



Sinai Temple Bulletin

*Take Back Your Time:
Rediscover Shabbat*

November / December 2016
30 Tishrei - 2 Tevet, 5777

Yelamdeinu Rabbeinu, Let Our Rabbi Teach Us...

Rabbi Howard Kosovske

Here they come: two holidays a month apart, each with a message totally opposite from the other. And can they be reconciled?

The first is Thanksgiving, coming at the end of this month. I know this will be difficult to believe, but more times than I can remember I've been asked, "Do you Jews celebrate Thanksgiving?" Talk about a question that felt like a punch in the gut! Here I was, objectified as an outsider, viewed as being less than American. It was tearing to the core.

Forget about my wearing the uniform of our Armed Forces for four years of active duty. Forget about my going into the mess-halls wearing dress blues with the rest of the chaplains and sharing Thanksgiving turkey dinners with every enlisted person around. Forget the World War II military cemeteries I visited that were dotted with grave-markers topped with *magenei david* instead of crosses. Forget about the Jewish mothers on whom I, a chaplain and a rabbi in uniform, pinned those medals for acts of extreme bravery that cost their sons their lives.

But how could I forget? If there was ever a time when we, all of us of all faiths, celebrated being American and gave thanks for it at the same time, Thanksgiving was/is it. That's what my family (and likely yours too) came here for. And that's what we were/are/will continue to be. First, last, and always.

So I don't ever want to be asked, "Do you Jews celebrate Thanksgiving?" The fact is that the motzi I will recite as I sit down to dinner on Thanksgiving will be but a Jewish version of the same prayer of thanks the first celebrants of Thanksgiving back in 1620 recited. It will be the same prayer that recognizes that the presence of the food before us is not to be taken for granted (and that I am obligated to make sure that everyone has enough of the bounty to share in it as well). But then I will add a second blessing. Secular celebration Thanksgiving or not, I will recite the *shehecheyanu* and give thanks to God for being able to live, stand, and reach a place like this where I, fully American, can celebrate.

Then, a month later at the end of December, unlike the Christian majority here who will be celebrating Christmas, I will celebrate a holiday purely Jewish. And the leitmotif of that holiday, Hanukkah, will be the exact opposite of what Thanksgiving was about a month earlier. This one will not be about being "same." It will be about being, and, more, reminding ourselves of the necessity of trying to pre-

Friday Evenings

November 4, 6:00 p.m. service
Joint service with Temple Beth El as part of the Hartman week-end

November 11, 7:30 p.m. service

November 18, 6:00 service and dinner

November 25, 7:30 p.m. service

December 2, 6:00 p.m. service

December 9, 7:30 p.m. service

December 16, 7:30 p.m. service

December 23, 7:30 p.m. service

December 30, 6:00 p.m. service
Shabbat Hanukkah followed by festive Hanukkah dinner



Saturday Mornings

November 5, 10:15 service

November 12, 10:30 -
Jacob Weiswasser – Bar Mitzvah

November 19, 10:30 -
Carly Baker – Bat Mitzvah

Message from Bruce Leshine

Temple President

My Friends,

Last year on Rosh Hashanah, I spoke about Liz and I stumbling upon the centuries-old synagogue on the tiny Greek island of Corfu in the Adriatic Sea, and my discovery of a Jewish community a world away from our world here in Springfield. I wondered about what makes both our community and the community in Corfu Jewish communities. Many would say that Jews all practice the same religion, and that this religion, Judaism, is a set of ideals and the way we should live our lives. So as a result, we are both “Jewish communities.” I believe whole-heartedly in that foundational principle. But in thinking about our two communities, I realize that although as Jews our ideals may be constant, our communities are not. The Jewish community on Corfu has changed over time; as is our community here in Springfield changing. And we are embracing these changes at Sinai Temple; we have before us a fantastic opportunity to grow—spiritually, intellectually, and dynamically, as a vibrant evolving Jewish community.

