



# 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*

**APRIL 2015 / NISAN - IYAR 5775**

## President's Message

Dear Congregants and Friends,

April is upon us with its mild temperatures for the most part. This is the time of year we pine for in January and February. It is also time for Passover. However you are celebrating the holiday, I hope you enjoy marking such a significant event.

For me and the Board, it is time to think ahead to the annual meeting to be held on May 31. It sums up our year and looks ahead to the next. I would like you, as members of Temple House of Israel, to think seriously about how you want 2015-2016 to unfold. What classes or programs or events would you like to attend? Are there speakers you would like to hear or discussions we should bring to the temple? Please think and then tell me or another board member. With this information, we, along with the rabbi, can make plans for the next year of our congregational life. All of our names and various means of contact are in the back of this bulletin.

I want to thank you for paying your annual dues promptly. We are ahead of last year in collections, and the board appreciates your effort.

I would also like to welcome new members Diana and David Black, Nadia Webb and to Bonny Strassler who has made the transition from affiliate to full member. The more the merrier.

Rosalie Waterman, President THOI

## From the Rabbi's Desk

Dear Temple House of Israel Congregants and Friends,

We are starting the coming month off with a bang! The evening of April 3<sup>rd</sup> is the start of Passover, which means that the day of April 3<sup>rd</sup> is the fast of the First Born. Passover continues until the 8<sup>th</sup> day on April 8<sup>th</sup>, Saturday, and will end that evening at sundown. If you wish to "sell" your chametz in advance of the holiday, please be in contact with me.

You may recall that at the end of February I attended a conference put on by Kavod v'Nichum. It was the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Chevrah Kadisha, and Cemetery Conference. It was a wonderful event; if you have any interest in any aspect of cemetery management, Bikkur Cholim or the work of the Chevrah Kadisha, I recommend you plan to attend. The next conference is scheduled for June 2016 in Boston.

There were four "tracks" at the conference: Traditional Taharah, Family Centered Taharah, Community Building, and Jewish Burial. Highlights included sessions and discussions of the transformational power of water, Taharah liturgy, Organ donation and autopsies, essence of Taharah, Taharah at Home, Green burials, Krovei Yisrael – ceremonies to honor non-Jews, Texas burial societies and congregations history, cremation and burial, interfaith sections in traditional cemeteries, sewing shrouds as a community building activity, documents we all need to have completed, Ebola and infection control for the Chevrah Kadisha, and Crypto-Jewish studies & Hispanic-Jewish relations. The conference was lively, interesting and informative, as well as fun, bringing together 80 amazing people from across North America. I recommend this conference to you highly.

In a related vein, I am now (as I write this) in the last week of the fifth semester-long course through the Gamliel Institute. The group of students who have made it this far are inspiring, and extraordinary people. The final course in the series will begin in two weeks. It is an

opportunity to learn that is unprecedented. It consists of online classes as preparation, then a study mission that includes hands-on practica and studies in New York, Prague, Tsefat, and Jerusalem, followed by online classes on return. This is a once-in-a-lifetime course. I have been incredibly blessed to be able to participate and view this as a chance to bring back knowledge, skills, information and best practices from a wide variety of groups, individuals, and experts in many locales to enhance and improve what we do in our community. This also means that I will be away from April 20<sup>th</sup> to May 10<sup>th</sup> and may have limited email during that time – which has been planned for and included on the congregational calendar last June. Some of the highlights of this trip include: studying together with students at Yeshivot from all streams of Judaism, working with funeral homes, cemeteries and Chevrei Kadisha, meeting and studying with spiritual care providers, funeral directors, scholars and leading rabbis. One of the many highlights of this course includes a day-long conference on the sacred work of the Chevrah Kadisha at the end of life, in Jerusalem, including many Chevrei Kadisha group members and spiritual care providers from throughout Israel, with keynote speakers including Rabbis Adin Steinsaltz, Benjamin Lau, Yaakov Ruza and Shaul Farber, to name just a few. I will be sending more details in a separate mailing about the study mission and the work of the Gamliel Institute, the training arm of Kavod v'Nichum, which teaches these courses. I hope to write more about this trip after I return, and will welcome the opportunity to speak with you about it.

