



Temple B'nai Abraham

Temple B'nai Abraham
President – Robin Affrime

The Temple Shofar
Rabbi Julie Pfau

Sarah Seidel Sisterhood
President - Faith Hupfl

May 2011

RABBI'S MESSAGE

Since our last newsletter, I have continued to feel anticipation for our congregational retreat in May. In keeping with some of the themes for the retreat, last month I wrote about my understanding of God as *tahalikh ha-tz'michah*, the process of growth, and how that theology enlivens my Jewish identity and practice. This month I would like to reflect more deeply on how this theology is connected with practices of *tefillah*, Jewish prayer.

I want to begin by sharing the Jewish text that delights me more than any other – a passage by Rebbe Nachman of Breslov: “When a person stands up to pray and recites the words of the prayers, s/he is gathering beautiful buds and flowers and blossoms, like someone walking in a field picking lovely blossoms and flowers one at a time, until s/he makes a bouquet.” (from Likutey Moharan 65:2)

I fell in love with this passage because it connects two of the most powerful expressions of my spirituality – *tefillah* (prayer) and *tahalikh ha-tz'michah* (the process of growth). I think it demonstrates something about the role of prayer in our spiritual lives. If God is the process of growth, and if prayers are flowers, that means that prayers flourish when the connection with God is flowing unobstructed – they are an outgrowth of our experience of God, and their shape and appearance will reflect something about the nature of our experience of holiness and transcendence. These blossoms become a kind of evidence for what is going on in the soil of our spirit. In times of trouble, petitionary prayers might dominate our bouquet. In times of celebration, we might find a whole host of halleluyah blossoms. When stressed, we might need a quiet calming bouquet of meditation techniques. The possibilities are endless.

As liberal contemporary Jews, we are in a position to plant entire gardens and create bouquets that are most beautiful to us – both by using the existing prayers and by innovating new ones. The prayers can be spoken or chanted, in Hebrew or in our native tongues. They might be *niggunim*, wordless melodies, or may be silent altogether. The prayers might be expressed through the

swaying of our bodies, sitting motionless in meditation, vigorous clapping, drumming, or ecstatic dance. All of these varieties of blossoms, and countless others, have seeds within the Jewish tradition. Ultimately, what we do at TBA in a Friday night service represents only a fraction of the diverse and vibrant blossoms that emerge from contemporary and historical forms of Jewish prayer.

Anyone who attends services at TBA is likely to pick up on my love for *tefillah*. You might notice that the bouquet of prayer I prefer is one that involves swaying, singing, and a preponderance of Hebrew. (It wasn't always so – I used to prefer prayer entirely in English.) In other contexts, I also relish more contemplative kinds of bouquets – ones full of chanting, meditation, and drumming. There are some varieties of blossom that I would never want in my bouquet – the kinds with thorny statements that promote extreme forms of nationalism or triumphalism, or that exclude people. I enjoy almost any garden of prayer, except the ones with separate seating for women. In an ideal world, I would lengthen services by at least an hour to accommodate a much larger sampling of forms, although the board would never approve it....!

This month, I invite you too to think about *tefillah* in terms of flowers. What kind of garden do you need to spend time in at this stage of your life? What blossoms are most lovely to you? Is there a blossom you have been seeking but haven't yet found? What blossoms would you most want to share with others? I look forward to continuing this exploration with you.

Shalom,
Rabbi Pfau

**The Temple B'nai Abraham Family
congratulates Rabbi Julie Pfau on
her Fellowship! Mazel Tov!**

~ 58 Crosswicks ~ PO Box 245 ~ Bordentown, NJ 08505 ~ (609) 298-1527 ~ www.bnai-abraham.org ~



Temple B'nai Abraham is affiliated with
the Jewish Reconstruction Federation.
www.jrf.org

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Elaine Trackman	Eileen Gale

Yahrzeit List

May 6

Harriet Hicks maternal Grandmother of Sara Blann
Bell Rosen, mother of Gerald Rosen

May 13

Leon Herzog, brother of Madge Rosen
Mary Gross, aunt of Shyrle Kushner
Philip Kushner, father of Sol Kushner
Arlene Schwartz, mother of Phyllis Chudoff

May 20

Louis Benson, father of Charyl Morginstin

May 27

Gertrude Urken, sister of Henry Kessler
Ann Zeitz, mother of Carl Zeitz
Bernard Greenblatt, father of Marcia Rosen
Julie Affrime, mother of Steve Affrime
Rita Hodes, aunt of Randy Bloom

June 3

Joseph Harrison, father-in-law of Renee Harrison
Jacob Mervish, father of Shyrle Kushner



Mark your Calendar!

