



August 2012  
Av/Elul - 5772

Morgantown, West Virginia

It is a Tree of Life to  
those that hold fast to it.

**RABBI**

Joseph Hample

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**COMING HOME**  
*Rabbi Joseph Hample*

At this season we are reading Deuteronomy, which tells us what to expect in the promised land. If we keep the commandments, we will enjoy prosperity and security, fertility and longevity. We are directed to bless our food, protect fruit trees, and write God's word on our doorposts. And we are reminded that our ancestors have already lived in the promised land. We are coming home.

I am also enjoying a sense of coming home, as I return to the Eastern time zone where I grew up. I was born in Buffalo, raised near New York City, and educated at Harvard, and I have cousins in Pennsylvania. My partner, Barry Wendell, hails from Baltimore. There is a lot of nostalgia in reclaiming a region with a colonial history, and four seasons.

I've spent the greater part of my life in California, much of it as a systems analyst at Wells Fargo Bank. Though long adrift from the perfunctory Judaism of my childhood, I impulsively joined a San Francisco synagogue in 1993, and soon found myself heading committees, organizing classes, giving sermons, singing prayers, serving on the board. Along the way I was honing skills that were unused at my day job: teaching, public speaking, project management. Unexpectedly, by a roundabout route, I was coming home.

Having belatedly discerned

that Jewish leadership was my real career, in 2004 I flew to Jerusalem to begin rabbinical school. Israel, of course, is supposed to be the Jewish national home, but it is full of surprises for American Jews. Imagine a country of Jews who never heard of Ellis Island or the Catskills! Imagine a country of Jews with no borscht or blintzes or pastrami! Israel is the pivot



of our modern Jewish universe, and I am grateful for its existence. But my return to America in 2005 was a happy homecoming. I was ordained by Hebrew Union College at Los Angeles in 2009. I then worked part-time at several synagogues. But my main congregation for two years was Pelican Bay State Prison, a maximum security facility in rural far

northern California, where I was the first Jewish chaplain ever. My congregants at Pelican Bay were not necessarily Jews, and of course they were not most people's idea of upstanding citizens. But they were human beings in distress, and they had real spiritual needs. By praying and studying with them I developed a deeper appreciation of what Torah offers us all: stability at times of uncertainty, dignity in a world of limitations.

Still, a prison is a stressful place to work. It is with considerable relief that I come home to a temple without bars or handcuffs, a sanctuary without a panic button, a congregation

*See COMING HOME page 2*

*Thank you to Cheryl Torsney  
who responded immediately to  
my request for  
an appropriate poem with which  
to greet Rabbi Joe.*

### The Nut Garden

*By Yosef Gikatilla  
Translated by Peter Cole*

The Nut Garden  
holds things felt  
and thought  
and feeling for  
thought is always  
a palace—

Sinai with flames  
of fire about it,  
burning though  
never by fire  
devoured.

On all four sides  
surrounded so—  
entrance is barred  
to pretenders  
forever.

For one who  
learns to be wise,  
however,  
its doors are open  
toward the East:

he reaches out  
and takes a nut,  
then cracks its  
shell, and eats...



### COMING HOME

*From page one*

of men and women and children. It is a *mechayeh*, a pleasure, to do once again the job I was trained for: sharing holidays and meals with synagogue members, meeting congregants all over town, planning life cycle events, preparing kids for b'nei mitzvah.

In the wake of the Tish'ah b'Av fast day, we are now in the seven weeks of consolation. My consolation, after a complicated move from California, is settling in this wonderful community, getting to know you all, and becoming familiar with your congregational culture. On my visits here in the spring I explored the city, met board officers and committee chairs, led a couple of services. I was delighted to find in this sophisticated synagogue an atmosphere similar to Larchmont Temple, where I was bar mitzvah in 1969.

My Torah portion was from Deuteronomy, a solemn section. But one of the happiest parts of Deuteronomy is the recurring advice to include the outsider, the widow, and the orphan in all our celebrations. I know that is a core value at Tree of Life Congregation. It's even on the website: You are a stranger only once at TOL. Nothing is more important than this. The future of Judaism depends on our making

every newcomer feel at home.

