



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

FEBRUARY 2015 / SHEVAT-ADAR 5775

President's Message

Dear Congregants and Friends,

I want to thank you all for being members of Temple House of Israel. Through your memberships you are saying that our beautiful temple with its long history and our quirky congregation from different backgrounds matter to you. THIS COMMUNITY MATTERS! You are supporting our life with your hard-earned money. You are keeping us alive. Thank you so much.

Dues statements will be arriving at your homes soon. When they do, please pay quickly and consider adding an extra amount as a much-needed donation. We can use every extra dollar.

We have a final January service on January 31 at 10 am. This is our first Saturday morning service of the year. It will be followed by a light brunch furnished by the Women's Group and our oneg hosts. Then in February we will have a service on February 13 (maybe a lovefest?), Ms. Shelly Christensen as guest speaker on inclusiveness and accessibility on February 20 and a pulpit exchange with Emmanuel Episcopal Church on February 27, all at 7:30 pm. Please join the group in the sanctuary for these services.

Rosalie Waterman, temple president

From the Rabbi's Desk

Dear Temple House of Israel Congregants and Friends,

The season of Khoref, winter, has finally arrived for us, with chill temperatures, and even a little bit of snow seen, at least once! It was certainly not been terrible (so far, B"H), but I have to admit that for my taste it is sufficient, and I am about ready for spring at this point! I will accept that I am a wimp in this regard. ☺

A reminder that at this time of year, especially with the cold, food pantries and shelters are overtaxed, so any donations you can make to support them are much appreciated, and I also commend to your attention Mazon, the Jewish organization that seeks to alleviate hunger.

The most recent article in the newspaper that I penned appeared in early January, under the rubric "Here's Looking at Jews". That column, and all previous, are linked on the congregation's Facebook page. Please take a look there and "like" it to be updated as we post new things. A February version will be forthcoming.

Of Note:

- January 30th to February 1st is the weekend of MAJYK, the junior youth group. All 6th to 8th grade students are eligible to attend. Contact Becky Mintzer or Dara Hall for more information. Some of the religious school and Shorty youth are planning to attend.
- The Tu Be'Shevat Seder will be on the evening of February 3rd at Beth El this year.
- The Shorty youth group will be hosting several other regional youth groups from Reform congregations for their Ski Weekend event on February 6th-7th. Be sure to join them for a lively Shabbat service on Friday night, the 6th.
- Anyone interested is invited to join me at the 13th annual Kavod v'Nichum North American Chevrah Kadisha and Cemetery Conference in Austin, Texas, February 22nd-24th. I would be delighted to have you there with me to learn. For information, please contact me.
- See the calendar and "Special Events" for the special voices to be heard during all 3 of our February services.

Rabbi's Message

The Torah Parashiot now through the month of February are Beshalach, Yitro, Mishpatim (also Shabbat Shekalim), Terumah, Tetzaveh (Also Shabbat Zachor), and then Ki Tisa as we enter March. We are in year 2 of the triennial cycle.

I have written about Tu Be'Shevat, the New Year for the Trees, in prior years. I don't want to repeat myself, so let me just urge you to attend the Seder the evening of February 3rd in Harrisonburg. It is a wonderful ritual celebrating trees and their produce, the land of Israel, Kabbalistic thought and teachings, environmentalism and our connection to the land and the earth as a whole, and Torah, as well as our gratitude to G-d for creation and all its' bounty. Be there or be square – 'nuff said.

Looking towards next month, I want to say a few words about Purim ahead of time. The holiday of Purim falls in the month of March. Purim is seen as a fun holiday, often thought of as being for children – like Halloween, a time of dress-up, make-believe, silliness, loud noisemakers, parades, songs and skits, and tasty treats. And, to be sure, it is. But at the same time, Purim is a very serious holiday. It is not accidental that the rabbis would write about the day of atonements by re-parsing their name – calling them not Yom Kippurim (Day of Atonements), but Yom Ki Purim, Day LIKE Purim. What would it mean to say that the most solemn day, a day of complete fasting and focusing entirely on the spiritual, is like the day of Purim, a time of mirth and tricks and treats?

Looking past the things that catch the attention of children, Purim is a story that demonstrates a much deeper and often darker aspect. It shows us power, and the abuse and corruption of it; the demeaning and objectification of others, the arousal and nurturance of bigotry, xenophobia, and jealousy; the consuming fire of lust and greed. It shows us a time when what is good is hidden and G-d seems absent, until the individual acts as G-d would have them do. It overturns the social order, showing that despite appearances the 'powerful' are not, that true power resides in the individual – even if they appear powerless; that good can triumph over evil, but only if good people act, even at the threat or cost of losing their lives.

