



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.

December 2007, Kislev/Tevet 5767

From the Rabbi's Desk

My dear fellow Valley Jews and Friends,

Shalom! I hope that your Thanksgiving holiday was blessed with family and friends and that your reasons for gratitude were plentiful and manifest to you.

Now we are entering into the winter season, a time when light is at a premium. Chanukah falls at this season, helping to light the darkness, both in a literal physical sense, and spiritually. May our Chag Urim (holiday of lights) be bright in every sense, may we all be re-dedicated to learning and living accordingly, and may we serve as a light to others.

The Jewish Calendar & Holidays

KISLEV → TEVET

Rosh Chodesh (the New Month) for Kislev took place on the 11th of November. Kislev will run until December 9th, and Rosh Chodesh for Tevet will be on the 10th. Tevet will run until January 7th, and the 8th is Rosh Chodesh for Shevat.

The major holiday during this month of Kislev is Chanukah. It begins on the 25th of Kislev, and runs until the 3rd of Tevet. On the secular calendar this year it will fall from sundown on December 4th through sundown on the 12th.

The procedure for lighting candles is based on a compromise between the teachings of the schools of Hillel and Shammai, so we add candles going from right to left (not counting the shamash or helper candle), starting with one candle the first night, and adding one each night to increase the light as we move through the holiday. When we actually light these candles, however, we light the shamash (helper) candle, and use that to light all the other candles, starting at the newest, which is the one on the farthest left for that night. In practice, for the fourth night (Friday evening, December 7th this year), we would put four candles into the Chanukiah (Chanukah menorah), starting at the right side as we face the Chanukiah, and moving towards the center and left. We would light the shamash and recite the blessings, then actually light the candles starting from the last one added (the leftmost) and moving towards the first one (at the right), going from left to right. The blessings for the first night are the two for Chanukah plus the Shehechyanu blessing, as this is the first time we are lighting the Chanukiah this year, so on the first night we would recite:

Baruch atah Adonai elohenu melech ha'olam asher kideshanu bemitvotav vitzivanu lehadlik ner shel Chanukah.

Blessed are You, Lord, our G-d, sovereign of creation, who has

commanded us with Your commandments concerning the lighting of the light of Chanukah.

Baruch atah Adonai elohenu melech ha'olam she'asah nisim la'avoteynu beyamim hahem bazeman hazeh.

Blessed are You, Lord, our G-d, sovereign of creation, who did miracles for our ancestors in those days at this time.

Baruch atah Adonai elohenu melech ha'olam shehechyanu vikiyamanu vehigianu lazman hazeh.

Blessed are You, Lord, our G-d, sovereign of creation, who has sustained us and supported us and allowed us to reach this time (of joy). .

On all other nights, after the first, we would not include the Shehechyanu blessing, and would say only the two berachot for Chanukah.

The 7th of December is Friday. You may want to remember that on the Friday night in Chanukah, we light the Chanukiah, and THEN the Shabbat candles, ushering in the Sabbath AFTER celebrating Chanukah so as not to kindle flame on Shabbat. ☺ This would indicate that the Chanukah candles are traditionally lit slightly more than eighteen minutes before sundown.

Plan ahead for a fun event – after the Chanukah pot luck dinner which will begin at 6 pm., the religious school students will be performing on Friday the 7th at THOI. See elsewhere in the bulletin for more details. Definitely remember to bring your own menorah and candles or oil to the synagogue to light the Chanukiah for that night! It is an amazing and very heartening sight to see so many Chanukiot (plural of Chanukiah) lit and casting light over all of us in the room. This is one of the highlights of the season for me.

The Congregational Calendar – Services

In recent services we had the Bar Mitzvah of Sean Miller in October and the wedding of Annie Saval and Shawn Wong in November. Coming in March is the adult Bat Mitzvah of Amber Pearson and then in May, of Natasha Benenson. On a sadder note, we held the funeral of Viola Blazer, Linda's mother. May the One who comforts comfort Linda and Jim among the mourners, and may her memory be for a blessing.

Please know that we always seek congregant and guest participation in services throughout the year. If you are interested in taking a role in a service, please be in touch with Rabbi Joe. Roles include: reading Torah, reading Haftarah, delivering a Devar Torah, serving as Gabbai (the "MC" for the Torah service), or having an honor. The Honors we usually confer include being called up for an Aliyah (saying the blessings for the Torah or the Haftarah), serving as Hagbah (lift, hold, and carry the Torah), Gelilah (undressing and dressing the Torah), or Petichah Usegurah (opening and closing the Ark).

