



# 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***

**DECEMBER 2018 / KISLEV — SHEVAT 5779**

## From the Rabbi

### **A Word ... or More “Happy Holiday!”... Bah, Humbug!**

Let me tell you straight...I hate the expression “Happy Holiday”. That’s true as well for “This holiday season.” When I hear, “The holidays are coming,” I cringe. Just close your eyes and picture the commercials on television from the moment Halloween ends until December 25th. You see snow covering the ground and beautifully decorated trees in the homes of families. Whatever is being touted is in the context of no not the “holiday” but Christmas. This “holiday” business is absurd political correctness. Not only can anyone figure out its reference, but in fact (or at least in my humble opinion), there’s nothing wrong with it!

As a Jew, let alone a rabbi, I celebrate Chanukah exclusively. I’ve joined Christian friends—clergy and lay alike—in their Christmas celebration. While you can keep the snow in the heavens above, the rest of the visual and aural aspects of Christmas make the season special. Who’s kidding whom...there are people of all faith communities represented in this country, yet the overwhelming majority are those who hold the religious meaning of Christmas very dear. Christmas is Christmas, Chanukah is Chanukah, Kwanzaa is Kwanzaa. Viva la difference!

Sure, there are similarities between the winter holidays of Chanukah and Christmas, just as there are in the spring holidays of Passover and Easter yet each became unique for Jews and Christians. The theme of the “Ch” days is light. Maintaining daylight as the winter nights became longer was the goal; if our far ancestors couldn’t do it through the sun they could through the fires that lit up the night. Once they figured out why the sun’s light “dimmed” in the winter they continued their new tradition of kindling fire. However they re-oriented their celebration with religious twists...the lights of the menorah commemorated the light the Maccabees brought into the world through their dedication to our Jewish values, and Christians celebrate the light their savior brought to his followers.

I feel good wishing people a “merry Christmas: and I enjoy hearing it from those who don’t know I’m Jewish and a rabbi. And I feel good wishing my congregants and other Jews a “Happy Chanukah” or in Hebrew “Chag Chanukah Sameach”.

“Happy Holiday”? Bah-humbug!!

Rabbi Peter H. Grumbacher



## Words from our Temple President

Dear members and friends,

Many thanks to all members who attended the congregational workshops led by Rabbi Grumbacher over the past several months. These conversations are vital to guide us as we begin the process to hire a permanent rabbi. The search committee completed and submitted an application for a part-time rabbi with the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) in mid-November and we anxiously await applicants.

The focus for the workshops from herein will be to look ahead to rebuilding and strengthening the congregation. Here are a few questions from Rabbi Grumbacher to consider for the next workshop to be held on Saturday, December 8 at 10:00 am.

1. Name someone you believe could contribute to the well-being of THOI with effort and time and what can you do to help involve that person?
2. What are some ways you would welcome, reintroduce, or encourage that person to become involved?
3. Several conversations were about worship, namely, likes and dislikes, and your ideal of meaningful Shabbat experience. Outline in WRITING (detail will help me and the next rabbi) what those are.
4. What activities can bring the general community into the building?
5. How can THOI initiate projects that will focus on social justice?

Finally, please join us for a Chanukah potluck (meat meal) on Friday, December 7 at 6:00 pm before the Shabbat service at 7:30. Many thanks to the Women's Group for setting up and decorating. Wishing you all a bright and happy Chanukah.

L'Shalom,  
Bonny Strassler



The month of December brings **Staunton's Festival of Lights** around Gypsy Hill Park. This year **THOI has installed a lighted menorah and dreidels**. Thanks to Ellen Werther, Gail Davis, Aleeza Wilkins and Debbie and David Jacobs for conceiving, building and installing the exhibit. Check out our Lights at the Park throughout the month.

- December 7 Chanukah party and potluck at 6:00 pm  
Shabbat service at 7:30 pm where we will sing songs of our Festival of Lights in lieu of a sermon.
- December 8 Torah study at 9:00 am  
Congregational workshop at 10:00 am
- December 22 Torah study at 9:00 am
- December 22 Shabbat service at 10:00 am

## December Activities and Services

## Free Clinic Dinner

We're planning to **bring dinner to the staff at the Augusta Free Clinic** on Thursday, December 20th. Thanks to Buffy and Carol Shapiro, Debbie Jacobs, Bonny Strassler, Elizabeth Schwartz and Beth Young for providing lasagna, challah, salad, desserts, and drinks for the hard-working, very appreciative staff. They'll be able to eat before seeing patients.

## Dinner for the Valley Mission on Christmas Eve

We (that's the collective "we") are bringing dinner to the Valley Mission on Christmas Eve this year, Monday night, December 24th. Eric Stamer has agreed to prepare the food we donate and we will all join to serve the meal to the residents. When we've served everyone (usually in 2 shifts) please join us, dining with the residents. Please let Beth Young (bydesign1993@gmail.com) know what you plan to provide so we can make sure Eric has everything he needs.

- 4 whole turkeys
- 2 whole hams
- 2 pounds bacon
- 4 loaves white bread
- 40 pounds russet potatoes
- 40 pounds carrots
- 30 heads Romaine lettuce
- 16 cans (10.5 oz each) cream of mushroom soup
- 32 cans (14.5 oz each) green beans
- 22 cups French's crispy fried onions
- Assorted desserts (cakes, pies, cookies etc)

No one person needs to bring all of anything. It's collective. Food should be delivered to Eric's kitchen, 19 E. Frederick Street, on Friday, December 14th. Call Tish's cell 849-0537 or Eric's cell 294-7307 to confirm that someone will be there for you.