And now that I feel at home here, I will devote myself to becoming the religious leader you dream of. That will be a process, of course. But I've grown into other challenging roles. In my first Sunday school internship, I focused too much on the syllabus and not enough on the children as individuals. Gradually I embraced the educator's maxim: we teach students, not subjects. In my first pulpit internship, I was so nervous I kept holding my service plan up to my face like a shield. With practice I began to relax. What's important is to bond with the congregation, not to read every word on every page. One of my mentors, Rabbi Don Goor, instructs: Always skip something.

So I'm sorry if I omit your favorite bit of Hebrew, but I have to learn from my mistakes and move forward. On August 18 we welcome the new Jewish month of Elul, during which we recite Psalm 27 with its theme of reconciliation. "I ask only one thing," the text says, "to live in the house of the Eternal all the days of my life." As we approach the transformation of the High Holidays, may we all find ourselves reconnecting with our tradition, renewing our relationships, and rediscovering our own potential. We are all coming home now: coming home to God.



Celebrating Mazal Tov Shabbat



Rabbi Joe's  
First  
Mazal Tov  
Shabbat  
April 20, 2012



Rabbi Joe's  
Welcome  
Brunch  
June 24, 2012  
Photos: Ed Gerson







**Adam  
Rosefsky**

As I mentioned in my last note, we are in a period of significant changes here at TOL.

Last month marked the final services for Rabbi Feder. I wish him and his family success and happiness in their future endeavors.

This month marks the beginning of our new Spiritual Leader, Rabbi Joe Hample. Rabbi Joe and his Partner Barry came to town last month and had a successful housing trip. They have completed their cross country journey and are settling into their new home.

Rabbi Joe will officially begin his tenure here on August 1<sup>st</sup>, and will be holding his first Shabbat Services on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. I urge everyone to join me in welcoming Rabbi Joe and Barry into our community.

During the upcoming weeks and months, there will be several opportunities to meet Rabbi Joe and Barry. I will let you all know as those events are scheduled. In preparation for the High Holidays, Rabbi Joe will be holding 4 Adult Education classes. I look forward to seeing you all at these events.

The education committee along with Rabbi Joe is working hard on a new curricula and format for the religious school and the B'nai Mitzvah classes. We will present more information on that shortly.

We have also had some changes on the Board of Directors. At our annual meeting last January, there were some changes to our constitution. Part of the change was the addition of 2 new board seats. I am happy to report that we have filled those two seats. Austin Works and Michelle Leversee have agreed to join the board. Austin will also be working with Marty Sippin on our House Committee. The board also officially voted for me to fill the Presidency.

On a sadder note, I want to send my condolences to Marty and Terry Sippin. Terry's son (Marty's stepson) Matthew Wolfe, passed suddenly in July. My thoughts and prayers are with you.

Shalom,  
Adam Rosefsky  
President, Tree of Life Synagogue.

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## Tree of Life Congregation Transition Committee Report to Congregation August 2012

**The TOL Transition Committee's goal is to help keep our congregation informed about change.** Our members are: Ed Gerson, Richard Cohen, Adam Rosefsky, Lee Kass, Michelle Leversee, Daya Solomon, Brian Lemoff, Judy Cohen, Stanley Cohen, Linda Herbst, and guest consultant Sylvia Cooper. This report focuses on completed tasks and those planned for the future.

**Outreach to Rabbi Feder & TOL Inventory:** Adam, Lee and Michelle met with Rabbi Feder on June 7 to offer continued assistance to him and his family on an as needed basis, and to locate items requisite to TOL activities and services. Lee Kass prepared a thorough report, which documented their discussions regarding the placements of Chevra Kaddish supplies, Purim graggers, keys for display case and building, Education Committee documents, the brass Tallitzim rack, Yiddish books and Genizah materials, Sisterhood file cabinets, Ark curtains, as well as exit sign light bulbs, and other miscellaneous items.

