



Temple House of Israel Bulletin

A Member Congregation of the Union for Reform Judaism
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www.thoi.org

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

JANUARY 2016 / TEVET - SHEVAT 5776

President's Message

Dear Congregants and Friends,

Before mentioning 2016, our December activities are worth a recap. We began with a memorial service for Susan Webb and a regular religious service on December 4. On December 12, under the leadership of the Ken and Elizabeth Schwartz, the Women's Group sponsored a silent auction which cleared over \$700 and hosted a Chanukah party. On December 17 the Women's group fed the Augusta Regional Clinic employees, a once-a-year effort. Then on December 19 we had our first Saturday service of the year. That was followed by the December 24 dinner at the Valley Mission, food provided by THOI and prepared by Eric Stamer. Lots of activities for such a small group! I want to thank all of you who planned, bought, cooked, attended, served and ate.

The Anthropology of Evil class finished its six sessions in December as a rousing success. Other classes are planned for later in the year. We hope you will be intrigued into attending. Regarding the cemetery fence, we have a firm bid and a plan so we can move ahead. I will pass on the information as it becomes available.

Looking to 2016, I would like to form a Ways and Means Committee to create ways we can have an on-going source of money. I also would like an events committee to plan social activities for us as a group. If you want to increase our activities of all sorts, please contact me. The Women's Group does a good job, but this group needs assistance.

Lastly, if you make New Year's resolutions, consider resolving to be a more active part of the temple organization. What can you do to make a difference? We need new voices and new ideas so we can grow and change. Best wishes for a peaceful year filled with loving people and interesting experiences.

Rosalie Waterman, temple president

From the Rabbi's Desk

Dear Temple House of Israel Congregants and Friends,

It has been a very full time on the calendar. As the secular year is coming to a close, there seems to be a lot wrapping up, but even more that is ahead.

Highlights of the past month for me included the now completed Introduction to Hebrew, the UVa OLLI, and the JMU LLI courses; the memorial service for Susan Webb (Nadia's mother); conversations with congregants about life cycle event planning; pastoral conversations; meetings with members of the larger community; and the Havdalah/Candle lighting for Chanukah.

With the turn of the year, we kick off a series of Pulpit Exchanges at Temple House of Israel. The Pulpit exchanges with Rev. Owen at Emmanuel Episcopal proved to be very positive experiences over the past few years and I was encouraged to expand the scope this year. I am happy to say that several clergy from various Churches in the area responded affirmatively, and we will have the pleasure of welcoming them to THOI on several occasions. I will reciprocate and speak at each of their communities. I urge you to come to all of these services, and to consider joining me at the various Churches for their service as an outreach to others in our community, and an interfaith event. I tried to make arrangements with clergy suggested by congregants, and in most cases succeeded: where I did not it was not for lack of effort.

From the Rabbi's Desk (con't)

- The first of these events will be on Friday, January 8th, with Rev. Reed Hopkins of Loch Willow Presbyterian Church in Churchville will be our guest. He will deliver the sermon or drash that evening, and in turn, I will speak at his Church on Sunday, January 10th.
- Later in January, I will be participating in the Interfaith Awareness Week at Mary Baldwin College, and in turn, Rev. Katharine Low will be our guest at the Shabbat service on Friday, January 22nd. [Rev. Low will be my guest at the second Havdalah & Conservation event on Saturday, February 27, 2016].
- February 6th, Saturday morning, Rev. Paul Oakley of the Waynesboro Unitarian Universalist Fellowship will be our guest, and I will be addressing his congregation the next morning, Sunday, March 7th. [Rev. Oakley was my guest at the first Havdalah & Conversation event November 21, 2015].
- April 29th, at the end of Passover, we will have as our guest Rev. Shelby Owen. I will be speaking at Emmanuel Episcopal Church on Sunday, May 1st at both the early and later services).
- Saturday morning, May 7th Rev. Hollis Gregory Dodge of St. Michael's United Church of Christ in Bridgewater will be our guest at the service, and I will visit with his congregation the next day, Sunday the 8th.