The Congregational Calendar – Events

Current events are listed under "Noteworthy Congregational News" and in the Calendar. Look for the Shorty youth group fund-raising dinner and service and the Tu Bi'Shevat Seder in January. In February, we will have a Song Session and dinner and later in the same month there will be a concert by Lyrissa.

Accessibility News: Another accomplishment for the congregation in the area of accessibility has been achieved recently. THOI has signed the commitment to join the National Organization on Disabilities as a member congregation committed to doing all we can to remove barriers. We are moving closer to that goal with a sound system upgrade and wider doorways into the rest rooms and

	<p>leading to the sanctuary. We are in the process of having some work done in the bathrooms to make access easier. As you can tell, there is still some work to be done, but the projects implemented are a wonderful step forward towards accessibility to our congregation.</p> <p>I want to close by telling you that I see our community keeping busy, thriving and growing, and moving from strength to strength! I am delighted and proud of all of us. As this secular year closes, I am amazed and happy to see the vibrancy and energy that our tiny community expresses.</p> <p>B'virvat shalom (with blessings for peace), Rabbi Joe Blair</p>
<p>Reaching the Rabbi</p>	<p>The Rabbi is available this year by prior arrangement on Sundays and Thursdays in Harrisonburg, and Mondays and Fridays in Staunton. If you wish to meet or speak with the rabbi, please email or call for an appointment to be sure that Rabbi Joe will be able to give you his full undivided attention, as you deserve.</p> <p>The office is not staffed and the building is generally closed when the rabbi is not there. In the event of an urgent need the rabbi may be contacted by email or telephone. Messages are regularly checked at both congregations, and email is frequently read. Please understand that the rabbi will not be available or reply on Shabbat or on Jewish holidays unless it is an emergency that cannot wait. In that case, please be sure to express the need for an urgent response.</p> <p>Rabbi Joe's Email: RabbiJoeB@hotmail.com Beth El Congregation 540-434-2744 Temple House of Israel 540-886-4091 Cell phone (for emergencies) 434-981-3959</p>
<p>Message from the President</p>	<p>Dear Congregants: Happy Hanukah!!! PLEASE make every effort to make the congregational meeting this Sunday, December 2, for a report on the Temple and voting on board members and constitutional changes. See you at the Hanukah party!</p> <p style="text-align: right;">.....Lisa Solod Warren</p>
<p>Noteworthy Congregational News</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ December 1st from 5:30 to 11 pm Shorty will hold a Parents' Night Out. Parents are welcome to bring their children (ages 1 to 12) to Beth El, and leave them to be cared for, entertained, and fed while they go out shopping, for a date, or just to talk. Call Sherri Alt at 540-820-3962 for information or to make a reservation. \$15 for one child, \$25 for two or more. ▪ Sunday December 2nd at 2 pm is the THOI Annual Congregational Meeting. <u>WE REALLY NEED YOU TO ATTEND and VOTE</u>. We have officer elections, and Constitutional changes and our budget to approve. Your attendance is essential! If you will be out of town, or if you are unable to attend for health reasons, please send your proxy so we can achieve a quorum at the meeting. Contact a board member for a proxy form.

Please come to the
Chanukah Potluck Dinner on Friday December 7th at 6:00 pm.

Latkes and drink will be supplied. Please bring a dish to share.

A – G Main Dish

H – P Side Dish or Salad

R – Z Dessert for the oneg after services

Remember to bring your menorah and candles

Some of our Religious School students, led by Roberta Stein, will be performing after the dinner and before our Shabbat service.

