



Affiliated with the
Jewish Reconstructionist
Movement

Temple B'nai Abraham

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Chair, Fundraising

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Susan Giachetti

Important Dates

Tot Shabbat 1/10

Family Education 1/12

Saturday Service 1/18

"The Temple Shofar"

January, 2014

Rabbi's Message

As I write this newsletter article, I find that my mind and heart have not yet let go of the whirlwind semester that just closed at Temple University. I was teaching two Death and Dying classes and taking two classes of my own – Arabic and a Teaching in Higher Education course. I submitted grades for my 71 students, and found that my mind did not transition well to the task of writing a newsletter article. But this phenomenon in itself was a good reminder of the difficulties that any one of us can face in being mindful of the holy in the midst of our demanding daily routines. Shifting mental focus doesn't seem such a complicated task, but sometimes the mind and spirit maneuver about as well as the Titanic...

Charting a spiritually connected journey takes planning, persistent attention, and periodic subtle course corrections. In my spiritual life, this means having some degree of regular spiritual practices. These might be daily or weekly practices – as long as they have some patterned regularity and consistency, they offer the chance to regularly attend to my spirit and engage with Jewish tradition, to notice if something feels unsettled or if I am drifting off course. Believe it or not, sometimes rabbis drift... In this semester of teaching, it was a challenge not to be completely diverted from my own spiritual connection. I have a new depth of appreciation for the contributions and seemingly endless exertions of our community's many teachers! It can be difficult to find a great deal of time to spend in prayer or meditation when there is an abundance of lesson planning and grading to be done.

Sometimes simplicity is a virtue. A Jewish practice does not have to take an hour for it to be worthwhile. For those of you who are also busy, it is advantageous if it doesn't even require a diversion from routine activities. One traditional Jewish practice that can be

readily adopted is ritual hand washing. It is possible to take a mundane activity that is a frequent part of our lives, and to elevate it to a higher level by offering a blessing. In the process we can elevate ourselves – mindfully engaging with water is an outstanding medium for reconnecting with the purity of the spirit.

In Jewish tradition, it is customary to ritually wash hands almost immediately after rising in the morning, after using the bathroom, and before eating a meal with bread. This washing is not a utilitarian washing for cleanliness – the assumption is that one would have already cleansed the hands first. The ritual washing involves pouring water from a cup over each hand 2-3 times, followed by a blessing.

Any kind of vessel can be used, as long as it is clean, making this practice very accessible. However, it is possible to buy a special vessel for this ritual called a laver – it is designed with two handles so that it can be easily transferred from one hand to the other without dropping. In the tradition of beautifying a mitzvah, many lavers are quite lovely.

When washing hands after using the bathroom, the traditional practice is to say *Asher Yatzar* – the blessing for the proper functioning of the body that we say during Saturday morning services. There is a different prayer for the hand washing associated with meals. The blessing for the hand washing before eating bread is:

*Baruch atah adonay eloheynu melech ha-olam
asher kideshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu al netilat
yadayim.*

Blessed are you, SOURCE OF HOLINESS, our God,
sovereign of all worlds,
who has made us holy with your mitzvot, and com-
manded us to wash our hands.

This blessing is nearly identical to the one we use for the *lulav* during Sukkot, except that the last word is

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Sisterhood Officers

Sisterhood President
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Marcy Schwartz

Recording Secretary
Ellen Wehrman

Corresponding Secretary
Patricia Light-Tolomeo

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Sisterhood News & Announcements**Haggadah fundraiser:**

We are doing a quick and easy Passover fundraiser this year. The Sisterhood will get 20% of the cost of your order when you order a personalized Haggadah - with either a family name or first name. You order directly from www.PersonalizedHaggadahs.com. Simply place your order online and select "Temple B'nai Abraham" from a pull down menu at check out. Haggadahs will be shipped directly to the purchaser prior to Passover. Haggadahs are \$11.50 and orders should be made prior to March 30, 2014. Every child would be thrilled with a Haggadah that has his or her name on it! There is a sample Haggadah at the Temple so that you can check it out.

Sisterhood news:

Thank you to Karen Nissim for the wonderful Thanksgiving centerpieces! As usual, Karen helped participants make a creative and beautiful centerpiece for the holiday table. Karen- you are one of our treasures! And Mia is an awesome helper!

We next meet on Monday, January 13 at 7:30. We will have a movie night using the wonderful equipment the Sisterhood purchased for the Temple. It will be one of the films from the Rutgers Jewish Film Festival and more information will follow closer to the date. Men and other guests are welcome to attend for the movie and refreshments. Hope to see you.

The book discussion meeting for this year will be held Monday, March 11. We will read two books this year. ***I Am Forbidden*** by Anouk Markovits is a novel about being a woman in the Satmar community. ***Unorthodox*** by Deborah Feldman is a memoir about growing up in the Satmar community. Robin Affrime and I found these books to be disturbing and thought-provoking and we look forward to discussing them with you. Randy ordered these books from Better World Books and is happy to lend them to anyone who wishes to borrow them. Just let me know and we can start handing them around.