A second series of events is also scheduled. This is a program called **Death Cafe: Coffee, Tea, Cake and Death**. We will have an open forum once a month from January to June to talk about death. No preconceptions, no limitations, no agenda. Anyone who wants to speak about this usually taboo subject is welcome to join us, and everyone will have an opportunity to speak (within the bounds of the rules established). There will be a series of three sessions at **Temple House of Israel in Staunton**, on **Wednesday evenings, 7 to 9 pm January 6th, February 3rd and March 2nd** and three sessions at **Beth El Congregation in Harrisonburg** on **Wednesday evenings, 7 to 9 pm, April 6th, May 4th and June 1st**. The small group conversations will be facilitated, with simple rules. This is in line with the intentional approach and model laid out by the International Death Café structure, described at www.deathcafe.com. Note January 6th on your calendar now and plan to come for a really interesting evening – and feel free to let others know about it.

I have spoken with members of the clergy from the Anglican Church of the Valley (the group that shares the use of THOI building) about a film showing with a discussion. I have suggested that we view the documentary, **The Power of Good**. Some may recall that we screened this some years back at one of the Staunton Jewish Film Festival events, and it was well received. I believe that it will stand the test of time, and would be a wonderful film to show and then hold a discussion with those present. I have not finalized the date yet as I write this, but hope to do so shortly. Look for more information about this as an event on the calendar.

The Torah Parashiot for the coming weeks are Shemot (the beginning of Exodus), Vaera, Bo, Beshalach and Yitro.

Rosh Chodesh for Shevat is on January 11th. Tu Be'Shevat (the 15th of the month of Shevat), the celebration of Trees, falls on January 24th.

Religious services are noted on the calendar, page 5.

Rabbi's Message

As we move towards and past the shortest day of the year, and the increasing darkness that it portends, I hope that your Chanukah was a time of blessings, and that the lights you kindled for that holiday shone brightly, and continue to illuminate your life, your heart, and the world around you, as we move forward into the secular new year.

Rabbi Joe Blair

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 (925-2-RAVJOE)**. Please note: **any other number you may have is no longer active.**

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 welcome 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.

Things of note

Welcome New Members Karen Lange, Sherri Lowe and Emily Gorham.

Karen grew up in Philadelphia. She earned a BS in chemical engineering at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania and then an MBA in marketing at the Wharton School. Her career spanned 25+ years in engineering, product and market management for DuPont and WL Gore & Associates (Gore-Tex). She lived in Delaware for 20+ years spanning both corporate life and "retirement" as a Realtor. She moved to Staunton in 2009 and is currently a Realtor with Premier Properties in Staunton. She enjoys hiking, bicycling, gardening and is active in animal rescue.

We hope to give you an introduction to Sherri Lowe, Bonnie Brown's mother, and Emily Gorham of Lexington in the next bulletin.

THANKS TO ALL OF YOU

- ✓ to all who baked and mixed and tossed, making dinner for the **Free Clinic**
- ✓ to those who provided food or donated money for the cause for Christmas Eve Dinner at the **Valley Mission**.
- ✓ to Eric Stamer for preparing all the food for the Mission residents.
- ✓ to Elizabeth and Ken Schwartz for coordinating everything for the silent auction and decorating the social hall for our Chanukah party

Check out the continually updated **thoi.org** website and thank Carla Donley for keeping it up for us.

Remember when you shop at Amazon, go to our **thoi.org** website first and click on Amazon Smile to place your order. That way you get whatever it is you want and the temple gets a small rebate.

Ellen Werther encourages all members to visit the **THOI Facebook page** and comment, like or share postings. Social media is a great way to reach out to the larger pool of friends and potential members.

January Birthday celebrations

Richard Young will celebrate his birthday on January 16th
Dennis Ward will celebrate on January 29th
Doug Degen on January 31st



The Women's Group

The Women of the Temple hosted a successful Chanukah party and silent auction. Over 40 items were available for bidding and a delicious array of food laden the tables! Many thanks to all who donated auction items and to those who attended and bid. Particular thanks go out to Elizabeth and Ken Schwartz for decorating the social hall and setting up, running and tallying the auction sales. Sales totaled over \$700!

