



Services

Youth Shabbat Service followed by a Potluck Dairy Dinner *see attached flyer*

Friday, January 6th at 5:30 PM *In Person only*

Kabbalat Shabbat

Friday, January 6th, 13th & 27th from 5:45 PM – 6:30 PM *Zoom only*

Musical Shabbat Service w/TTY Band followed by a Potluck Dairy Dinner

Friday, January 20th from 6:00 PM to 8:30 PM *In Person with Streaming* ***see attached flyer***

Morning Shabbat

Saturday, January 7th, 14th, 21st & 28th at 9:30 AM * In Person & via Zoom*

Tuesday Minyan

Tuesday, January 3rd, 10th, 17th 24th & 31st at 5:30 PM *Zoom only*

January Events

Men's Club: Climb for the Health of it! Family Rock Climbing Event at Rock Spot in Peacedale, RI

Saturday, January 7th from 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Men's Club: Team Building & Rock-Climbing Event at Rock Spot in Boston/Dedham, MA

Sunday, January 8th from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Adult Education Classes Taught by Rabbi Barnett

Resuming on Sunday, January 8th *In Person only*

Beginning Hebrew Reading from 9:30 AM – 10:15 AM

Jewish Literacy & Culture from 10:30 AM – 11:15 AM

Sprouts Program: Tu B'shevat Theme *see attached flyer*

Sunday, January 15th from 9:15 AM – 10:15 AM

February & March Events – SAVE THE DATES!

Men's Club: Lox Making Event * see attached flyer*

Thursday, February 9th at 6:00 PM

Men's Club: Breakfast *see attached flyer*

Sunday, February 12th at 9:00 AM

Laugh the Night Away at TTY Comedy Fundraiser *see attached flyer*

Saturday, March 11th Doors Open at 7:00 PM Show Begins at 8:00 PM



Announcing Trees of Life!

One of the most special verses that was committed to memory early on in my Judaic studies was the verse that appears at the end of the Torah service, as we are putting the scrolls back into the ark: “Etz Chaim Hi.” This section is deemed so important that in our Siddur Lev Shalem, it appears in boldface. It’s preceded by a verse where the arrow is that you don’t even

always hear, but which I always remember to do: “I have given you a precious inheritance: do not forsake my teaching.” Then, we have the beautiful verses in Hebrew, for which I’ll share the translation in English here: “It is a tree of life for those who grasp it, and all who hold onto it are blessed. Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace.” Then the final verse is in essence a call to action: “Turn us toward you, Adonai, and we will return to you; make our days seem fresh, as they once were.” What beautiful thoughts expressed in poetic verses! Let’s explore some aspects of them briefly.

The analogy our Torah being likened to a tree is preceded by an alert designed to get our attention: We have something very valuable and special here, and we are enjoined to not forsake it, meaning not to ignore it, or turn away from it. We now know and anticipate that we’re going to hear something very unique: The ways of life, bringing many blessings, are like a tree to us; just as you need to reach out and grasp the branches of a tree in order to climb and ascend it, so also does learning require a degree of effort, yet rendering that effort will bring many blessings in its wake as a natural consequence of following its paths and directives. Those directives are designed to help us live with honor and with dignity, creating a just, moral, ethical, and compassionate society, as long as we remain faithful and true to its essential precepts. Just as trees renew and regenerate themselves at this season, even though all of the processes may not be apparent to the naked eye, so we too can renew and regenerate ourselves at each and every moment, and thereby create within ourselves feelings of renewal, strength, restored vigor, and a rekindled youthful-like hope yearning towards a better future.

This season of the year, following Chanukkah, is always one of great opportunity for renewal. In the spirit of rededication and bravery of the Maccabees, we can incorporate that spirit, and even combine it with the secular fun of “New Year’s Resolutions.” If we are sensitive to its beauty and mysteries, the world of nature around us, alluded to above, can aid us if we actively appreciate its power and consciously decide to combine its majesties with the underlying currents of our own souls. Rather than taking the example from the bears who hibernate during this season (conserving their energies for the spring and summer yet again though), the analogy of the deciduous trees losing their leaves has always had great meaning for me. As the sap in the trees descends, and the leaves fall down, key nutrients are always moving up and down within the bark layers of the trees and the root system of the trees. To the casual observer, the system may seem static, with nothing happening; however, to the biologist, constant processes are in place and in a state of dynamic flow, leading later on to the outward manifestation of growth, renewal, blossoming, flowering, and the yielding of fruits. If the current “hidden” processes did not occur, none of the later results could either.

Thus, to apply this to our Jewish context, what are your updated “Jewish new year resolutions?” Are we still on track from those more formally created hopes and resolutions going back to Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur? What new paths are we taking in our journey of increasing in Jewish learning, of strengthening our synagogue through greater involvement, and of continuing in our mission of “being a light unto the nations?” For myself, this time in the year has always represented a second

Jan.

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chance; feeling the greater themes of the “spirit of the season”, how can we maximize that feeling and bring increased levels of blessings into our lives and into the lives of those around us?

