



Temple House of Israel Bulletin

A Member Congregation of the Union for Reform Judaism
15 North Market Street, Staunton, VA 24401 (540) 886-4091
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1412, Staunton, VA 24402
www.thoi.org

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

AUGUST 2017 / AV-ELUL 5777



- We will have **lay led services on August 11** at 7:30. This will be English-emphasis service 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 was an excellent full-length feature article about the amazing life accomplishments of our own **Rabbi Lynne Landsberg** in the News Leader's July 30 issue. Check it out. We've always known she is one fantastic woman.

President's Message

Dear Temple Members,

For some of us the summer is still lazy, while others are beginning to return to busy personal and community schedules. Much planning has occurred over the summer including services for the next year, High Holiday clergy, and discussions about engaging the congregation in planning for our future.

Looking at the schedule for August, there is an upcoming **lay-led service** on August 11 and a **congregational picnic** at the end of August. Be on the lookout for an email finalizing the picnic!

For the High Holidays, we welcome Rabbi Dan Alexander, Rabbi Emeritus from Congregation Beth Israel in Charlottesville. As in the past, Rabbi Joe will alternate services with Rabbi Dan between THOI and Beth El.

The board is busy planning a series of focus groups to provide members an opportunity to give constructive input and discuss many items related to our community life. Your input is valuable in guiding the board in future decision-making and planning. More information will come your way. Please consider participating in this valuable exercise!

From the Rabbi's Desk

Dear Temple House of Israel Congregants and Friends,

Summer is more than half over as you read this, and the activities of the congregation for the coming year are being planned and arranged now. In only a few weeks we enter into the High Holy Days season with the arrival of the month of Elul. One month later is Rosh HaShanah, ten days after that is Yom Kippur, and five days after that Sukkot begins. We are face to face with the coming whirlwind—it is time to prepare!

Rabbi's Message

Summer is not generally noted for any of the well-known holidays on the Jewish calendar. Perhaps that is because it is a liturgical period when we have a more solemn, sad, focus. This is a significant period of remembrance of sad events for Jews. In fact, this year July to August is the time in which both of the fast days related to the Three Weeks fall.

The Three Weeks is a period that spans the time between the 17th of Tamuz (Yom Shivah Asarah be'Tamuz), sometimes called the fast of the fourth month, commemorating the siege and breach of the walls of Jerusalem, and the 9th of Av, (Tisha Be'Av), the most solemn and sad day in the Jewish calendar, sometimes known as the fast of the fifth month. This latter day commemorates the capture and desecration, and the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. These two days fall this year on the evenings to days of July 10th-11th and July 31st-August 1st, so we are starting August at the end of the Three Weeks, literally on Tisha Be'Av.

Tradition tells us that multiple calamities befell the Jews on each of these two days in different years. In fact, tradition holds that both instances of the occupation and the destruction of the Temple occurred on Tisha Be'Av, although many years apart (roughly 586 BCE by the Babylonians, and 70 CE by the Romans). The entire period of three weeks has been considered a time of semi-mourning for the loss of the Temple and the sacrificial system which was followed there. Since the year 70 CE (2,087 years ago!) there has been no animal sacrifice in Judaism (and the idea of human sacrifice was prohibited much earlier, in the time of Abraham, roughly 3,867 years ago). Instead, the rabbis instituted the form of worship we use now, with prayers used as the sacrificial offering in place of animals, meal, first fruits, or other items brought to the temple, and the main form of worship was transferred from the central location of the Temple to the home, where one's table serves as the altar. That is why the ritual for holidays and meals includes Challah (the braided egg bread) as the equivalent of the 'show bread' in the Temple, wine for Kiddush (sanctification), candles to mark the sacred time as separate from secular time, the candle flame to remind us of the fire on the altar, and salt to represent the spices and the incense.

Because it is viewed as a period of mourning, or semi-mourning, some of the mourning rituals and practices are followed by those who commemorate these events. Traditionally, one would not shave or get a haircut during this period, shop for or purchase new clothing, wear leather (which requires killing an animal to make it), hold celebratory events such as weddings, or attend parties or public celebrations. More strictly observant Jews avoid eating meat during this period (meat is considered both a source of pleasure, and a reminder that the Temple was destroyed and the sacrifices there ended—which meant that meat for use at home was limited or curtailed. In addition, this is the source of the practice of many, particularly among Conservative and most Orthodox Jews not to allow the use of musical instruments in the synagogue for services; the idea is that since we are considered still to be in mourning for the loss of the Temple, the pleasure of music is to be avoided. Prior to the destruction of the Temple, musical instruments were in use in the Temple, as we can readily find in Psalms (see Psalm 150 for a perfect example). We begin the Three Weeks with a fast day, and we end it with a fast day. Little more than fasting and specific additions to prayers change on the 17th of Tamuz, but the traditional observance of Tisha Be'Av is not only to fast, but to gather at night, sit on low stools or the ground with shoes removed (as mourners) and

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Rabbi's Message (con't)

change the book of Eichā (Lamentations) to a special Trope melody, which is both haunting and beautiful.

You may be asking, "why should Jews today be in mourning for the Temple? After all, we would not want to return to that form of worship or reinstitute animal sacrifice." I would agree with that completely (though there are people who do wish for a restoral of that system). But the logical extension of that argument leads to de-valuing and eliminating the observance, and encourages the process of forgetting—and that seems to me wrong.