Join members of the Women's Group for **lunch on Tuesday, December 29th at 12:30 at Silk Road** Asian Restaurant at 2040 Rosser Avenue in Waynesboro. It will be a great time to be together and have a fantastic meal! Please send Bonny Strassler a quick email if you are planning to come at bonstrassler@comcast.net.

Two meetings are coming up in the month of January:

- The Women's Group monthly meeting will be on Sunday, January 10 at 2:00 pm at the temple
- The next book discussion will be Saturday, January 16 at 11 am at the temple. We are reading a funny, lighthearted mystery by Rita Lakin titled Getting Old Can Kill You. A light lunch will be provided. Please let Bonny Strassler know if you plan to come.

Remember the flamingoes are always ready, willing and able to congregate in a yard of your choosing....

Donations

Thanks to those who have contributed to Temple House of Israel

For the Valley Mission Christmas Dinner Janne & Daniel Heifetz
..... Sarah Grove Humphries
In memory of Susan Webb (Nadia's mom) and
In memory of Sky Liberty (Leah's granddaughter) Beth and Rich Young
For the Anthropology of Evil lecture series Staunton Antiques Center

January Yahrzeits

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

NEWS FROM THE PEWS

- Baruch Dayan Haemet – May they be comforted from Heaven. For Rabbi Lynne Landsberg, on the death of her father, Gilad Landsberg, on November 27th. The funeral was on December 1st.
- And to Leah Farmer, whose granddaughter Emerald "Sky" Liberty died November 30th at age 16. Leah will be visiting Matt and Spring over the winter holidays, when they will hold a commemorate event.
- Nesia Tovah - Safe travels over the holidays and into January to all who are on the move at this time.
- Refuah shelemah bimheyra - Prayers for Healing & Wholeness to Rabbi Lynne Landsberg who is continuing to recover from her recent injury.
- Continuing wishes for health and wellbeing to Shirley Brand, Steve Guberman, Dan Schorsch, Ellen Werther and Nancy Witt.

January Calendar and Services

					1	2 Shabbat Services at 10
3	4	5	6 Death Café 7 – 9 pm	7	8 Shabbat Services 7:30 with Rev. Reed Hopkins	9
10 Women's Group 2:00	11	12	13 7 pm Temple Board meet	14	15	16 11 am Book Discussion
17	18	19	20	21	22 Shabbat Services 7:30 with Rev. Katharine Low	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<p>Oneg hosts for January 2: Schorsch and Werther Oneg hosts for January 8: Waterman and Cizek Oneg hosts for January 22: Boden and Mason</p>						

SHORTY

SHORTY will bring in the end of the year with Shabbat services at Beth El on December 25th after enjoying some Chinese food for dinner and a movie after services. What a wonderful way to celebrate Shabbat and our small Jewish community while others in the area enjoy a peaceful Christmas Day.

Coming soon – SKI WEEKEND – February 5-6. We're so excited to join with Jewish Youth Groups around Virginia and enjoy services, reflection, camaraderie and some skiing!

Religious School

It has been an eventful couple of months. After the many wonderful b'nai mitzvot of Helen, Erin and Katy, we had yet another special Shabbat on December 18th with all of our religious school students! We are all so proud of our students' accomplishments. They are an amazing bunch!

We have also had two tot Shabbat services led by our wonderful teachers Morah Elissa and Morah Allison. We are sad to see Morah Elissa move on, but we are excited about her next journey to become a special education teacher as she completes her student teaching experience in Northern Virginia beginning in January. We thank her for 3-1/2 years of teaching our Beth El students!

Additionally, we had an opportunity to celebrate Chanukkah together in religious school. Thanks so much to our wonderful parents – the Feldmans, the Lovingers, and the Johnstone-Yellins – for their support of this celebration with delicious latkes and donuts, a fun edible dreidel craft, as well as other fun Chanukkah crafts!

I hope everyone enjoys winter break. We look forward to seeing everyone back in religious school on January 10th.

L'Shalom,
Dara

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