Please participate in the personalized Haggadah fundraiser - it is a great gift for grandchildren or a family Seder.

Happy New Year and wishes for a wonderful 2014! Randy

Congratulations to Stephen Benowitz, husband of Ellen Benowitz, will become the Mayor of Bordentown Township on January 4!

**Reconstructionist Rabbinical College Message**

We're excited – we're going to Israel!

The Reconstructionist movement is planning a trip to Israel May 14-21. We want your members to join us.

If you would like more information or have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me directly. More information and a full trip itinerary can be found on [the RRC website](#). Thank you!

Barbara G. Lissy
Assistant Vice President for Development
Reconstructionist Rabbinical College
(215) 576 0800 x 155

Sisterhood Donations

- In honor of Karen Nissim- for all you do- from Linda Osman
- Happy birthday to Mimi Geller and Ellen Weiner from Phyllis and Is Kamer
- Get well Charyl Morginstin from the Kamers
- In memory of Paul Cantor from Phyllis Chudoff

Temple Donations

- In memory of Stanley Hodes from Michael Scolaro and Randy Bloom
 - In memory of Paul Cantor from Elaine and Joy Trackman, Michael Scolaro and Randy Bloom, Eileen Gale, Linda Bowker
 - In memory of Julius Bloom from Randy Bloom ,
 - In memory of Max Kamer from Phyllis & Iz Kamer
 - In memory of Ella Kessler from Rhoda & Henry Kessler
 - In memory of Bernard Zeichner from Ronnie & Stan Zeichner
 - In memory of Jacob Epstein from Brian & Maribeth Epstein
-
- High Holiday Pledges from Ira Levinton and Marcy Schwartz & Rick Shain

Donations

Temple Cards - If you wish to have a Temple joy or sorrow card sent in honor or memory of someone, please contact Randy Bloom by e-mail or phone. She will need the name and address of the person receiving the card, the occasion, and name of the honoree or deceased. The minimum donation is five dollars. There are get well cards as well as cards for any occasion. The donation for the card may be sent directly to Mike Rosen with a notation of what it is for and the check is payable to the Temple.

Yahrzeits for Winter 2014

Jan. 3 rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethel Speiser, mother of Bernie Speiser • Minnie Gutstein, mother of Herman Gutstein • Rose Wasserman, mother of Linda Bowker • Ida Josephson, mother of Sam Josephson • Minnie Kaufman, grandmother of Phyllis Busch • Harry Gutstein, father of Herman Gutstein • Joseph Schwartz, grandfather of Phyllis Chudoff
Jan. 10 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rose Goldberg, mother of Phyllis Kamer • Morris Herzog, brother of Madge Rosen
Jan. 17 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jerry Urken, father of Gail Gernamous • Morris Miller, father of Ilene & Roslyn Miller
Jan. 31 st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Max Kessler, father of Henry Kessler • Nathan Goldman, father of Maxine & Philip Goldman • Rose Kaiser, mother of Eileen Gale
Feb. 7 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selma Levitsky, great-aunt of Brian Epstein

Old Prayer Books & Kippot

Old prayer books, Talle-sim, kippot, or other religious items that are no longer needed should be buried. Please place these items into the box (by the sanctuary stairs). Items will be brought to the local Chabad House for burial. \$5 donations are appreciated.

Siddur & Tallit Donations

A new siddur (prayer book) can be purchased in honor of or in memory of someone for \$35. A tallis (prayer shawl) can be purchased for \$60. Please contact Marcia Rosen at: mjanrosen@comcast.net

Memorial Plaques

Plaques are available for \$250. To order a plaque, send the following to TBA: Marcia Rosen, Plaque Chairman PO Box 245 Bordentown, NJ 08505 or: mjanrosen@comcast.net.

English name of loved one, Hebrew name of loved one and date of death in the English calendar. Once the plaque has been installed, you will be billed. Plaques will not be moved from one board to the other.



Supermarket Gift Card Program

It is always the season for sharing and giving. Please share with the Temple by purchasing your gift cards from Acme or ShopRite for your New Year's celebration.

Please make checks payable to **Temple B'nai Abraham** and send to: **Marsha Dowshen / 502 Farnsworth Ave., Bordentown, NJ 08505 / (609) 298-5306**. Your cards will be sent to you the same day.

Tot Shabbat

Friday evenings, 6:00 PM
Coming Up: January 10th - Remember/Zachor
Craft: Mitzvah Reminders



Includes candle lighting, potluck 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 Kami Knapp at: kami.knapp@googledoc.com.

“The habit of giving only enhances the desire to give.”

~ Walt Whitman

Tikkun Olam / Social Action

TBA continues to make meaningful contributions to hunger relief in our area, and YOU can be part of it! Here are ways to help:

- Donating boxes of granola bars or cans of tuna or chicken for our monthly contribution to grocery bags for motel residents.
- Any non-perishable food items are welcome for the St. Mary's Food Pantry, just place them in the baskets at the temple.
- We deliver hot meals prepared by the Friends Meeting in Crosswicks to the Pine Motel on the first Thurs. of every month.
-

All of these efforts are interfaith collaborations with area worship centers. Together we can make a difference!

