



# 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 2019 / SHEVAT– ADAR 5779**

## From the Rabbi

### A Word ... or More “Bentching Gomel!”

So I’m in my Mini Cooper about a quarter mile from our home. A woman failed to heed a Yield sign. I was hit on the passenger side, flew (literally) onto someone’s property knocking over a fence and hitting two parked cars. I was able to get out and the only injury I suffered was/is a “skiers” thumb, a little cut on my knee and that’s it. I was lucky.

There’s a prayer one says following moments like this; it’s called *bentching gomel* (the Yiddish word *bentching* is derived from the same origin as “benediction.”) One offers this prayer when a life was spared. I’ve assisted others in reciting it. This was the first time I ever had to offer it myself.

I “Googled” it (of course I did; I “Google” everything) and I found the following: “bentching gomel” *is a recognition that all those little gifts from God that are all too easy to take for granted are not less thanks-worthy than (a) major event such as the lesson of the Exodus—that God is constantly bestowing His (sic!) goodness to me.*

What this rabbi is saying is that our sages looked at our history which has proven the need to thank God for what we might consider huge moments of being saved, moments when our entire People might have disappeared were it not for the goodness of God. Those like the Exodus remind us that we are here today because of a life-saving moment in our People’s history.

But we know that our tradition teaches that each man, woman and child is as important as our People in the aggregate; each individual is created in the Divine Image.

I’m grateful that I can begin the secular new year able to write this and to continue to serve you. I’m grateful that I can still be with my family and friends. I’m grateful that God sought to it to preserve me at least for a little while longer.

May each of you and yours have a HEALTHY and PEACEFUL 2019... and don’t wait til November to give thanks for, as the television show states “a million little things.”

Rabbi Peter H. Grumbacher

## Services and Events

**Staunton’s Festival of Lights** in Gypsy Hill Park are on display through January 2. We installed a lighted menorah and dreidels, thanks to Ellen Werther, Gail Davis, Aleeza Wilkins and Debbie and David Jacobs. If you haven’t seen them, check it out.

- January 18      Shabbat service at 7:30 pm
- January 19      Torah study at 9:00 am
  
- January 25      Shabbat service at 7:30 pm
- January 26      Torah study at 9:00 am

## Words from our Temple President

Dear members and friends,

This month Tu B'Shevat begins on Sunday, January 20th. If you have attended THOI's Tu B'Shevat seders in the past, you will know that it is a delightful feast and time together, reflecting on the start of life after a cold winter and all that nature has to offer. For us in Virginia, we are in the midst of winter and the emergence of spring seems far off, but the message resonates with me. The hope of warm days, budding trees, and birdsong are enough to keep me going through the cold and dark of January and February

The cycle of seasons and life is much the same for our congregation. I'm hearing so many positive comments and the outlook for our future as a nurturing and cohesive congregation seems within reach. It takes all of us talking, listening, being together to make our way forward sure and successful. So please take an opportunity this winter season to attend a service, a workshop or a board meeting. The hope and life our our congregation that is affirmed as we worship and socialize, plan and implement together is a sure sign that our spring is coming.

L'Shalom,  
Bonny Strassler

## Holocaust Remembrance Day



International Holocaust Remembrance Day will be marked with a presentation of *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* to be staged at JMU's Forbes Center on Sunday, January 27 at 2:00 pm. In addition, on Monday, January 28 there will be a special program featuring twins who survived the Holocaust, speaking about their experiences. For details <http://www.jmuforbescenter.com/forbescenter/events/2019/01/27-a-holocaust-remembrance.shtml>.

## Women's Group

The Women's Group was busy this past December. We hosted a delicious Hanukkah Potluck for almost 40 people. Thanks to all the ladies who helped during the set-up and to all our great cooks. The candle light from all the menorahs did indeed bring light into the room!

Our dinner brought to the Free Clinic was graciously accepted. Everyone was well fed. We made donations to both the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh and Temple Adat Elohim in Thousand Oaks Jewish communities in memory of those lost in the shootings at each location.

In addition, we made a donation to the Salvation Army Neediest Families Fund at the holiday season.

- We **look forward to seeing you January 13** (weather permitting) **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. Everyone is welcome with their new ideas!

## Outreach

Thanks to all who donated food or served at the Valley Mission on Christmas Eve and also to those who Cooked for the Free Clinic dinner. Our efforts on behalf of others are definitely appreciated!



## Gift to the Congregation

Thanks to an artistic metal sculptor, we now have a steel menorah on permanent display in the social hall. Keith Zimmerman completed his year-long certification program run by the Virginia Institute of Blacksmithing, and presented the menorah as a gift to the congregation during the December 7th service. Keith lives in Staunton and works at his forge in Waynesboro. His sculpture is exhibited at the Michael Tusing Gallery (next door) and the Shenandoah Valley Art Center. Thank you Keith!