If we do not remember, we lost part of what shaped us, and a piece of who we are. It seems far preferable to me to hold on to the observance, not because I seek a return to the practices that were ended, but precisely so I will know and remember what they were and how we arrived at this point. That is why each year I note the arrival of the Three Weeks, and I try to observe the traditions and customs associated with them. It is an exercise in memory, in history, and in rootedness, serving to connect me to all those countless others who came before me, all those who re-observing the traditions and customs today, and all those who will do so in future. It makes me know that I am one link in a long and strong chain, playing my tiny part in preserving and protecting this piece (and others) of our heritage through remembering and commemorating.

Wishing you a good summer, with slight echoes in mind of the song "See You in September".

Rabbi Joe Blair

Calendar

The evening of July 31 to August 1 is Tisha Be'Av; August 5 is Shabbat Nachamu; Tu Be'Av is August 6-7; Rosh Chodesh Elul is August 22-23.

As a heads up for those of you who want to plan ahead, **High Holidays** begin with Erev Rosh Hashonah services on Wednesday, September 20 with Rabbi Dan Alexander and continue on the 21st with Rabbi Joe. Yom Kippur will begin with Kol Nidre on Friday, September 29 with Rabbi Joe and continue on Saturday the 30th with Rabbi Dan Alexander.

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.

Women's Group

Please consider filling the post of **Women's Group treasurer or president**— we need you! Elizabeth Schwartz promises that the treasurer's job is easy and all the books are in fine order. Contact Bonny Strassler bonstrassler@comcast.net if you are willing to take on either of these positions to keep us running smoothly.

The countdown to the **Greater Augusta Out of the Darkness Walk** on Saturday, **October 21** is moving quickly. **Team Tikvah** needs you! Please sign up to walk with us or donate to this important cause. Your participation and generosity will certainly be appreciated. Our goal is to raise \$1500 as a team by reaching out to family and friends ... hopefully more, since last year we reached \$1700, all for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. Have a friend who isn't a member of THOI but cares about suicide prevention? Please invite them to join Team Tikvah. Call Debbie Jacobs at 540-688-8058 or email her at deb1130@hotmail.com with questions. Register online directly at <https://afsp.donordrive.com/> and look for Team Tikvah.

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 at ellenschorsch@gmail.com if you know of members the committee should contact.

Our **next meeting will be August 13 at 2:00 pm** in the social hall.

Know Your Neighbor Picnic

More than 150 people from Trinity Episcopal Church, Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Allan Chapel of AME Church, the Islamic Center of the Shenandoah Valley and Temple House of Israel came together to share a meal in July. Blessings before the meal were made in English, Arabic and Hebrew. In addition to the food, there were fun and games and activities for everyone and a good time was had by all who attended.

Donations

Thanks for the generous support of our Temple and congregation.

Alan and Vicki Goldenberg restoration of the Goldenberg Torah
Alan and Vicki Goldenberg building fund

August Celebrations

Happy Birthdays

Ellen Boden celebrates on August 6
Stephanie Brand celebrates August 11
Joe Kristoff will party on August 13
Nadine Chase celebrates on August 23
Mark Schorsch celebrates on August 30



News from the Pews

- **Refuah Shelemach:** Wishing and praying for a speedy and full recovery for Leah Farmer, Greg Cizek, Vera Flint, Tom Davis (Gail's husband), 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, and Joanne Simons (Carla Donley's aunt) .
- Mazal Tov to **new grandparents Debbie and David Jacobs.** Their daughter Mara gave birth to Aidan Levi on July 20—a precious and healthy 7 pounds, 2 ounces.
- **Thanks to Ellen Boden** who was part of the search committee finding Rabbi Dan Alexander to lead us for the High Holidays, sharing the pulpit with Rabbi Joe.
- Mazal Tov to Daniel and Janne Heifetz for another OUTSTANDING **Heifetz Institute** summer program. What an amazing 6 weeks of performances by unbelievably talented young people and a gathering of the world's top string players and piano accompanists. Bravo!

Religious School

Religious School will begin at 9:30 am, Sunday, August 27th at Beth El in Harrisonburg.

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.

****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!!

SHORTY

If you know of any teens interested in participating in SHORTY—we plan to meet the third Sunday of each month at 12:30 at Beth El. We also plan to have an event one night each month. Please contact Becky Mintzer at rem82398@aol.com.

We honor the memories of our loved ones at this season

August Yahrzeits

Ed Solomon	Donald Mindell	Anna Harris
Madeline Barth Shultz	Dorothy Bresky	Mabel Kaplan
Charles Switzer	Albert Gomberg	Julius Kane
Lucy Hyde Nicely	Louise Cohen	Samuel Schultz Loewner
Claire Jacobs	Charles Brand	Mildred Fay Degen
Bernard Goldsmith	David Greenstein	Cynthia Grossman
Anna Harris	Louis Kamerman	Doris Patterson
Shirley Peretz	Eva Roberts	Esther Rosenthal
Rachel Rothenberg	Sandra Schoenberg	Vivian Schorsch
Samuel Sebell	Miriam Wasserman	

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	richardfyong@gmail.com
Rabbi	Joe Blair	925-272-8573	RabbiJoeB@hotmail.com

August Calendar

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		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 Temple Board Meet at 7:00	10	11 Lay-led services at 7:30	12
13 Women's Group Meet at 2:00 pm	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27 First day Religious School at 9:30 am	28	29	30	31	1 Rabbi-led Shabbat services 7 pm	

The full year's religious services calendar will be published shortly.



August 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 Temple Board Meet at 7:00	10	11	12
13 Women's Group meet at 2 pm	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	

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!