Thank you to Robin and Steve Affrime, the Weiss family, Marcy Schwartz, Rick Shain and Ellen Wehrman for their continued help with meal delivery.



Monthly Oneg Hosts

January 18 th	Morginstin / Eric & Kristi Schwartz
January 24 th	Barman / Ramos

Fundraising

EXCITING NEWS!!

We have finally begun the temple and sisterhood fundraiser cookbook. The first Temple B'nai Abraham cookbook was printed in the 1970s, the second in 1987, and now we will commemorate our centennial year. We are working with a company called Morris Press and have the ability to type recipes directly into the website with a specific password that denotes our project. Anyone will have the ability to type their recipes into the project and then a small committee will review the recipes and do final editing. This will help us avoid 6 brisket recipes and 20 brownie recipes. It is important that the book be well balanced with a variety of appetizers, vegetables, soups, salads, entrees, and desserts. We might also want to have a specific area for Holiday fare. If you are interested in working with Randy and Robin on this cookbook, please send us an email to let us know how you would like to help [Randy: mikerandy@gmail.com; Robin: raffrime@gmail.com].

If you have a recipe that you would like to be considered for the cookbook, go to www.typensave.com and insert the **username: TBAS** and the **password: plate294**. Anyone can contribute a recipe and we highly

encourage you to put in recipes from your treasured family traditions. A few guidelines: Recipes must be able to be made kosher so no pork, ham, or bacon, and the recipe cannot include both meat and milk together. That said, recipes can be adjusted to be made kosher. If you have a recipe that you would like to share, but aren't sure if it is kosher or how it can be adapted, please contact us. This is a labor of love and we will be more than happy to help you.

We encourage everyone in the Temple B'nai Abraham community to be a part of this fundraiser by contributing recipes. In order for this to be a successful fundraiser and to cover the first printing, each member or family of temple and/or sisterhood will be responsible for buying a minimum of 5 books that the member can either give as gifts or sell to friends and family. The exact cost per book is not yet determined, but we hope to keep it in the \$10.00 range. This cookbook will represent the entire Temple B'nai Abraham community and family and friends - so please join in and share your best recipes.



“Coming together is a beginning, Keeping together is progress & Working together is success.”

~Henry Ford

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yadayim (hands) instead of *lulav*. The word *netilat*, which is here translated as wash, actually means lift, so that “*al netilat yadayim*” literally means “concerning the lifting of hands.” This is why, after washing but before drying, the traditional practice is to lift the hands into the air while saying the blessing.

Since this is a ritual washing and not a utilitarian one, it doesn't involve holding hands under faucets or using soap. Instead, a separate vessel is filled with water and then used to wash the hands. Exactly how the washing is done can vary depending on customs and whether the washing is the one before eating, after waking, or after using the bathroom. Some pour water three times over the right hand and then three times over the left; some pour water once over the right hand and once over the left hand and then repeat the process three times; some follow one of those two procedures but pour over each hand twice rather than three times; some make a point of turning their hands so that the first pouring is over the back

of the hand, followed by the palm; etc... Remember – two Jews, 5,000 opinions... The main point is to be *mindful* – of the powerful symbolism of water. This washing is a ritual act and not for utilitarian purposes – we are purifying ourselves spiritually rather than washing away germs. We can contemplate our spirit's need for cleansing soothing and refreshing, and our tradition's teaching that the divine is a source of living waters.



I invite you to try this Jewish practice and see if it offers a way in to a regular Jewish practice in the midst of a busy and demanding world. Consider how it might transform your approach to a busy day were you to mindfully wash your hands in the morning or before eating. Were you to take 30-60 seconds to connect with a sense of spiritual purity, would it change the way that you encounter others throughout the day? Would it change the way you view and care for yourself?

Shalom,
Rabbi Pfau



**TEMPLE
B'NAI ABRAHAM**

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<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Shabbat morning services begin at 10:00 a.m. (when there are B'nai Mitzvah, services begin at 9:30 a.m.)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">January, 2014 ~ Tevet/Sh'vat</p>						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 No Hebrew School	30	31	1	2 4:30 pm Hebrew School	3 7:30 pm Shabbat Services	4
5 9 am Sunday School 10 am Hebrew School	6	7	8	9 4:30 pm Hebrew School	10 6:00 pm Tot Shabbat 7:30 pm Shabbat Services	11
12  10 am Family Education Day	13  Sisterhood 7:30pm	14	15	16 4:30 pm Hebrew School	17	18 10:00 am Shabbat Morning Services
19 9 am Sunday School 10 am Hebrew School	20	21	22	23 4:30 pm Hebrew School	24 7:30 pm Shabbat Services	25
26 No Hebrew School	27	28	29	30 No Hebrew School	31 7:30 pm Shabbat Services	1