



Sept/Oct 2015

Elul/Tishrei/Cheshvan - 5775/5776

Morgantown, West Virginia

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

RABBI

Joseph Hample

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High Holiday Schedule of Services 2015

Saturday, Sept. 5

S'lichot program

movie (*This Is Where I Leave You*) and prayer service
8:00-10:00 pm

Sunday, Sept. 13

Erev Rosh ha-Shanah

7:30 pm
Kiddush after service

Monday, Sept. 14

Rosh ha-Shanah Morning

Children's service 9:15-10:00 am
Service 10:00 am – 12:00 noon
Tashlich 12:30 pm

Tuesday, Sept. 15

Rosh ha-Shanah Second Day

Service 10:00 am – 12:00 noon

Sunday, Sept. 20

Kever Avot (cemetery visit) at Beverly Hills Memorial Park

2:00 pm

Tuesday, Sept. 22

Kol Nidrei 7:30 pm

Wednesday, Sept. 23

Yom Kippur

Children's service 9:15-10:00 am
Morning service begins 10:00 am
Break 12:30 pm
Rabbi's Tish 2:30-3:30 pm
Music & Reading of names/memorial
3:30-4:30 pm
Afternoon Service 4:30 pm
Yizkor 6:00 pm
N'ilah 7:00 pm
Havdalah 7:45 pm
Break-the-Fast after Havdalah



Friday, Oct. 2

Pizza in the Hut & Sukkot service

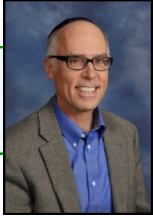
6:00-8:00 pm

Sunday, Oct. 4

Simchat Torah celebration

10:00 am – 12:00 noon

Visit <http://etzheim.org>



**Rabbi
Hample**

Ezra Invents the Holidays

How easily we imagine our ancestors felt closer to God. Surely their faith was stronger, their spirituality deeper than ours. And yet the Bible is full of doubt: “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity” (Ecclesiastes 1:2); “Why does God give light to the sufferer, and life to the bitter in spirit?” (Job 3:20). Perhaps uncertainty is part of the human condition.

How easily we imagine our ancestors knew the scriptures better. Surely they read the holy writ more often, understood it more completely. And yet the Bible is full of ignorance: “When the king heard the words of the Torah, he tore his clothes... Great must be the wrath of the Eternal which is kindled against us, because our ancestors did not obey the words of this book” (II Kings 22:11, 13). Perhaps every generation is invited afresh into the revered documents.

How easily we imagine our ancestors were more observant. Surely they recalled the commandments in greater detail, kept them more carefully. And yet the Bible is full of neglect: “They found written in the Torah that the Israelites must dwell in booths during the festival of the seventh month... the Israelites had not done so since the days of Joshua” (Nehemiah 8:14, 17). Perhaps each individual must pioneer the religion as if it had never been practiced before.

Nehemiah 8 offers a surprising take on the autumn holiday season. The High Holidays and Sukkot are apparently forgotten with the destruction of Solomon’s Temple, and rediscovered only after the Temple is rebuilt. “On the first day of the seventh month (Rosh ha-

Shanah), Ezra the priest brought the Torah before the (Jerusalem) congregation, men and women, all who could understand... This day is holy to the Eternal your God... Go, eat choice foods and drink sweet drinks and send portions to whoever has nothing prepared, for the day is holy” (Nehemiah 8:2, 9-10).

Is there really a whole Jewish community, in Jerusalem yet, that doesn’t know how to celebrate Rosh ha-Shanah? What if Ezra weren’t there to tell us? What if Ezra got it wrong? Religious development is more haphazard than we usually care to admit. I often think I’d like to design a religion-generating computer application. There’d be pages to specify holy books, to compose prayers, to enact dietary laws, to supply an afterlife doctrine: check boxes for heaven, hell, purgatory. It sounds silly, but someone *did* invent our religion: or rather, someone committed it to paper, massaging diverse and conflicting traditions into a coherent synthesis. We didn’t know what we believed until someone explained it to us.