- There will be a **Mitzvah day and Social event on December 9th from 2 to 5.** Come and enjoy great food, nice people, wonderful conversation, and a good time, while helping the congregation with some tasks to keep up the building! We have things many people can do, including cleaning and arranging the kitchen, organizing the storage area, treating the wood of the pews and stands in the sanctuary, painting, and clearing leaves off the roof.
- A new idea: We will have a **Game Day Social on December 25th from 2 to 6.** Bring your favorite board and card games and a pot luck dish (unless we decide as a nod to tradition to order in Chinese ☺), and we will all enjoy the afternoon together – after all, nothing much is open!
- There is a **Torah Lishmah at 6:30 on Friday, December 28th.** Bring your meal, and eat while we talk about the Torah prior to our Shabbat service. If you enjoy this type of session, you can also attend the Talmud Torah Limud the preceding week, Friday, December 21st, at 6:30 pm at Beth El, prior to our Shabbat service that night there.
- Our Community Awareness Shabbat brought more than 100 people to the synagogue! It was an excellent educational evening for all of us.
- The Members' Brunch in October was delicious. About 20 of us had relaxed conversation over very good food. Thanks to Laurie Berman for her fresh-from-the-garden tomatoes, basil, and peppers, to Rabbi Jo for the bagels, to Gail Brusoe for the juice, to Marsha Pillet for the yummy muffins and jam, to Rosalie Waterman for the vegetable salad, to Ellen Werther for the fruit and to Beth Young for the egg casserole.
- “Chanukah is often thought of as the holiday of lights. ... That light, the light of the presence of G-d among us, shines on still. ... Today we must acknowledge that the holy light of the presence of G-d among us is not visible to us. It is clouded by the darkness of war in many places. It is obscured by the existence of hate, bigotry, and prejudice among us and within us. ... If we are to truly kindle the light of Chanukah, we must re-dedicate ourselves to the pursuit of justice and righteousness. ...” **Check out the Rabbi's blog on our website: www.thoi.org.** The full text of these words is available for you to read there.
- The next **board meeting will be December 17th at 7:00 pm.**

<p>News of our Community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shirley and Rafael Brand have moved into their new home on Rockfish Road and Rafael is recuperating nicely at home after surgery on his wrist. ▪ We wish a speedy recovery to Betty Menaker who is not well. ▪ Our thoughts and prayers go also to Claire Lerner (Marsha Pillet’s mother), Helene Berman-Seidenfeld (Laurie Berman’s mother) and Fredi Solod (Lisa Solod Warren’s mother), all of whom are ill. ▪ We will miss Linda Singer, Final Draft Booksellers and the whole Singer family when they close their store and move to Easton, MD at the end of the year. Linda has been wonderful in accepting our used books so that others may enjoy them and we appreciate the donations made to the temple during their years in Staunton. ▪ Come experience the joy of learning to play the piano! <i>Musikgarten Adults – Enjoying the Piano Together</i> is a new 8-week group piano class for adult beginners offered by Sarah Grove-Humphries starting Tuesday, January 8, 2008 from 11:00 to noon at Emmanuel Episcopal church, 300 W. Frederick Street in Staunton. No prior musical experience is needed – just enthusiasm and a love of music. Cost is \$110 and includes piano book and accompanying CD. For more information or to register, contact Sarah at 885-4223 or Humphries@rica.net.
<p>The Israel Trip</p>	<p><i>Notes from Israel:</i></p> <p><i>We arrived in Jerusalem on a Friday afternoon. Our guide suggested that we go to the Jewish market. We were tired after a busy morning and a long ride, but figured we should check it out.</i></p> <p><i>The market consisted of an enclosed alleyway, lined on each side with vendors. It was packed with people trying to finish their shopping and get home in time to prepare Shabbat dinner. We picked our way through the throng of shoppers with bags, with baby strollers, with children. The noise was indescribable in that enclosed space, as shoppers haggled with sellers, vendors called out their wares, and traffic whizzed outside.</i></p> <p><i>We passed by tables laden with dried fruit and nuts of all kinds; bags of aromatic spices, gorgeous fresh fruit and vegetables. There were mountains of paprika two feet tall, and a table of glassy-eyed fish. One seller had nothing but halvah – a dozen kinds. Pastries and challah filled several more tables, while goat and sheep cheeses adorned yet another. As it got closer to Shabbat, the pace got even more frenetic, as sellers tried to move their stock before the holiday. It was a piece of everyday life in Jerusalem, and we were glad we’d made the effort to come.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>.....Ruth Chodrow</i></p>
<p>Adult Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rabbinic educational programs and Adult Education programs are possible and limited only by our resources and imagination. Please be in touch and let me know what you would like to have offered. This is certainly NOT limited to having Rabbi Joe as the only instructor or leader – think outside the box! ☺ We already have several folks who have offered to conduct classes for our congregants on a wide variety of topics. I would like to take them up on those offers and schedule them soon. ▪ Please note the Torah Lishmah and Talmud Torah Limud programs,