Congregational Meetings

Wednesday, May 11 at 7:30 PM

Wednesday, June 15 at 7:30 PM

It is that time of year again; a time for us to think back on the year behind us and to look ahead to the year to come. You are invited to continue your support of our Temple by attending the two upcoming congregation meetings to discuss where we are headed for the future. Our first meeting will be on Wednesday evening **May 11th at 7:30pm** in the Temple all purpose room. Then, on Wednesday evening, **June 15th** we will again meet in the all purpose room.

We are a very small community and your presence and vote are very important to us. See you on May 11th.

1st Annual Reconnect & Renew Retreat

Sunday, May 15, 2011 10 AM- 4 PM
Robbins House, West Windsor

Services for May 2011

May 6 - 7:30PM

May 14 - 10:00am Shabbat Morning Services

Oneg to welcome Ella Grace Epstein

May 20 - 6:00PM Tot Shabbat

7:30PM Shabbat Services

May 27 - 7:30PM Shabbat Services

Hostesses Rhea Goldman and Bonnie Goldman

You're Invited!

Brian and Maribeth Epstein would like to celebrate the birth of Ella Grace Epstein by inviting you to a Welcoming Oneg following services on Saturday, May 14, 2011. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Temple Donations

In Honor Of

Rabbi Julie's Fellowship from Eileen Gale

In Memory Of Leon Herzog, brother of Madge Rosen and **IMO** Belle Rosen, mother of Gerald Rosen, from Madge Rosen

In Memory Of Flora Grassian, mother of Rita Nissim, from Rita Nissim

In Memory Of Max Kamer, father of Isadore Kamer and **IMO** Rose Lagowitz Goldberg, mother of Phyllis Kamer, from Phyllis and Is Kamer

In Memory Of Jack Harrison, brother-in-law of Renee Harrison, from Renee Harrison

In Memory Of Marcia's father Bernard Greenblatt, from Marcia and Michael Rosen

President's Message

Reconnect and Renew Retreat Planned

Several months ago at a board meeting we were discussing our concern over a lack of community involvement in Temple life. We don't always get a minyan for services, people don't seem to really know and connect with each other beyond their group whether it be Tot Shabbat, or Hebrew School, and it seems that often, the same people do all the jobs and tasks that need to be done to keep synagogue life going. At that meeting the idea of a spiritual retreat was born. The excitement around the table was palpable. Ideas began flowing and talk was about getting people to make a spiritual connection to G-d and to Temple B'nai Abraham. The idea I am happy to say took on a life of it's own. By now you should have received the brochure in the mail for Temple B'nai Abraham's First Spiritual Retreat. You can see for yourself how far we have come since that first discussion. We hope there is something there for everyone, and our hope is that you will find at least one thing you can take away from the day that makes you feel a little better about yourself, your connection with G-d and your connection to the people of TBA.

You need not have a strong and varied background in Judaism. All you really need is an interest in learning something new, and a desire to get to know more of the people in our community. We have such a varied congregation. Some of us are very learned in the ways of Jewish custom, some of us barely have a Jewish background. Some of us are married to Jews and some of us are not. All together we make up a community that sees Judaism and traditions in different ways. But what connects us is that we all want to see Judaism and Temple B'nai

Abraham thrive, and move into the future.