## Women's Group

We've divvied up duties to simplify our meetings. Thanks to those who have stepped up and divvied up: Elizabeth will lead our meetings (and will co-sign checks in Deb's absence) while Buffy will be our communications conduit, Debbie will continue as treasurer and Beth will take meeting notes.

- Thanks to the Degens for donating cold drinks and Stu Davidson whose donation covered salad and fresh fruit for the attendees of the Annual Suicide Survivor Support Day in November. The local AFSP truly appreciated these donations from THOI members. Team Tikvah exceeded our \$1500 fundraising goal this year as we walked to remember Skylar, Leah's beautiful granddaughter. Leah and Pat went home, but Deb, Ruth, Ellen, Eliana and Beth joined many others who walked a lap around the park. To continue our success, John Metheny, owner of Nu-Beginnings **The Store** is helping us raise more money for suicide prevention efforts by asking customers if they'd like to "round up" their check when they pay at the register from now until late December. So far more than \$120 has been raised through the kindness of his patrons toward our Walk out of Darkness donations. Delicious sandwiches, friendly service and local products! Visit The Store at 221 North Lewis Street.



## Women's Group continued

- At our November meeting we voted to send cards with donations to the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA as well as Temple Adat Elohim in Thousand Oaks, California.
- The **Caring Committee** needs a chair person and you are probably just that person! The job is not difficult and comes with instructions and stamps. Please contact Elizabeth if you're able to send cards to those who are ill or home-bound or need a pick-me-up.
- There's no meeting in December. **We look forward to seeing you January 13 at 2 pm in the social hall** to continue plans for the future. Keep your eye out for a February meet and greet and a silent auction and cocktail party in May.

## December Celebrations

Happy Birthday to Gregg Goldenberg whose birthday is December 6th

Robert Pendleton celebrating on December 11th

Alan Goldenberg on the 12th (one that ends in '0')

Beth Young on the 14th (another one that ends in '0')

Sam Goldenberg also on the 14th

Sarah Grove-Humphries on the 15th

Rosalie Waterman celebrates on the 19th (another one that ends in '0')

Eliana Brown celebrates on the 22nd

Jesse Landsberg Ward has a birthday on the 25th

Anna Degen celebrates on the 28th

Philip Chodrow also on the 28th

Happy Anniversary to Ellen and Lou Boden on December 19th



## News from the Pews

- Rabbi Peter H. Grumbacher's interview was published in the News Leader, responding to the killings at Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh and speaking of his father's experience during the Holocaust on the anniversary of Kristallnacht.
- Ruth Chodrow gave a presentation on the history and architecture of Temple House of Israel to a group of students from Stuart Hall School. The 18 students were seniors in Chaplain Connor Gwin's religion class. After the formal presentation, the students had an opportunity to look at prayer-books and see a Torah scroll. Ruth answered multiple questions. At the end, Ruth was given a hand-made card, signed by the students, expressing sympathy and condolences for the shooting at the Pittsburgh synagogue.
- Refuah Sh'leimah to Tom Davis who continues his slow but steady recovery from heart transplant surgery. He's now been moved and is doing his rehab in Charlottesville. Gail thanks the congregation for all the continued thoughts and prayers sent to her.
- Steve Guberman is still convalescing at Kings' Daughters Rehab Center after a stroke.
- Mi Sheberach and Refua Sh'leimah and all those in our community who are in need of healing.
- Many thanks to Shelby Owen of Emmanuel Episcopal Church who put together a meaningful, heart-warming Interfaith Prayer Service for the Nation. Beth and Ruth each took part in the service along with clergy and members from Trinity Episcopal, Covenant Presbyterian, the Islamic Center of Shenandoah Valley, Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal, and Christ Lutheran Church. Sarah Grove-Humphries was the music director, leading us in song. Ruth counted 27 congregants in attendance.

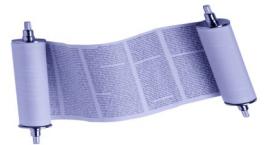
## December Yahrzeits

Flora Barth	Joseph Barth	Louis Belfor
David Brownold	Hannah Degen	Anne Goldberg
Rose Greenfield	Aaron Harris	Sadie Jacobson
Elain Werther	Max Klotz	Milton Klotz
Clara Litvin	Earl Nicely	Tina Rosenberg
Abraham Rosenthal	Simon Rosenthal	Alma Samuels
Phillip Seltzer	Albert Shultz	Lydia Switzer
Hubert Thompson	Rhea Walters	Irvin Weinberg
Seymour Isaac	Joseph Loewner	Sara Sachs
Fannie Snyder	Morris Snyder	

## As a Reminder

### Support Temple House of Israel

- THOI is registered at **amazonsmile.com**. Any time you shop at Amazon simply go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) from the web browser on your computer or mobile device and a portion will be donated to THOI.
- If you use Facebook, you are encouraged to add comments to THOI posts. Please "like" and "follow" us on social media.
- Consider a donation to the Torah Maintenance and Repair fund. Keeping our Torah scrolls in good repair requires an ongoing and regular effort. Your checks to THOI should be marked "Torah Restoration Fund".
- Can't figure out what to buy for a gift for a local friend who has everything, or to say a big thank you? A pink flamingo flocking may be just the right gift, and it's a contribution to the Women's Group. Those flamingos get lonely in their box in the closet. They love seeing the light of day and the smiles on recipient's faces. Contact Debbie (deb1130@hotmail.com) if you'd like to share them.



## Recent Donations

**Thank you** to those who have supported our congregation during the past month with their much appreciated financial donations:

For the Torah Restoration Fund ..... Latifa Kropf  
 For the large print prayerbook ..... Benn Legum and Penelope Ferguson

## Board Contacts

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