**Rabbi Hample's June visit to Morgantown:** Rabbi Hample and Barry Wendell visited West Virginia June 19 - 26. Lee Kass coordinated a successful housing search with Michelle Leversee and Daya Solomon; a townhouse was leased June 25th. Laura and Richard Cohen (Ritual Committee) hosted Shabbat dinner June 22 for Rabbi Joe and Barry. Attending were Roz Becker, Bob Cohen and Kathy Abate, Nyles Charon and Ann Selinger, Lee Petsonk and Susan Brown. Adam introduced Rabbi Joe to Rabbi Feder after services; Sherry Hildebrand provided the Oneg. The Education Committee met with Rabbi Hample. Monique Gingold transported Rabbi Joe and Barry to a Sunday June 24 brunch warmly hosted by Lee Kass and Bob Hunt at their Fairmont home. Twenty-eight members of the Board, the Transition Committee and family members attended. Sylvia Cooper joined Rabbi Joe and Barry for dinner at Judy and Stan Cohen's home on June 25th, along with Art and Linda Jacknowitz.

**Rabbi Feder's Farewell:** Rabbi Feder's June 29 service was attended by 32 people; a special Oneg was hosted by Linda Jacknowitz. Following the Saturday June 30 service Rabbi Feder went on vacation but was on emergency call thru July 31. The TC and TOL Board thanked Rabbi Feder for his service to TOL and many congregants have thanked him personally. We again invite you to send your own individual recognitions and acknowledgements of gratitude directly to: Rabbi David Feder, 1365 Riddle Ave., Morgantown, WV 26505.

See REPORT page five

## REPORT *from page four*

**Rabbi Joe Hample's July Arrival:** After a cross-country drive with two cars and one cat, Rabbi Joe and Barry arrived Thursday, July 12, 2012. Rabbi Hample begins his term of employment Aug 1, 2012.

**The Transition Committee asks TOL members:** What is our relationship to be with our new spiritual leader? Rare is the opportunity to remake ourselves but here we are, a new Rabbi, a new Tree of Life! It's up to all of us. We've had meetings, we're good at quorums. We now look forward to frequent Shabbat minyans and more commitment to TOL activities!

**Here is a rare opportunity for our congregation to initiate a new relationship with our new Rabbi, Joe Hample, with our new leadership, and with one another. We invite you to contact us with your ideas to support and strengthen the TOL community.**

### **The TOL Transition Committee/Congregation Future Activities**

Rabbi Hample will participate in several vital discussions resulting from TC recommendations to the Board of Trustees. This is a historic opportunity for congregants to step forward alongside a new generation of leadership. Changes have already occurred. Transition is your adaptation, your informed response, to those changes as reported by this committee. The following are recommendations to the Board of Trustees; however, they are a call to action by all of us.

**1 - Ritual Committee** - Over a period of years this committee has been relegated to a minor role; now it is regrettably under-staffed. During High Holy Days it has previously performed a last-minute role. We have a new Rabbi; it's time to build a new ritual model for Rabbi Hample and our congregation.

**What is the Ritual Committee?** Our bylaws state: "**Section 10.3.** The Ritual Committee shall make policy recommendations to the Board of Trustees and the Rabbi regarding the rituals, practices, and observances in the synagogue and shall meet with the Rabbi to set up the schedule for services, including High Holy Days."

The Mi Shibeirach list and especially the weekly Kaddish list need updating before erev Rosh Hashanah, Sept. 16. Last year's very successful Yiskor book effort needs repeating this year. It eliminated reading several hundred names and actually provided the opportunity for more people to personally speak names during the Yiskor service.

**Brass Tallitizim Rack:** This item is now stored in the south stairwell near the social hall, it needs to be preserved for use during High Holy Days. The Ritual Committee will take responsibility for placing and returning it when it is used.

Rabbi Hample envisions monthly meetings with the committee to brainstorm fresh approaches to worship and to identify those with musical talent (guitar, piano, etc.) We invite you to participate and join the newly reactivated Ritual Committee. **To become an active member of this committee please contact: Neal Newfield, Chair (304.288.4419; nnewfiel@wvu.edu) or Richard Cohen (304.685.3859; rpc116c@aim.com).**

**2 - TOL Calling Tree:** Daya Solomon, Chair, is now organizing callers to function as listeners in response to a list of questions to our congregants. They will discuss newsletter information, announce upcoming "meet and greets" and focus groups. What questions would you as a congregant want to be asked before erev Rosh Hashanah, Sunday Sept 16?. This is a community-building effort. What brings about congregational participation? The Calling Tree will listen to your concerns. This historic opportunity is yours; we invite you to participate: **If you wish to work on this important new TC outreach effort please contact Daya (304.685.3660; dayasolomon@gmail.com).**

**3 - Education Committee:** The Education Committee is working closely with the TC to determine how they can assist with future needs. **If you have any special concerns please contact Bryan Lemoff, Chair (304.594.2457; blemoff@yahoo.com).**

**4 - Focus Groups with Rabbi Hample:** The TC has recommended that following the High Holy Days focus groups take place with congregants, who wish to discuss hopes, concerns, and topics of mutual interest with Rabbi Hample. The TC will be consulting with congregants on the best times and places for such meetings. Please keep this in mind when you are contacted by the TOL Calling Tree.