In 1999, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, in their words, “state[d] a set of Principles that define Reform Judaism in our own time.” This Statement of Principles expressed that “We are an inclusive community, opening doors to Jewish life to people of all ages, to varied kinds of families ... who strive to create a Jewish home. We believe that we must not only open doors for those ready to enter our faith, but also to actively encourage those who are seeking a spiritual home to find it in Judaism. We are committed to strengthening the people Israel by supporting individuals and families in the creation of homes rich in Jewish learning and observance. We are committed to strengthening the people Israel by making the synagogue central to Jewish communal life, so that it may elevate the spiritual, intellectual and cultural quality of our lives.”

Elevating the spiritual, intellectual and cultural quality of our lives will require us to think broadly, and to open our minds, individually and collectively, to change. Over the coming years, I look to the members of our Congregation becoming more and more active in everything that happens here at Sinai Temple. I believe strongly that our synagogue lives become richer and fuller when members connect with one another and create their own multiple visions of life within Sinai Temple. Let’s not simply rely on the temple president, the rabbi and the board of directors to put together and prescribe our services and our programs, and decide what we do and what we don’t do and how it will be done at Sinai Temple. I sincerely believe, and I’m sure most of you share this sentiment, that our Congregation’s interests are far more expansive than merely religious services inside our physical building. And although few would contend that worship is not an integral part of our being Jewish, it also is not necessarily the entirety of it—there’s a great deal more to being Jewish, so let’s get to it.

Of course, change is not necessarily easy. But our growth, both internally and externally, relies in large part on our willingness to change. Our first step is separating the Jewish “way we live our lives” and “but that’s the way we’ve always done it.” The two are not the same. Once we do that, and we realize that it’s alright—even beneficial—to explore and maybe modify the way we’ve always done it in order to improve and heighten the way we live our Jewish lives, change takes on a whole new look to it. Indeed, change creates Sinai Temple’s “tomorrow.”

Be well, Bruce

From Rabbi Kosovske Regarding the Rabbi’s Discretionary Fund of Sinai Temple

A number of people have asked me questions about my Rabbi’s Discretionary Fund. The reality is that it is not *my* discretionary fund. Rather, it is *your/Sinai Temple’s* Rabbi’s Discretionary Fund, and my role is to serve as its custodian.

There are a couple of things you should know about the Rabbi’s Discretionary Fund. Most important among them is what it exists for. Essentially, while the fund will do such things as provide emergency assistance/scholarships to congregants and others in need, supplement congregational programs in need of additional funding, and support local, national, and international non-profit organizations, the Rabbi’s Discretionary Fund first and foremost is a *chesed* and *tzedakah* fund. Its main purposes are to aid the needy, care for the infirm, teach the unlearned, and extend a helping hand to those who have lost their way in the world. Very few transactions will ever be made outside of these purposes, and always they will have a *tzedakah* and Toraitic component to them.

Second, the fund, by its nature, will often operate in a confidential manner. But even in such cases, while the recipients of help from the fund will be and always remain confidential, the amounts and the transactions of the fund, in and out, will not be.

Therefore, several things will apply. First, at the end of my tenure, fund transaction records will be presented to our treasurer for confidential auditing. Second, any funds remaining in the Rabbi’s Discretionary Fund will, at the end of my tenure, be turned over to Sinai Temple for passing on to the Rabbi’s Discretionary Fund of my successor to start his/her fund.

Finally, there have, at this point, been only a relative handful of contributions to the fund. The fund needs (and is soliciting) support, therefore, whether as memorials, or happy day contributions, or, simply, as acts of *tzedakah*.

The Rabbi’s Discretionary Fund will always strive to be a powerful vehicle for carrying out the highest ideals of Sinai Temple and Reform Judaism. Your participation in its work literally will make difference in the lives of people.