## Cemetery Landscaping

There are visible changes to our cemetery! A comprehensive master plan for the entire cemetery site was funded by Dennis Ward and Rabbi Lynne Landsberg with the professional guidance of Amy Arnold, city planner and landscape architect. Amy researched our cemetery, created a photographic booklet and drew plans for development in phases to include landscape trees, shrubs and seating. The goal was to create a contemplative space with both visual and auditory separation from Augusta Street and the neighboring residences. The specific plant material was selected for low maintenance once the plants are established. Phase I includes the planting of a continuous hedge along the north and east edges of the historic section of the cemetery which will grow to 6-7' in height with no pruning. Those plants will go in the fall, 2019. Phase II continues the separation along North August Street with a mixture of flowering shrubs and is now complete. Phase III recommends adding trees and small gardens with benches. Phase IV, V and VI continue the plan which is available for anyone to view in the Rabbi's office. Each aspect of the plan will be coordinated with the Temple Trustees.

Dennis and Lynne have also very generously donated the plants, the labor by Staunton Plant Company and the maintenance for phases I and II in order to get the plants established. The congregation, past, present and future, are extremely grateful for this long range gift to us all. Thank you, Dennis, with Lynne's blessings.

## January Celebrations



Michael Degen will celebrate his birthday on January 6th  
Gail Davis celebrates on the 12th  
Rich Young celebrates on the 16th  
Aleeza Wilkins also celebrates on the 16th  
Dennis Ward's birthday is January 29th  
Doug Degen turns another year older on January 31st

**Happy  
New Year!**

## News from the Pews

- Paul Klein is undergoing chemo and radiation therapy for a slow growing, esophageal cancer. We wish him a smooth recovery and continued good wishes.
- Refuah Sh'leimah to Tom Davis who came home to continue his slow but steady recovery from heart transplant surgery. Your continued support for Gail is much appreciated.
- Steve Guberman is still convalescing at Kings' Daughters Rehab Center after a stroke.
- Michelle sends her regards from Florida. She and Jim can be reached at 1 LaCosta Place, Palm Coast, FL 32137 or at their old email address. Michelle reports that they're settling in, meeting new neighbors and hopes to see us in May. She and Jim have sold their house in Wintergreen.
- Mi Sheberach and Refua Sh'leimah and all those in our community who are in need of healing.

## Recent Donations

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

For the Entrance Renovation Fund .....	Mike and Lauren Ackerman
	..... Deb Jacobs
	..... Ellen Werther
	..... Gail Davis
	..... Joanne Hirsch
	..... Beth and Rich Young
In memory of Lynne Landberg .....	Debbie Jacobs
For the Torah Restoration Fund .....	Simona Aranow

## Bring Smiles!

### WINTER SALE!!

THOI's pink flamingos don't like to be stuck in a carton in the storage closet all winter... so... the cost to 'flock' someone has dropped to \$15 (or 2 'flockings' for \$25). Ask Ellen S., Beth, Alan, Ken, Rosalie, or Leah to name a few of the recipients—being 'flocked' is a one-of-a-kind experience, sure to put a big SMILE on that special person's face—whatever occasion (birthday, anniversary, thank you, MAZEL TOV, you're the best neighbor anyone could ask for... whatever you want to celebrate!) Just tell us what to write on the sign (or make your own), and we'll place the flamingos on the person's lawn for at least a 24 hour visit.... And if you wish, you're very welcome to participate in the 'flocking'.



Help the Women's Group raise funds that help THOI and the Greater Staunton community. Contact Deb Jacobs by email: deb1130@hotmail.com at least 2 weeks in advance of the 'flocking' date.

## 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. Spreading the word will encourage others to join.
- Consider a donation to the Torah Maintenance and Repair fund. Keeping our Torah scrolls in good repair requires an on-going and regular effort. Your checks to THOI should be marked "Torah Restoration Fund".



## January Yahrzeits

A. David Biatch	Sophie Cohen	Robert Davis
Morris Degen	Marjorie Edelman	Milton Finkel
Leah Frank	Arthur Kaufman	Pauline Prince
Emily Schorsch	Daniel Seligmann	Morton Sloane
Lamartine Gary Strauss	Augusta (Gussie) Swit	Flora Switzer
Solomon Switzer	Roberta Weber	Abraham Weinberg
Abraham Weinberg	Ethel Weinberg	Johanna Weinberg
Irene Lebson		

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