**5 - Acknowledgments:** We gratefully thank everyone for their hard work and participation in the Rabbi search, the TC, the TOL Board and Committee Activities throughout our transition process. We also thank all members of the TOL community for their help and encouragement during this time of transition and new beginnings.

**Pending: Interview of Rabbi Hample by Lee Chottiner, Exec. Editor, The Jewish Chronicle - Pittsburgh Pa.**

*Ed Gerson, Chair  
Transition Committee*

## From the Treasurer

A reminder to those of you who have not yet pledged for the 2011-2012 fiscal year (yes, there are a few of you), please do so now. It is not too late. We count on every one of our members' contributions to help maintain our financial stability. And as a reminder, a donation to one of the Tree of Life funds is a great way to commemorate a special occasion or memorialize a friend or loved one. Contact me for further information about a leaf or stone on our Simcha Tree or Bennett Millstone if you would like to purchase a plaque on the Yahrzeit board.

*Merle Stolzenberg, Treasurer  
(304)292-6767  
mpstolzen@yahoo.com*

## Hadassah

Shana tova to all. This is an exciting year during which we continue our celebration of the 100th birthday of the founding of Hadassah. If you want to visit Israel, there will be a wonderful centennial convention in Jerusalem.

Locally, we will celebrate the start of the New Year with our annual new member brunch in September. Details will follow. Plan on attending other fun meetings celebrating Chanukah, rosh chodesh, plus more!

Merle has arranged for a summer brainstorming session. Watch your inbox for up-to-the-minute plans.

FYI, the 2012 Hadassah Book List is available on line: <http://www.etzhaim.org/community/hadassah/>

*Be well  
Monique*

## Education Committee

The first day of Religious School will be Sunday, September 9, at 10 am.

There will be no Religious School on Sept 16 due to Rosh Hashanah.

Religious School will recommence Sept 23.

A full Religious School schedule will be provided on the first day of classes, and more information will be coming, so watch your e-mails.

Hebrew school classes this year will be grouped according to the kids' ability level and scheduling constraints. The Rabbi will meet with each Hebrew student and parents to assess ability and discuss schedule. Hebrew class schedule will then be determined.

## Adult Education

### THE REAL MEANING OF HIGH HOLIDAYS with Rabbi Joe Hample

Who says repentance takes ten days? What's special about a ram's horn? Why do some wear white on Yom Kippur? How many thrones does God have? Please join Rabbi Joe for text study and group discussion on High Holiday themes from 7 to 9 pm on four Thursdays at TOL. Each class stands alone: feel free to attend any or all.

- ◆ August 9: High Holiday laws
- ◆ August 16: High Holiday prayers
- ◆ Aug 30: High Holiday customs
- ◆ Sept 6: High Holiday spirituality

If the idea of starting with a veggie pot luck supper at 6:00 pm appeals to you, let Rabbi Joe know.

## Coopers Rock Shabbat

Our traditional end-of-summer Coopers Rock Shabbat will be August 31, 2012. Plan to arrive at 6:00 pm for the blessing of the candles, the wine and the challah.

Bring along your favorite dairy-veggie dish to share during our Pot Luck Supper. Following dinner, we will enjoy Shabbat Services together in the tranquility of the park.

Watch your inbox for further details, including which Shelter we will be using.



## High Holidays 5773

Mark your calendars.

Rosh Hashanah High Holiday Services will begin on Sunday evening September 16th

Yom Kippur High Holiday Services will begin on Tuesday evening September 25th

A full Schedule of dates and times will be published in the next Newsletter. You will receive emails with details as the dates draw nearer.