NOTES FROM THE CANTOR

My thanks once again to the talented members of the 5777 Sinai Temple High Holiday Choir: Marilyn Amster, Leigh Cherkas, Maggy Cohn, Sarah Cohn, Bonnie Gibson, Cheri Haimowitz, Jack Henrie, Steve Kessler, Margie Klein, Lisa Levheim, Sheri Levson, Bonnie Mikesh, Robyn Newhouse (our beloved rehearsal accompanist!), and Ann Rosenfield. My thanks also go to the many other singers, musicians, and excellent Torah readers who helped to enrich the Yamim Noraim services. "Yasher Koach!"

This December I will once again have the great honor of performing with the Springfield Symphony at their annual Holiday Extravaganza concert. This year, I will be singing *Yeish Kochavim* (There are Stars) as a special tribute to my beloved colleague, Cantor Morton Shames (z'l), and *A Heart of Wisdom*, the piece I sang to honor Rabbi Shapiro this past June, but this time, the piece will be arranged for symphony orchestra! Please check the SSO website for more information.

Ivdu et Hashem B'simcha! Serve the Holy One with Joy!

PRESIDENT'S LETTER FOR THE MEN AND WOMEN OF SINAI (MWOS)

It was great to support the kick-off BBQ for Sinai's Religious School students, parents, and community on September 11th. A good time was had by all. Thank you to Buff Maniscalco in coordinating our efforts and to all who pitched in to help in any way.

We now have a set of scheduled breakfasts in the Rabbi Shapiro Oneg Shabbat Room on Sunday mornings at 9:30. MWOS, in conjunction with the Adult Education Committee (and other congregants), will be serving breakfasts (generally bagels, lox, and cream cheese, scrambled eggs, coffee, and OJ) on November 20th, January 8th, March 19th, and April 30th. Please check your e-Vents for our speakers at each of the breakfasts. I am excited at the potential we have for speakers and also at the opportunity to work with the Laurie Weinberg chairing the Adult Education Committee on the presenters and breakfasts.

We will have our annual Chanukah Shabbat dinner on December 30th. This is always a great community event, and we have had nearly 300 people join for dinner and services and all the warmth and light of this holiday in the past. Please consider joining MWOS and actively participating in this event.

I wish to thank all of you who have pitched in to help MWOS and other Sinai Temple committees in any way. If you have not yet, we would love to have you participating, both men and women of Sinai. This is another eventful year in support of our Sinai community!!

Jack Henrie
President, Men and Women of Sinai

Rabbi message continued from page 1

serve, "different."

My take on Hanukkah: the message that most have learned about Hanukkah as kids simply isn't the way it happened.

It wasn't that a Syrian Greek king named Antiochus IV Epiphanes tried to prevent us from being Jews. Nor was it that he tried to impose a non-Jewish set of religious practices on what was then Jewish society either. Rather, it was instead that most Jews of those times wanted to be like the Greeks. They liked what the Greeks were about, liked their art and philosophy and gymnasia and whatever else Greek culture was about. And to go along, our priesthood invited all of those foreign religious elements into our sanctuary.

But then a small group of zealots – Maccabees you know them as – revolted against all that. And when they succeeded in driving the Greeks out of the country (and the temple), they at the same time created a totally new brand of Judaism, one in which 1) the Temple was decentralized and 2) Judaism was no longer purely a Biblical religion, and 3) being Jewish, fully Jewish, was now the name of the game.

That they accomplished that was, indeed, a miracle. And lighting candles each night for the eight nights of Hanukkah to remember a story about a tiny cruse of oil somehow continuing to fire the newly-rededicated temple for eight days instead of one, is not about a victory. Rather, it is our way of proclaiming to all those who pass by who see our Hanukkiot burning in the window that what we are about is exactly about our being Jews.