As the rabbis will reinvent Judaism after the Second Temple is destroyed, probably Ezra and his circle invent the *original* Judaism, after the *First* Temple is destroyed and rebuilt. They come back from the Babylonian exile; the Temple has reopened, but enthusiasm is weak, the momentum is flagging. Ezra and his allies pull together the Five Books into a unified scripture, and Ezra reads the whole thing aloud in the town square. It’s all part of a larger project: Ezra’s team persuades everyone to observe the old faith in a new way. The practice before Ezra – priestly, sacrificial, with no standardized scripture – was Israelite religion, but it would not be correct to call it Judaism. *Ezra invents Judaism.*

So imagine Ezra in Jerusalem in the mid-5th century BCE, somehow using my religion-making app, delivered to him by time machine. Along with the other options, there’s a page to define holidays. You need indoor holidays, outdoor holidays, feast days, fast

days. You need clusters of related holidays, each day representing a different piece of a complicated story. You need a New Year holiday: every religion has one. Many religions have a repentance holiday too: Christians have Ash Wednesday; Muslims have the Day of Arafah (the day before Eid al-Adha). It is, perhaps, Ezra’s special genius to link the New Year directly with the repentance holiday. You want to live another year? Own up to the previous year’s sins, and maybe God’ll think about it.

Not only that. By publicly declaiming the sacred text, Ezra invents the Torah service. “Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform... Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people: and when he opened it, all the people stood up. Ezra blessed the Eternal, the great God, and all the people answered, Amen, amen” (Nehemiah 8:4-6). This is where we pivot from an elite Hebrew priestcraft to a communal Jewish worship experience, and it happens at the Days of Awe. Maybe that’s how the “first day of the seventh month” comes to be thought of as the New Year. It isn’t the beginning of the farming or hunting or fiscal year, but it is the beginning of something: *Judaism.*

Nehemiah 8 goes on to describe the first recorded Sukkot observance. After God grants us that additional year of life, we feel like rejoicing. The weather is still nice enough for partying *al fresco*, so Ezra selects the “outdoor” checkbox on the holidays page of the religion app, and we get a celebration that has to be kept under the open skies. “The Israelites must dwell in booths during the festival of the seventh month... Go out to the mountains and bring leafy branches of olive trees, pine trees, myrtles, palms, and other leafy trees to make booths... So the people went out and brought them, and made themselves booths on their roofs, in their courtyards, in the courtyards of the House of God... *The Israelites had not done so from the days of Joshua*” (700 years earlier; Nehemiah 8:14-17). Ezra invents Sukkot too!

Ezra is little known to the Jew in the pew, and the books that mention him have no formal place in our cycle of readings. Nevertheless, he looms large for the sages. The Talmud (Sanhedrin 21b) even says Ezra was worthy to receive the Torah for Israel, if Moses had not already done so. Ezra the scribe is a trailblazer who defines the pillars of our faith, presumably by pulling together miscellaneous cultural norms and assembling as viable a structure as he can from those fragments. We can't all be Ezra, but we can all revive fading practices or arrange bits of custom into a meaningful pattern. With or without my computer app, we can all invent Judaism.

5776 Years Since What?

This season we welcome the year 5776 in the Jewish calendar, a somewhat mysterious number. As the joke has it, if the Chinese year is only 4713, what did Jews eat on special occasions for the first 1063 years of our existence?

The Chinese calendar is reckoned from the mythic First Emperor, but you may have wondered what happened 5776 years ago to launch Jewish chronology. A continuous year count is absent from the Bible, which situates historical dates by the reigns of monarchs, either Hebrew or foreign: "In the fifth year of King Rehoboam..." (I Kings 14:25), "...that was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon..." (II Kings 25:8). The rabbis relied on the Seleucid era, counting from 311 BCE when Greek rule was consolidated over the land of Israel; or the Destruction era, counting from 70 CE when the Romans razed the Temple. Some Jewish communities retained these systems down to fairly recent times.