To that end, I’m hereby announcing a mini “Tree of Life Program with the Rabbi”: anytime between the hours roughly of 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on a Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, or even a Friday, and it’s not raining, if you’d like to combine the mitzvah of taking care of your health and body (yes, it’s a mitzvah! – “Shmirat HaGuf”) while simultaneously marveling in the trees around us with all of their symbolic meaning as outlined above, along with talking about your Jewish life with the synagogue (or anything else), just make a call into our office, if possible, in advance, and let me know around when you’ll be coming. We’ll plan to take a lap or two or three around the perimeter of this beautiful complex (it’s about ¼ mile around) and have a great time in the process! If it’s difficult to walk, feel free to come in anyway, and I’ll be looking forward to seeing you!

In the meantime, appreciate and be inspired by the trees!

-Rabbi David Barnett



Shalom Fellow Congregants.

Earlier this month, I participated in a USCJ-hosted virtual conference with the authors of a new book entitled “Creating Sacred Communities.” The authors, Dr. Ron Wolfson and Rabbi Brett Kopin lead a seminar by this title for the senior rabbinical students at the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies of the American Jewish University in Los Angeles. The book is an exploration of the current state of synagogue life and discusses innovative experiments that have led to

growing congregations and independent minyanim at a time when so many synagogues are struggling to survive.

I was so inspired by what I heard that I bought the book and spent some time reading it while on vacation. I want TTY to be a growing, sustainable Jewish community, but we are not yet there, so I’m eager to learn from the successful synagogues. One of the main themes in the book is that growing, sustainable religious communities are truly welcoming communities. Now, I hear many of our members say that we are “a welcoming, inclusive synagogue” but I want to point to two incidents that occurred during my short term as president that suggest we are not walking that walk.

The first incident involved the Men’s Club invitation of Ashley Kalus to speak at the temple. You will recall that she was the Republican candidate for governor at the time. Although she was a political candidate, she was coming to talk about her mother’s experience as a Holocaust survivor and her experience as an American Jew. There were several issues raised by that invitation. For my purpose here, I want to focus on the fact that some members made very sweeping, derogatory generalizations about Ms. Kalus specifically and about Republicans generally. In case these people don’t know, some members of our congregation are Republicans and take strong exception to those derogatory characterizations. Such behavior is not consistent with a welcoming, inclusive environment.

The second incident happened more recently. Someone who has been coming alone to Shabbat services told me that they sit alone, that no one speaks to them or asks them to join a group. As a result, that person plans to no longer come to services or continue as a member of TTY. I’m sure there have been other people who have come to services for the first time and, other than being greeted at the door, have found themselves alone during the service and feeling unwelcome. I might ask myself, why didn’t that person introduce themselves or sit next to another person? In the end though, I’m the one who lost a member of our congregation.

A central point in Creating Sacred Communities is that thriving synagogues are places where the community has created a truly welcoming ambience, where all members of the community see it as their responsibility to welcome the stranger as we are taught in *Vayeira*. Abraham has no idea who these strangers are that approach his tent. He’s ninety-nine years old and ill from having recently circumcised himself, yet he runs to greet these strangers and treats them as honored guests. The authors point out that the Rashi and other texts make clear that the concept of hospitality is at the top of the list of Jewish values. They also make the point of the importance of creating a culture where every member at a service or Kiddush takes responsibility for being a greeter; we all must lead by example.

I ask that we all work harder to practice hospitality. After all, one never knows who might walk into our community one day.

Michael



Torat Yisrael's Cohen School

Happy Chanukah and New Year to all of our Cohen School families. We celebrated the holiday at the school with lots of excitement, joy and some fried foods!! Students played dreidel with gelt, created gifts for family and friends, explored the holiday's traditions and history and practiced the Chanukah blessings. On December 18th our students enjoyed delicious sufganiyot for snack and many families attended the festive Chanukah party after school. A huge thank you to all of the parents that volunteered that day and made both events a great success!!!!

Our all school Tefillah program is turning out to be such a great learning experience! Each week we practice specific Shabbat and Friday Night service prayers, sing songs and even have instruments and dancing parades. The students are learning the choreography of the prayers, the importance of the siddur and how to be leaders and members of the congregation. Every student has the opportunity to lead prayers from the bimah and also share what they did in class that day that was fun or interesting. It's such a wonderful way for the whole school to come together to feel like a community!

On December 18th, our monthly Sprouts program was led by Leah Ross Coke and Rabbi Barnett and focused on Chanukah. There was story time, singing, and sufganiyot for snack. The next Sprouts will be on January 15th and will be Tu B'shevat themed. The Sprouts program is \$12 per session.

We have completed our 10-week Hebrew Bootcamp. Our participants are flying through the Aleph Champ levels and are really gaining Hebrew skills weekly. We plan to offer this program next year and it will continue to be taught by Andrea Allgood and Dori. There will be a sign-up sheet in January. We will determine the day and time for the next session from parent surveys. We do need a certain number of students to run this program. Don't let your child miss out on this exciting and successful Hebrew learning experience.