One of the highlights from the past month for me was the Community Awareness Shabbat when we had about 80 people attend our service. The service was a lively, fun and energetic event and it was a lovely evening. I heard many nice comments about how much people enjoyed it, and how welcoming they found the congregants at THOI. Kol Hakavod to all who were involved in putting together the evening, include those who participated in the service.

The Torah Parashiot for the coming two months are Tzav (Shabbat Hagadol), Pesach day 1, Pesach day 8, Shemini, Tazria-Metzora, Acharei Mot-Kedoshim, Emor, Behar-Bechukotai, Bamidvar (Erev Shavuot) and Naso. Rosh Chodesh Iyar is on April 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> and Rosh Chodesh Sivan is on May 19<sup>th</sup>.

As we move towards our holiday of Redemption and liberation from bondage, may we each find the strength we require, and the will to choose to do that which makes us free to serve G-d and others. Just as the Hebrews were redeemed for the purpose of serving G-d, so may we each find our highest purpose and fulfill it.

B'virkat Shalom,  
Rabbi Joe Blair

## Rabbi's Message

## Contacting the Rabbi

Please Note: Rabbi Joe may be reached by email at [RabbiJoeB@hotmail.com](mailto: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 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.

## NEWS FROM THE PEWS

- ❖ Mazel tov to Allyson Goldsmith who is now working at the United Nations Foundation, currently on the Nothing but Nets initiative. Allyson's dream job! And thanks to Allyson for her informative session about ELEVEate, the non-profit she started to support girls in Senegal.
- ❖ An article entitled "Jewish Merchants of Early Downtown Staunton" by Ruth Chodrow and Karen Lynn Johnston, was published in the latest bulletin of the Augusta County Historical Society. Mazel tov, Ruth!

### April Calendar and Services

			1	2	3 Passover Seder at 6	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 10:00 AM Shabbat Services
12	13	14	15 Temple Board Meet 7:00	16	17	18
19 Women's Group at 2 <i>Chapters of the Heart</i>	20	21	22	23	24 Potluck Dinner at 6:00	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Oneg hosts for April 11: Beth and Rich Young and Greg Ciszek

### Special Potluck Dinner Just for Fun

Come join us for a potluck dinner! April 24th at 6 P.M.

The Women's Group will sponsor a potluck dinner for temple members. All are invited for an informal and enjoyable Shabbat evening. After dinner, Sarah Grove-Humphries will lead us in some Shabbat songs. This dinner will be milchig - please bring vegetarian, dairy, or fish dishes. Let's have an informal evening to hang out, have some good conversation, and enjoy each other's cooking.

## Women's Group

Congratulations to Women's Group president, Ellen Werther, on the marriage of her son on March 21, 2015, in Maui, Hawaii. A significant event in a significant place.

The Women's Group will be helping with set up for the temple seder on April 3. Set up will be briefly on both April 2 at 1 pm and April 3 at 3:30 pm just prior to the service. We have some helpers already, but call Rosalie if you would like to help also.

Our meeting this month is on April 19 at 2 pm at the temple. It will be a discussion of Rabbi Sue Elwell's *Chapters of the Heart*, a collection of essays written by Jewish women. These essays show how Judaism played a part in a time or an aspect of the writers' lives. Join us to listen, to ask questions, and to contribute opinions. If you haven't read the book, come and listen.

On Friday, April 24, the Women's Group will sponsor a dinner at the temple. The rabbi will be away so instead of a service, we will have a Shabbat meal together, focusing on food and enjoyment of each other's company. Details from Ruth, the event coordinator, are below the calendar on page 3.