The story of Purim is set in a Persian satrapy, but there is nothing about it that could not occur today, in a hundred places – and this begs the question of whether it is in fact being acted out now somewhere, or in several somewhere; and perhaps at times even here in our own land. I am coming to believe that there is no people, no nation, that is completely guiltless in these matters. The story is remarkable in that it calls on us to reach within ourselves and find the strength, the courage, and the moral fiber to do what is right, no matter how powerless we may feel, no matter how hard it may be, no matter what the society in which we live may say. It is a call to action, to fulfill the commandment enunciated in the phrase, **Tzedek, Tzedek, Tirdof! Justice! Justice SHALL you pursue.**

May we all be blessed to feel that call, to muster the urgency and strength to respond to it, to find it within our power to answer it and to act, and to see those acts come to fruition speedily in our own days so that the world will be at one, and all our children will know abundant blessings, and everyone will rest beneath their fig trees and vines and know peace. And let us say, Amen.

B'virkat Shalom,
Rabbi Joe Blair

Contacting the Rabbi

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 (925-2-RAVJOE). 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 now 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.

NEWS FROM THE PEWS

- ❖ Ellen Werther's son Jonathan will be married to Hayana on Maui, an enviable destination wedding, on March 23rd. They live in Santa Monica, California. Mazel Tov!
- ❖ Gordon Sutker, son of Larry and Patty Sutker, will be married to his fiancée Yael in Tel Aviv, their home, on July 6th. Another Mazel Tov! And another enviable destination!

February Calendar and Services

						31 Shabbat Service at 10 am
1	2	3 Tu Be'Shevat seder at Beth El	4	5	6 Women's Group lunch 12:30	7
8	9	10	11	12	13 Shabbat Services 7:30 w/ Dr. Linell Moss	14 <i>Happy Valentine's Day</i>
15	16	17 Temple Board Meet 7:00	18	19	20 Shabbat services 7:30 w/ Shelly Christensen	21
22 Women's Group at 2	23	24	25	26	27 Shabbat Services 7:30 w/ Rev. Shelby Owen	28

Oneg hosts for February 13: Rosalie Waterman and Kay Stohr

Oneg hosts for February 20: Ruth Chodrow

Oneg hosts for February 27: Nadine Chase, Leah Farmer and Marsha Pillet

Special Events

- On **February 13, Dr. Linell Gray Moss** will join us as a guest cantorial soloist for our regularly scheduled Shabbat Service. Join us at 7:30 pm. even though Sarah Grove-Humphries will be away that evening.
- February is Jewish Disability Awareness Month. On **February 20th**, **JDAM founder Shelly Christensen** will give the devar Torah in recognition of Inclusiveness Shabbat. “JDAM promotes the idea that living a Jewish life is not dependent on one's ability but rather on one's desire to live Jewishly in the world”. We invite all who are interested in this topic to attend the service, to hear Ms. Christensen speak, and to have an opportunity to meet her following the service. Shelly Christensen is the author of *The Jewish Community Guide to Inclusion of People with Disabilities*, and Founder and Executive Director of Inclusion Innovations. She will describe The Inclusion Program: a nationally recognized program and a leader in the field of inclusion in faith communities. For more information please contact Rabbi Joe Blair, [925-272-8563](tel:925-272-8563), or email rabbijoeb@hotmail.com
- We will host **Rev. Shelby Owen** who will deliver the sermon for our service on February 27th as part of a pulpit exchange. Rabbi Joe will address Emmanuel Episcopal, her congregation, on Sunday morning, March 1st. As an added bonus to attending the later Sunday service, you will have the pleasure of hearing Sarah Grove-Humphries play the organ for their worship service.
- The Creation Care Group of Harrisonburg Mennonite Church and the Climate Action Alliance of the Valley have invited us to attend the showing of “**Years of Living Dangerously**”, an **award-winning video series**. The showings are Wednesday evenings from **7:00-8:00 January 7 through March 4**. Come for one or all 9 episodes. The church is located at 1552 South High Street (42 south) and may also be reached from Emery Street via Central Avenue. Enter by the Main Sanctuary door. Signs will direct you to Room E2,3. For more information, call Anne Nielsen at 574-6125. Follow the link below for the first episode. Hollywood celebrities and respected journalists span the globe to explore the issues of climate change and cover intimate stories of human triumph and tragedy. [Years of Living Dangerously Premiere Full Episode youtube.com](#)

Donations

Thank you to these generous people who have recently donated to the temple:

Jim Osbourne

Larry and Patty Sutker

Party time!