	<p>approximately monthly, and plan to attend.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If you are interested in studying for and having your own B'nai Mitzvah, or in learning to leyn (read/chant) Torah and/or Haftarah, or to lead services, or serve as a gabbai, or you wish to discuss conversion, please be in touch with Rabbi Joe. Similarly, if you feel a conversation with the Rabbi would be of benefit to you, please be in touch with the Rabbi to make an appointment. You can call or email TORAH PARASHIOT <p>Torah parashiot (Torah portions) read for the period covered by this newsletter include: Vayeshev, Miketz, Vayigash, Vayechi, and Shemot. These are drawn from Bereshit (Genesis) 37-50 and Shemot (Exodus) 1-6. .</p> <p>Haftarot read this month include readings from Amos 2-3, Zechariah 2-4, Ezekiel 37, 1 Kings 2; Isaiah 27-29.</p>
Book Group	The holiday recess will last through December. We'll meet again on Jan. 30, 2008 at Janet Brody's to discuss <u>The World is Flat</u> .
Young Adults	The Young Adults are having a Chanukah dinner at the home of Natasha Benenson on December 4th at 6:00 pm . Bring your menorah to help celebrate! RSVP to Natasha at 886-1157.
News from the Women's Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Thanks to Ruth Chodrow, Leah Farmer, Sarah Grove-Humphries, Marsha Pillet, Rosalie Waterman, and Beth Young for preparing our Women's Group fall Shabbat dinner. It was delicious, as always! ▪ Thanks to Gail Brusoe and Lisa Warren as well as Jim Osborne and Beth Young for the oneg following our Community Awareness Shabbat services that evening. We had more than 100 people attend! <p><i>Birthdays to be happily celebrated December:</i></p> <p>Gregg Goldenberg celebrating on December 6th Robert Pendleton celebrating on the 11th Alan Goldenberg on the 12th Beth Young on the 14th Sam Goldenberg also on the 14th Rosalie Waterman on the 19th Jesse Landsberg Ward on the 25th Anna Degen on the 28th Philip Chodrow also on the 28th Ben Freedman on the 31st</p> <p><i>Happy Anniversary to:</i></p> <p>Rachel and Tony Jordan celebrating on December 29th</p>
Judaica Shop	The <u>new shipment has arrived</u> so check out all the Chanukah goodies! In case you haven't heard, Chanukah begins December 4 th . If you have any specific needs or wish for something else to be displayed, please contact Natasha at 886-1157.
Notes from the Editor	I've incorporated changes to this bulletin based on what I've heard. I'd love to hear more of your comments and suggestions – contact me at bulletin@thoi.org .

Religious School	<p>We would like to wish everyone a very Happy Chanukah, which is fast approaching. Our Ellis Island Family Education Day was a success and a very interesting morning, as well as including a delicious lunch of family favorites. We thank everyone who helped to make it happen. Special thanks to our guest who so graciously shared their family histories and stories with the students: John Stewart Gary Stein and Ronnie (Reva) Saltsberg.Dara, Linda, and Ruth</p>		
Donations	<p>Thank you to these generous people who have made contributions to the Temple during the previous month. We greatly appreciate your donations!</p> <p>To the General Fund Final Draft Booksellers, Linda Singer For the cemetery in honor of Viola Blazer.....Harold and Nancy Abrams Alan Blumberg In honor of what would have been David's 90th birthday Janet Brody In honor of Barth Weinberg's significant birth and speedy recovery..... Abram Kronsberg In honor of the Ben Raybin libraryLynne Landsberg Inge Raybin In honor of Rabbi Joe for help with Sean's bar mitzvah Sheryl Miller To the accessibility fundLynne Landsberg To the Caring Committee in memory of Viola BlazerLinda Blazer</p>		
Yahrzeits for December	Flora Barth	Aaron Harris	Simon Rosenthal
	Joseph Barth	Sadie Jacobson	Alma Samuels
	Louis Belfor	Max Klotz	Phillip Seltzer
	David Brownold	Milton Klotz	Albert Shultz
	Hannah Degen	Clara Litvin	Lydia Switzer
	Anne Goldberg	Earl Nicely	Hubert Thompson
	Rose Greenfield	Tina Rosenberg	Rhea Walters
		Abraham Rosenthal	Irvin Weinberg

DECEMBER						1 Parent's night out with SHORTY
2 Annual Congregational Meeting at 2:00 pm	3 Intro to Hebrew at 6	4 Young Adults Chanukah Dinner at 6 @ Natasha's	5	6	7 Chanukah potluck at 6:00 Shabbat Services at 8	8
9 Mitzvah Day 2-5	10 Intro to Hebrew at 6	11	12	13	14	15
16	17 Board Meeting at 7:00	18	19	20	21	22
23	24 Intro to Hebrew at 6	25 Game Day at THOI 2-6	26	27	28 6:30 Torah Lishmah Shabbat Services at 7:30	29

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