On that note I invite you to join us for the opportunity to be a part of this day. The board has decided to take on the bulk of the financial responsibility to make it possible for families to attend without causing a financial burden. So, sign up your whole family for a day of thought-provoking conversation and motivating lectures. Look forward to being stimulated. I know I'll be there, and I hope to see you, too.
~ Robin Affrime

Tot Shabbat News

The next Tot Shabbat will be on Friday, May 20th at 6:00 p.m. This month's program theme is Israel and will include candle lighting, pot luck dinner, story time, a theme-related craft, and songs. If you need any additional information, or would like to volunteer to help clean up or set up, please contact Marla Hoffman rhynestonegrl@gmail.com.



Social Action



Many thanks to our generous members for contributing items for the St. Mary's Food Pantry and granola bars for the motel residents. We have been keeping up our commitment to the community effort to fight hunger! Please keep them coming, as we hope to have enough to continue contributing through the summer when we don't have regular services and activities at the temple. A big thanks to Elaine Trackman for her continuing commitment to working at the food pantry.

Also thanks to Debby and Jaden Weiss for their help in delivering monthly meals to the Pine Motel. This is an on-going activity, and anyone interested in pitching in for meal delivery, please let Marcy know (324-0571).

Supermarket Gift Card Program



The gift card fundraiser is extremely important as a source of income for the Temple. We need more participation! Please take one minute to write a check and send it to Dowshen 502 Farnsworth Ave Bordentown, NJ 08505 or call 298-5306. Your cards will be sent to you the same day.

Sisterhood Notes

Our gift shop is always open! We have a variety of Judaica items for sale including some new things for Passover. We also have an assortment of Hallmark cards for sale. The prices are as marked. At Temple B'nai Abraham, we use an honor system for our shop. Please fill out a receipt, write us a check (made out to "Sarah Seidel Sisterhood") and place it in the gift shop envelope.

Please join us for the next Sisterhood Program

**May 9th at 7:30 pm
Book Review**

*The Zookeeper's Wife by Diane Ackerman
Hostesses are Rita Nissim and Mimi Gellar*

Sisterhood Nominations

The nominations to be voted on at the May Meeting:

<i>President</i>	<i>Randy Bloom</i>
<i>Vict President</i>	<i>Debbie Weiss</i>
<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Marcy Schwartz</i>
<i>Financial Secretary</i>	<i>Rita Nissim</i>
<i>Recording Secretary</i>	<i>Ellen Wehrman</i>
<i>Corresponding Secretary</i>	<i>Mimi Geller</i>

Sisterhood Donations

Get Well Sid Lavine from Ellen Wiener
In memory of Harold Hasson from Robin and Tony Zak and Neil and Karen Nissim
Happy Birthday Philip Scharf from Barbara and Jeff Streisfeld
Get well Berny Speiser from Is and Phyllis Kamer and Charyl and Sid Morginstin

Marlene and Sid Lavine graciously thank all of you for your get well wishes. They were most appreciated.

In case a loved one dies, the following information will be helpful in thinking through what steps to take:

- 1) As soon as possible, please contact the Rabbi, the Temple President, and the Sisterhood President.
- 2) If you would like the Rabbi to officiate at the funeral, please ask the Funeral Director to contact the Rabbi when exploring possible dates and times.
- 3) There are many traditional Jewish practices that may offer guidance about the handling of the body, the funeral, and the burial. Please ask the Funeral Director to explore these options.
- 4) Resources about mourning, death, and dying are available from the Rabbi. There is also a synagogue document containing information about Jewish funeral procedures.

We hope this information will be needed as infrequently as possible!

Healing List

The list has become quite long. On January 15, 2011 we will start again with a new list. Please contact Sid at 609-456-9508 with the names of those you desire to put on the list. Also, please tell him when the name can be removed. Sid makes an effort to contact you about 2 months after adding a name, however, sometimes he is very busy, so, please contact him if there are any changes.

Torah Prayer Books (Chumashim)

A new Torah prayer book can be purchased in honor of or in memory of someone for \$75 or an existing Siddur may be sponsored for \$35.00. Please call (298-0437) or email Betsy Ramos:

bramos@capehart.com

The Board decided to experiment with a new start time for Shabbat morning services. It was thought that beginning at 10:00 am instead of 9:30 am might increase the likelihood of people arriving on time. We will be interested in people's responses to the alternative start time, and will take note of whether it accomplishes the goal. We will then evaluate whether to make the new time permanent. (However, when there are B'nai Mitzvah, we will still begin at 9:30 am since there are additional pieces of the service.)