## Religious School

The snow days are over, and spring has sprung! Religious School bounced back from the snow days by celebrating with a post-Purim party on March 8th. Thank you so much to the many parent and teacher helpers, especially Jennifer Edwards, Ashley Renick, Gale Clemons, and Stephen Lucas! Also, thank you to Jessica Mintzer for her help during the event, The kids had a blast with lots of fun activities including a costume party and crafts including - making egg graggers, origami, balloon animals and balloon masks, decorating crowns and paper masks, a ring toss, and more. And of course, there was the delicious eating of Hamantaschen. I think it can be said, we all had a great time!

The kids are working hard on preparing for the Religious School Shabbat Service at Beth El on Saturday, April 18th. I hope everyone will join us for this event! Additionally, we will celebrate all of our new students with consecration during this service. Then there will be a Kiddush luncheon following the service. Please plan to be there to support our students.

Finally, many thanks to the Beth El congregation and Religious School families for supporting our teachers with a delicious dinner and a lovely Shabbat service on Friday, March 20th. The beautiful certificates and the warm welcome lets our teachers know how much you appreciate them, and in turn they are very proud to teach your students and be a part of the Religious School!

Wishing everyone a wonderful Pesach!

L'shalom,  
Dara Hall, Principal

## SHORTY

Three members of SHORTY, Madeline Hall, Hannah Daniel, and Jessica Mintzer went to Capital Camps in Morgantown, PA for a fun event (despite the rain). The Vent is one of many opportunities NFTY-MAR has for our kids to meet other Jewish kids and form a strong and supportive community.

## Special Events

Commemorating  
the  
Holocaust

Film screening and discussion: **Raise the Roof**. March 29<sup>th</sup> 7:30 – 10:00 PM at the Stackhouse Theater, Elrod Commons on the campus of W&L in Lexington. The story of reconstructing the Gwozdziec synagogue including the work of some of the Lexington-area timber-framing community. See the attached flyer for the full information.

**Holocaust Survivor Dr. Roger Loria shares his story**. April 7<sup>th</sup> 5:30 – 7:00 pm in the Hillel Multipurpose Room on the campus of W&L in Lexington. See the attached flyer for the full information.

The **daughter of a Holocaust survivor, Bernice Steinhardt**, president and chair of Art and Remembrance will speak April 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm in Cole Hall at Bridgewater College. Inspired by the art and story of their mother, Esther Nisenthal Krinitz, Steinhardt co-founded Art and Remembrance with her sister Helene McQuade. An arts and educational non-profit, Art and Remembrance uses art and personal narrative to recognize individual courage and resilience, and to foster understanding and compassion for those who experience injustice. **Through the eye of the Needle: The Art of Esther Nisenthal Krinitz**, directed by Steinhardt, will be shown, followed by remarks from Steinhardt on her mother's experience and its significance to her and others.

**"The Boy in the Striped Pajamas"** film screening will be shown on April 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 in the Hillel Multipurpose Room on the campus of W&L. The 8-year-old son of the commandant at a concentration camp has a forbidden friendship with a Jewish boy on the other side of the camp fence with startling and unexpected consequences.

## HaPPY BIRthDAY

Bonny Strassler celebrates on April 5<sup>th</sup>

Martha Degen celebrates on April 7<sup>th</sup>

Rabbi Joe celebrates on April 13<sup>th</sup>

Vicki Goldenberg celebrates April 21<sup>st</sup>

Ellen Werther celebrates on April 25<sup>th</sup>



## Donations

THANK YOU to the following people who have given generously to the building fund:

Art Goldsmith and Jan Kaufman  
Leah Farmer  
Asher and Laura Jean Brand  
Shirley Brand and the Brand Memorial Fund  
Anonymous Donor

And to the general fund:  
Shirley Brand  
Dan and Ellie Schorsch

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**CHECK OUT OUR ALL NEW WEBSITE AT THE SAME ADDRESS: [thoi.org](http://thoi.org)**

**Thanks to Carla Donley who has agreed to update our site.**

**Thanks also to Kimberly Watters at Graphic Artist 4 You for working with us to  
create our web presence.**