And don't forget the Pre-High Holiday adult ed classes led by Rabbi Joe.

## Community Sharing Page

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We note with sorrow  
the passing of  
**Mathew Wolfe**  
son of  
**Marty and Terry Sippin**  
  
May his memory  
be a blessing



### New Address

We have a new address:  
6104 La Posta Dr.,  
El Paso, TX 79912.  
Am thinking good thoughts  
for TOL and Rabbi Joe.,  
*Cheryl Torsney*

**Rabbi Joe's  
First Shabbat  
Friday, August 3**  
The Board will host oneg.

### Mazal Tov Shabbat

We have not forgotten those  
who celebrate  
a birthday or  
anniversary  
in August.

Our August honorees  
will be recognized  
together with the  
September list  
during the  
September 21st  
Shabbat Service.



**Share Your Simcha  
Buy a Leaf on  
THE SIMCHA TREE**

**\$250/leaf  
\$2500/Small Stone  
\$5000/Large Stone  
Contact  
Merle Stolzenberg/  
Barbara Jacowitz**

August 2012			
Date	Day	Event	Time
August 3	Friday	Rabbi Joe's Inaugural Shabbat Service. Oneg by the Temple Board	7:30 pm
August 4	Saturday	Services with Rabbi Joe	10:00 am
August 9	Thursday	"High Holiday Laws"	7:00 – 9:00 pm
August 10	Friday	Shabbat with Rabbi Joe	7:30 am
August 11	Saturday	Services with Rabbi Joe	10:00 am
August 16	Thursday	"High Holiday Prayers"	7:00 – 9:00 pm
August 17	Friday	Shabbat with Rabbi Joe	7:30 pm
August 18	Saturday	Services with Rabbi Joe	10:00 am
August 19	Sunday	Jewish Community Day at Kennywood Park	all day
August 24	Friday	Shabbat with Religious Committee	7:30 pm
August 25	Saturday	Services with Religious Committee	10:00 am
August 30	Thursday	"High Holiday Customs"	7:00 – 9:00 pm
August 31	Friday	COOPERS ROCK SHABBAT with Rabbi Joe	6:00 pm
Sept. 1	Saturday	Services with Rabbi Joe	10:00 am
Sept. 6	Thursday	"High Holiday Spirituality"	7:00 – 9:00 pm

Remember a loved one  
with a  
**Yahrzeit Plaque**  
\$400 DONATION  
Contact: Bennett Millstone

### MI SHEBEIRACH / WELLNESS PRAYERS

Please remember to consult with those who are in need of healing, before publicly adding their names to the Mi Shebeirach list. With their permission, we would like to add whatever support we can to their recovery and healing.





**Tree of Life Congregation**  
PO Box 791  
Morgantown, WV 26507-0791  
(304) 292-7029  
<http://etzheim.org>

## FIRST CLASS MAIL



### Sisterhood

The Tree of Life Sisterhood is planning many activities for the 2012-2013 Season. We have a new co president, Rosalyn Becker, who will bring new ideas and activities for the coming year. Many educational and social events will be discussed and organized. We need your help in bringing these ideas to life. Sisterhood supports all Congregational activities. We need your help to be effective. All women who are in good Congregational Standing are eligible to become members.

We welcome Rabbi Joe and his partner Barry and wish them success, health and happiness in Morgantown. We want to take this opportunity to pledge Sisterhood's complete cooperation as Tree of Life enters a new phase.

*Barbara Jacowitz*

### The Annual Jewish Community Day at Kennywood Park Sunday, August 19, 2012

Tickets (cash only) will be available soon at  
**Murray Ave Kosher** and  
**Creative Silver and Wines** (Premier Wine Pittsburgh)  
or **Online**

<http://www.kennywood.com/site/tickets.html?keyword=Daily%20Tickets#>  
using the promo code **JEWISH819**

Our **DISCOUNTED Regular Funday** tickets are priced  
at **\$22.00** (\$37.99 @the gate)  
**Senior tickets** at **\$14.00** (\$18.49 @ the gate)

Kosher food will be available in pavilion 4  
Mordy's Cafe!

If you have any questions or concerns,  
please email  
[mimimaizlech@gmail.com](mailto:mimimaizlech@gmail.com)

Visit <http://etzheim.org>