MAY 2011 NISAN/IYYAR 5771

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9-10 SS 10-12 HS Yom HaShaoah	2	3	4 Rosh Chodesh Iyyar	5 Rosh Chodesh Iyyar 4:30-6:30 HS	6 Shabbat Evening Service 7:30pm Candle lighting 7:38 pm	7 8:51 pm Havdalah
8 9-10 SS 10-12 HS	9 7:30 pm - Sisterhood Program- Book Review	10	11 7:30 pm – Congregational Meeting	12 4:30-6:30 HS	13 Candle lighting 7:45 pm	14 Shabbat Morning Service 10:00 am Oneg: Brian & Maribeth Epstein 8:58 pm-Havdalah
15 9-10 SS 10-12 HS 10 am – Reconnect Retreat	16	17	18	19 4:30-6:30 HS	20 Tot Shabbat 6:00pm Shabbat Evening Service 7:30pm Candle lighting 7:52pm	21 9:05 pm - Havdalah
22 Lag B'Omer	23	24	25	26 4:30-6:30 HS	27 Shabbat Evening Service 7:30 pm Candle lighting 7:58 pm	28 9:11 pm - Havdalah
29	30	31				

Sisterhood Oneg Schedule

<u>MAY</u>				
Mon	9-May	7:30 PM	Sisterhood Program- Book Review	Rita Nissim & Mimi Gellar
Sat	14-May	10:00 AM	Shabbat Morning	Brian & Maribeth Epstein
Fri	20-May	6:00 PM	Tot Shabbat & Regular Services	
Fri	27-May	7:30 PM	Erev Shabbat	Rhea Goldman & Bonnie Goldman
<u>JUNE</u>				
Fri	3-Jun	7:30 PM	Erev Shabbat	Bar Mitzvah
Sat	4-Jun	9:30 AM	Shabbat Morning	Noah Goldberg
<u>Mon</u>	13-Jun	6:15 PM	Sisterhood Pot Luck	Marsha Dowshen & Randye Bloom
Fri	24-Jun	7:30 PM	Member of the Year	Debby Weiss & Marcy Schwartz

1st Annual Reconnect & Renew Retreat Sunday, May 15, 2011 10 a.m.- 4 p.m Robbins House, West Windsor



On May 15th the Temple will be holding a Congregational Retreat at the Robbins House in West Windsor. The purpose of this all day event is to allow members and their families to reconnect with their faith, one another and our synagogue.

Participants will have the opportunity to choose different seminars to attend, including Sessions with Rabbi Leverton on "What is Kabbalah?", Rabbi Leslie discussing Community Building and Interfaith Relationships and Rabbi Julie leading a session on "Prayer: Making it Your Own". Other speakers include Rabbi Steve who will host a seminar entitled "Every Shabbat We are in Israel." Rabbi Steve will also be providing musical entertainment during our lunch hour.

There are also programs suitable for parents with their children, including Rabbi Marissa's entitled "Teaching Family Traditions", and children without their parents like Rabbi Leslie's session on "Communities and Harmful Speech", and Rabbi Steve's interactive dialogue on Lecha Dodi, complete with the children creating their own Shabbat Crowns.

This is a wonderful opportunity to spend some time reflecting on how our Temple and your faith fit into your everyday life.

The cost is \$25. Per adult/ \$12 for children under 13, not to exceed \$75. Per family. Lunch, beverages, and snacks are included.

For more information, contact Linda Osman at (609)291-0355 or Attyosman@verizon.net

General Donations

For anyone interested in making a general donation to the synagogue that does not fit into any of the above categories, of course, the synagogue will be happy to accept the donation. You may send a check to Temple B'nai Abraham, P.O. Box 245, Bordentown, and indicate whether it is for a special occasion and whether you would like the synagogue to send an acknowledgment. If it is a non-temple member, please provide their name and address.