So how do we reconcile now our proclaiming that we are fully Americans and fully Jews? For me it means that we take the messages of Judaism (which really are about fixing the world) and, as Jews, do everything we can to make those messages reality. You see, for us fighting injustice and intolerance and inequality isn't something we do just because it's the right thing to do. We do it because doing it is what being Jewish is about. And, blessed by being part of this wonderful American society, it is our responsibility to do all we can to make this place the best society it can be.

So for these months, I wish you good holidays. Too, I hope you will rejoice in being Jewish Americans. And also American Jews.

L'shalom,
Howard A. Kosovske



Message from Heather Sullivan

Director of Education

Shalom, Chaverim,

Happy 5777!

Thank you for a fun-filled and busy October. As always Sukkot and Simchat Torah were fantastic celebratory events. This year our holidays were filled with the sweetness of tradition, along with new experience, as Rabbi Kosovske shared in our sukkah decorating and sandwich making and Simchat Torah dancing.

Looking ahead:

- 11/11 - Shabbat dinner for students in grades 10-12, followed by 7:30 service. RSVP to the main office.
- 11/18 - Kidz Kabbalat for students in grades K-2 and their families at 6:00 p.m. This is a great way for our youngest students to experience a Shabbat service, in a very student-friendly way. RSVP to the main office.
- 12/20 - Chanukah party for grades 3-7 at 4:45-5:30
- 12/20 - Chanukah dinner and activity for students and parents, grades 8-12, 5:30-7:00

Mazel Tov to Bar Mitzvah, Jacob Weiswasser (November 12), Bat Mitzvah, Carly Baker (November 19), and Bat Mitzvah Sarah Metcalf (December 3) and their families!

L'Shalom,
Heather

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY

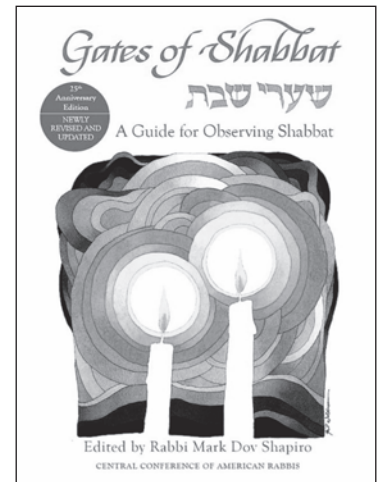
by Tina deMeza

It's time for another anniversary celebration! Twenty-five years ago *Gates of Shabbat* by Rabbi Mark Shapiro was published by the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Over the years Shabbat has been a major focus and a teaching point at Sinai Temple. Many families have attended PACT's about Shabbat at which time we received a copy of the Rabbi's book for use at home. In 2008 the Rabbi kicked off a year of special Shabbat programming titled *Take Back Your Time: Rediscover Shabbat*.

The CCAR Press just released the 25th anniversary edition of the book on August 1st. Edited by our Rabbi Emeritus, the book is "a completely revised and updated version of the classic how-to guide about Shabbat observance and practices".

Rabbi Shapiro has graciously donated three copies of the 25th anniversary edition to the Sinai library. Stop in soon to check out this new addition!

The library is always open during regular Temple hours, including Sunday mornings when Religious School is in session. Checking out books is easy – just sign your books out in the bind on the library desk. Please return the book to the box on the library desk within three to four weeks.



Continued from page 1

November 26, 10:15 service

December 3, 10:30 -
Sarah Metcalf – Bat Mitzvah

December 10, 10:15 service

December 17, 10:15 service

December 24, 10:15 service – 1st candle

December 31, 10:15 service – 2nd candle

Sunday Morning

Sunday, November 20, MWOS Breakfast

JUDAICA GIFT SHOP CORNER

Your shop is preparing for Chanukah! We'll be ready by mid-November for all the "snowbirds" who celebrate Chanukah with Thanksgiving before they fly away.

This year the toy market has offered us some new and different things for both young and older children. We'll have them!

Of course, we'll have menorahs, traditional, children's novelty and modern. We'll have candles, decorations, hostess gifts, novelties and much, much more.

