blair	925-272-8573	RabbiJoeB@hotmail.com

A HUGE THANK YOU TO DEBBIE JACOBS, KEN SCHWARTZ AND KAY STOHR WHO HAVE SERVED THE TEMPLE WELL DURING THE PAST TERM OF OFFICE.

**ENJOY THE
SUMMER
TIME!**

Summer 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				JUNE 1	2	3
4 Women's Group meet at 2 pm	5	6	7	8 Ducks in a Row 6:30- 8:30	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16 WG Social gathering 6:30—8 pm	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	July 1
2	3	4 HAPPY 4TH OF JULY!	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12 Temple Board Meet- ing at 7 pm	13	14 Lay-led Shabbat Services 7:30	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31		August 9 Board Meet- ing	August 11 Lay-led Shabbat Services	August 12 Women's Group meet- ing at 2 pm	

LET'S HAVE A PICNIC!

Remember all the fun we had at our Interfaith Lenten potluck dinners? Let's keep the fun going!

Please join us at our first KYN (Know Your Neighbor) picnic. All congregants from A.M.E. Allen Chapel Church, Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Islamic Center of the Shenandoah Valley, Temple House of Israel, and Trinity Episcopal Church are invited. And bring a friend!



KYN Picnic:

Date: July 23, 2017

Time: 5:30-7:30 P.M.

Location: Oakdale Park, Bridgewater, VA

Bring a potluck dish to share – no pork, please. Please list ingredients for the benefit of people with food sensitivities.

The fun will include:

Soccer balls and frisbees for kids

Henna painting

Informal horseshoe games

Face painting

Calligraphed bookmarks in three languages (Hebrew, English, Arabic)

And plenty more!