Happy Birthday Vera, celebrating on February 17th

Happy Birthday David, celebrating on Feb. 29th
(which means he's approximately 17 years old)

Happy Anniversary to Ken and Elizabeth who will celebrate many happy years together on Feb. 12th



The Women's Group

- ❖ The Women's Group will be meeting at the new restaurant, **Staunton Thai, on Friday, February 6 at 12:30**. Those who have eaten there have praised both the food and the service. Please let Ellen W. know if you are planning to attend so she can reserve a table.
- ❖ **Our next meeting will be at 2:00 pm on February 22nd** at THOI--Same time, different date. We will be planning our book discussion, scheduled for our April meeting and also be discussing future events, including a possible social evening--perhaps with dance lessons!
- ❖ So that you have plenty of time to read, our April 19th meeting will be a discussion of *Chapters of the Heart*, co-edited by Rabbi Sue, who also wrote one of the stories. The book is for sale at the Temple's Judaica shop and at Sacred Circle in downtown Staunton. Or contact Ellen W, Rosalie W. or Beth Y. to borrow a copy.
- ❖ There is an **SPCA box in the store room to hold your donations** for the organization. Elizabeth has put a list on the bulletin board which indicates what donations the SPCA can use.

We welcome all women of the Temple. If you have a suggestion or want to put something on the agenda, please email Ellen W at junetenth1935@gmail.com.

Voices of Survival

A Concert Commemorating the 70th Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz
and in Observance of International Holocaust Remembrance Day

Tuesday, January 27, 2015 at 7:00 pm in the Carpenter Theatre at Richmond CenterStage
A partnership among the Virginia Holocaust Museum,
the Carole and Marcus Weinstein Jewish Community Center and the Richmond Symphony

The program will reflect humanity's triumph over the atrocities of the Holocaust by featuring works by composers who suffered at the hands of the SS as inmates, as well as excerpts from Verdi Requiem and John Williams' Music from Schindler's List. Video vignettes featuring Richmond's Holocaust Survivors will be presented throughout the concert as living documentation of the Survivors' experiences before and after their freedom was regained.

Adult tickets start at \$20/ student tickets start at \$10.

Purchase tickets online or call 1-800-514-ETIX

Virginia Holocaust Museum Speaker

Join the Virginia Holocaust Museum on **January 25th** for a lecture and special preview of our upcoming Auschwitz exhibit. The event will begin at 2:00 p, at VHM with an introduction by Dr. Charles Sydnor, which examines the history of Auschwitz and the legal cases against camp guards. Following the lecture by Dr. Sydnor, Tim Hensley will give audiences a sneak peek of the upcoming exhibit on Auschwitz, which is expected to open in April 2015. The event is free and open to the public.

Shorty

SHORTY has been busy! On December 25th we celebrated the season with Chinese food and the movie, Exodus: Gods and Kings. Since then, we are preparing for Ski weekend coming soon - February 6th & 7th. If you know of any youth in the area who are interested in joining us, have them contact Becky at rem82398@aol.com. It will be a fabulous weekend. Please join us for services on Friday night February 6th and show your support for our youth group! Also, if you are interested in joining us for any NFTY-MAR events, please contact Becky. There are lots of great trips coming up!

Religious School

Religious School is back in full swing in the New Year and we have a lot of wonderful events in the works for early 2015. On Sunday, January 25th, our students are welcoming Tu Be'Shevat in a different way than previous years. Instead of a traditional seder, they are taking some time to honor their parents and are grandparents by organizing, preparing, and serving them a luncheon. There will be fruits and nuts consistent with the holiday, as well as some student-made dishes (salad, kugel and quiche). Additionally, they will be doing some plantings and making crafts for their parents. It should be an awesome event! This February, there will be some great opportunities for our Dalet students. Several will be going to Northern Virginia for a field trip and will experience what it was like to go through Ellis Island. Also, some of our dalet students and SHORTY members will be going to NFTY's Majyk event.

SAVE the date - Saturday, March 7th will be the Religious School Shabbat service at Beth El with a luncheon following the service. All are welcome and encouraged to be there to support our children!

If you have any questions about Religious School, please contact Dara Hall, Principal at mddmhall@verizon.net.

February Yahrzeits

Melvin Berman	Moshe Cohen	B. Edelman
Irving Goldberg	David Goldstein	Henrietta Goldstein
Fannie Greenstone	Hyman Greenstone	Oscar Mundell
Hiah Neuger	Harry Patterson	Betty Robins
Leah Schneider	Jerome Seligmann	Beckie Shapiro
Dorothy Sragovitz	Regina Barth Strauss	Mae Hare Suskins
Minnie Switzer	Albert Williams	Rose Zultowski

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