A 2nd-century work called *Seder Olam* ("Order of the World") tries to establish the chronology of Biblical events, taking Scriptural genealogies at face value and adding together the stat-

ed age of each patriarch upon the birth of his son. The Talmud endorses this timeline, mentioning for example that the Temple fell in the 3831st year from Creation (Avodah Zarah 9b). This Creation era was little used until the spread of Christian chronology prompted a search for an authentically Jewish alternative, but today the Creation era is universal in Judaism. If 70 CE = Jewish year 3831, then 2016 CE = Jewish year 5776.

Rationalists may finesse Biblical chronology by playing with the meanings of words. If God formed the world in six days (Genesis 1:31), perhaps each "day" was really a billion years: there was no sun in the sky till the fourth day (Genesis 1:16-19), so it's anyone's guess how the first three days were delimited. If Methusaleh lived 969 years (Genesis 5:27), perhaps those "years" were really months, making Methusaleh about 80: old, certainly, but not amazing. Yet somehow this misses the point. Religion, as I learned in seminary, provides the map of the invisible world. Who can define the elapsed time in creating an invisible world, or living in one? Even if unscientific, the text has a higher truth. We can take it seriously without taking it literally.

Incidentally, Christians have also sought to deduce the age of the world from the Bible. In the 17th century, Anglo-Irish bishop James Ussher determined that Creation took place in 4004 BCE, which would bring us to 6019 today. That's pretty close to the Jewish figure. But if there are Jews who really believe the world is only a few thousand years old, they're pretty quiet about it. Some Christians are zealously committed to the calculation.

Of course, the regular Christian year is counted from the Nativity, not the Creation. Many Christians feared the world would end in 1000 CE: and there were similar anxieties in 2000 CE, though mostly framed as a danger of computer meltdown, the much-hyped Y2K scare. Likewise, some Jews attribute cosmic significance to the Jewish year. The Talmud (Sanhedrin 97a) speculates that the seventh millennium

will be the age of the messiah, analogous to the holy seventh day (Shabbat) and seventh year (*sh'mittah*, the sabbatical year). The Biblical statement that a thousand years is like one day in the sight of God (Psalms 90:4) adds weight to this theory. The messiah will come in the sabbath of the supernal week.

A calendar, like a language, is only a set of symbols: but how attached we become to those symbols! In a Philip Roth story, a secular Jew speaks of living in the 20th century; his religious friend counters that for him it is the 57th. The state of Israel was established in 1948 CE, midcentury: but the Jewish year was 5708, the *threshold* of the century, a clean slate, a new beginning.

In fact, we routinely ascribe cultural nuance to arbitrary blocks of time: the 18th century was the Age of Reason, the 19th century was the Industrial Revolution, the 1920s was the Jazz Age. Bill Clinton's "Bridge to the 21st century" and Zager and Evans' *In the Year 2525* are essentially empty phrases, but they sound deep because we love to find meaning in chronology. It used to be said that presidents elected in "zero" years (1840, 1860, 1880, 1900, 1920, 1940, 1960) inevitably died in office (Harrison, Lincoln, Garfield, McKinley, Harding, FDR, Kennedy). The longevity of Reagan (1980) and George W. Bush (2000) put this theory to rest. My teacher Rabbi Pinchas Giller toyed with a notion that "seven" years typify their decade: the fifties were epitomized by Sputnik (1957), the sixties by the Summer of Love (1967). This is no sillier than any other historical schema.

Anniversaries are further evidence of chronology's magic. The year 2015, we have often heard, marked 70 years since Hiroshima, 150 years since Appomattox, 200 years since Waterloo; the year 2016 marks 250 years since the Declaration of Independence. In Jewish terms, 2016 / 5776 marks 100 years since the first Jew, Louis D. Brandeis, was appointed to the Supreme Court, and 500 years since the founding of the first ghetto, in Venice.