Looking ahead to January, there is no school on January 1st, but we will welcome the students and teachers back on January 8th, with a pajama and hot chocolate day. Then on January 15th, we will have our annual MLK Tzedakah program. Students will be making sandwiches for the hungry with Max's Lunch Bunch, making tie blankets for animal shelters and also will make snowman mitten crafts to donate to the homeless. Ellijay, our Israeli Emissary, will also be at the school to make cards for the IDF soldiers and lead the students in fun Israeli games.

We have so many wonderful plans for 2023!!! Looking forward to a fantastic second half of the year. Please email me at school@toratyisrael.org should you have any questions about the Cohen School or the Sprouts program.



Librarian's Corner

Leaving Eastern Parkway: A Novel by Matthew Daub

Brooklyn's Hasidic community of Lubavitchers is turned upside down when family tragedy strikes and everyday life changes forever in the life of Zev Altshul. He is first placed into the care of the closed and close-knit community where he grew up, but soon realizes he can't stay. His saving grace is handball; it's his gift from God, and the one thing he can rely on as he is shuttled, chased, and abandoned by trusted elders, family, and friends. Even as Zev never fully escapes from the guilt of his choices, he sets course across the United States to discover where loyalty really lies and what it means. He seeks out his long-lost sister, only to find himself as unprepared for life outside the Lubavitcher community as he was unwilling to remain. Forced out of his second home, Zev plays handball to support himself in the goyische world, but obligations he doesn't fully understand still tie him to Crown Heights and follow him to Chicago and New Mexico threatening always to return Zev to life among the Lubavitchers. Lyrical, vivid, and thoroughly engaging, this is certainly among the first novels of its kind.

Laura Steele

Temple Office will be closed on Monday, January 2nd in observance of New Year's Day

In Our Torat Yisrael Family



Mazal Tov to everyone celebrating a Birthday in January! Elan Smith (10 years old), Esta Karp, David Levy (14 years old), Rhodes Kentor (10 years old), William Massey, Dr. Melissa Pezza, Jason Deutsch, Dr. Naveh Levy, Rebecca Ginsburg, Sonya Colletti, Charlie Massey (10 years old), Eden Smith (8 years old), Gary Siperstein, Mischa Brickman (9 years old), Elizabeth Honey Massey, Stephanie Norin, Benjamin Revkin, Judith Steiner, Ruth Blasbalg, Jill Niedelman, Lary Norin, Kurt Salomon (13 years old), Keelia Kentor & Alan Olinsky.

Our Torat Yisrael Community Acknowledges with Thanks the following Generous December 2022 Donations:

GENERAL FUND

In Memory of William Abeshaus
-Debra Abeshaus
-Marc & Debbie Abeshaus
In Memory of Philip Birenbaum
-Beverly Rotenberg
In Memory of Dr. Melvin Blasbalg
-Arnold Blasbalg
In Memory of Ida Blazar
-Sylvia Blazar
In Memory of Norman Bomzer
-Harriet Bomzer
In Memory of Irene Buckin
-Sheila Kaplan
In Memory of Harold Coleman
-Julie Gray
In Memory of Bertha Davis
-Helen Davis
-Morris & Clare Davis Yaffe
In Memory of Ira Davis
-Jeffrey & Cynthia Davis
In Memory of Miriam Feinstein
-Roberta & Barry Gilstein
In Memory of Lillian Finkle
-Jonathan & Judy Finkle
In Memory of Norma Friedman
-Helen Davis
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-Hyman Goldman
In Memory of Lenore Goldstein
-Nancy Waszkis
In Memory of Milton Goldstein
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-Robert Greenberg
In Memory of Celia Greene
-Berne M. Greene
-Jim & Sana Greene
In Memory of Sally Heimann
-Sam & Lillian Mendelowitz
In Memory of Edith Honig
-Dr. Richard Honig
In Memory of George Labush
-Leah Ross-Coke

In Memory of Norman Levine
-Joanie Bookbinder
In Memory of Clarence D. Marer
-Carol Haig
In Memory of Beth Mazor
-Joanie Bookbinder
In Memory of Alfred Mittler
-Peter & Elizabeth Mittler
In Memory of Anne B. Musen
-Steven Musen
In Memory of Michele Pam Ross
-Leah Ross-Coke
In Honor of Ruth Ross' Birthday!
Leah Ross-Coke
In Memory of Louis Russian
-Sheila Russian
In Memory of Ruth Russian
-Sheila Russian
In Memory of Herbert William Schindler
-Laurie & Stephan Goldman
In Memory of Lillian Schwartz
-Sandra Gross
In Memory of Samuel H. Segal
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-Freda Lehrer
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-Joan R. Coken
In Memory of Eleanor Westerman
-Joel Westerman

JEROME J. KATZ FUND

In Memory of Albert N. Bellin
-Trudy Katz

SECURITY FUND

In Honor of Giving Tuesday
-Beth & Jeff Salk