On E-VENTS we will post additional days and hours Shortly.

Thais Fischel 786-9577

Adult Opportunities

Introduction To Talmud With Rabbi Devorah Jacobson

Rabbi Devorah Jacobson will be teaching a drop-in Talmud class on Thursday mornings beginning in November. There is NO charge for this learning opportunity which is a great introduction to the Talmud. The class will meet in the new Michael's Cafe, in JGS Lifecare, 770 Converse Street, Longmeadow. Please come when you are able to carve out time for study, if you have to miss a class, that is ok too. The class is the brain child of Rabbi Jacobson and Rabbi Katz of TBE and we thank them for offering this wonderful opportunity to learn without the complications of committing weekly time and tuition. Look in E-vents for details about dates and times as we get that information.

SINAI READING PARTNERS

We will meet monthly for lunch and conversation in the Temple library. Our library has a copy of our selections and the Storrs Longmeadow Library will have copies reserved for us during the month before we meet.

Wednesday Oct. 19, noon, bring your lunch as we discuss "Forbidden Love in St. Petersburg", by Israeli novelist and veteran Mossad agent Mishka Ben-David.

Thursday, November 17, noon, we'll discuss Israeli novelist A.B. Yehoshua's new book "The Extra", which humorously touches on some of life's most compelling and troubling dilemmas in a way that is both very Israeli and very universal.

New youth engagement advisors Jonathan Dubinsky and Elizabeth (Cossin) Dubinsky

We are Jonathan, Elizabeth and baby Eleanor, and we are excited to be the new SPFTY advisors! We are moving back to the area after living in Denver for the past 5 years. Jonathan grew up in Kansas City and Elizabeth grew up here at Sinai. We both enjoy gardening, camping, and fermenting things.



SINAI'S NEXT MUSICAL PRODUCTION

Sinai's next musical production, "Children of Eden" is coming February 9-12. The story of the first 9 chapters of Genesis is set to gorgeous music by Stephen Schwartz (Wicked, Pippin, Godspell). Be a part of the production by volunteering to help with one of the many things it takes to put on a full scale musical theatre production. We will need people to usher, sell concessions, and many other one-time volunteer opportunities. Contact Sheri Levson at levsong@comcast.net for more information, or see the volunteer board in the lobby.





CANTOR LEVSON BLOWS THE SHOFAR

The Sinai Temple Bulletin is published six times a year by Sinai Temple, Springfield, Massachusetts. This is Issue Number 3 for 2016-2017.

- Howard A. KosovskeRabbi
- Martin Levson.....Cantor
- Mark Dov Shapiro.....Rabbi Emeritus
- Heather SullivanDirector of Education
- Bruce LeshinePresident
- Buff ManiscalcoCo-Vice President
- Laurie WeinbergCo-Vice President
- Susan Cash Cannizzo.....Vice President
- Steven Kessler.....Vice President
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of Sinai
- Ron WeissCemetery Chair
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CannizzoMembership Committee Chairs

SOMETHING NEW!!!
SOMETHING NEW!!!
SOMETHING NEW!!!

Mark your calendars now for four, once-a-month Saturday night happenings. It's our new gathering opportunity called

HavDeli!!!

That's right, and it's not a misspelling.

HavDeli!!! Say it again:

HavDeli!!!

So what is **HavDeli!!!?** **HavDeli!!** is

- 1) havdalah, followed by
 - 2) a deli dinner followed by
 - 3) a movie, all on a Saturday night,
- and all for the modest cost of just \$12 per person!

The time? **Always at 6:30 PM**

Date 1: Saturday, November 12th

Date 2: Saturday, December 17th

Date 3: Saturday, January 14th

Date 4: Saturday, February 4th

Mark your calendars now.

Details, movie titles, and registration opportunities will follow.

But remember, it's **HavDeli!!!**





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