If you wish to be coy about your age, my advice is to give your birth year according to the Jewish calendar.

I'm not ashamed to admit I was born in 5716: before they can do the arithmetic and realize how old I am, the conversation will have moved on to other topics. By the same token, a Hebrew target date is a handy evasion if anyone asks when you're going to clean your house or write your novel. I'll probably get to that by 5800. If not, check back with me in 5900.

Say It Loud

There are two ways to do things: the loud way and the soft way. Announce your plan boldly and harangue the crowd to participate, or meet privately with each person and gently steer them in the intended direction. The loud way may seem easier, and more honest; the soft way may feel nicer, and more sophisticated. In many cases the soft way is more effective, if we can find the time and patience to embrace it. But it has its limits.

There are two ways to celebrate holidays: the loud way and the soft way. What's Fourth of July without fireworks, what's Halloween without "Trick or Treat," what's New Year's Eve without hooting and hollering at midnight? But Valentine's Day and Memorial Day are normally a little quieter. Implicitly, the contrast between one holiday's decibel level and another's is part of our seasonal culture.

In Judaism, too, we have loud holidays and soft holidays. Tish'ah b'Av, for example, is a quieter holiday. (It's the midsummer fast in memory of the ancient Temple.) But many of our holidays are on the noisy side, and we like it that way.

It's fair to say that the Days of Awe are our loudest holidays, the ones requiring a *shofar* (ram's horn). In the Torah, Rosh ha-Shanah is not called Rosh ha-Shanah ("New Year"), but Yom T'ru'ah ("Day of Noisemaking," Numbers 29:1). Like many of our customs, the *shofar* has a variety of meanings. For the Talmud (Rosh ha-Shanah 16a) it is a reminder of the near-sacrifice of Isaac, for whom a *ram* was

substituted. The ram was caught in the thicket by its *horn* (Genesis 22:13). For Maimonides the *shofar* is a kind of alarm clock, meant to awaken us from our moral slumber, our spiritual complacency (Hilchot T'shuvah 3:4).

But in the Torah, no clear reason is given for sounding the horn on holidays. Its function apparently is just to call the people together, or perhaps, to get God's attention. The theme of getting God's attention seems especially appropriate nowadays. Surely God has a lot on God's mind. We'll have to toot those trumpets hard, all over the world, to pull God away from other heavenly responsibilities.

Yom Kippur does not feature the noise of the *shofar*, except at the very end of the day, to mark the conclusion of the fast. But Yom Kippur offers its own kind of racket, in the form of confession. Making amends to our neighbor is inevitably verbal. Our tradition teaches us to ask them aloud for forgiveness: up to three times, if need be (Hilchot T'shuvah 2:9-10).

Making amends to *God* could be verbal or nonverbal: presumably God already knows what we've done wrong; but we customarily offer this form of atonement aloud as well. Improving our attitude often requires articulating what is inside of us. This is called catharsis, or "getting it out of your system." Psychotherapy relies on this method, and so does pastoral care. A person in crisis, a sick person or a mourner may be paralyzed by fear or grief, guilt or anger, or a thousand other emotions: but after they talk about it, they automatically feel better. And after we talk about our misdeeds, we automatically feel empowered to change. The quiet way is for mystics and hermits. Most of us do better with the loud way.

There's a further reason we repent out loud on Yom Kippur, and in community: to mitigate the shame of other transgressors. Why are the confessional prayers, *Ashamnu* ("We Have Sinned") and *Al Chet* ("For Our Sin"), phrased in the first person plural? Why do they force the whole congregation to

claim all offenses the liturgists could think of? Presumably to soothe embarrassed penitents by ensuring that everyone will confess every sin, whether they've committed it or not.

Sometimes there is power in silence. Calvin Coolidge quipped, "If you don't say anything, you won't be called on to repeat it." Perhaps he was thinking of Psalm 34: "Guard your tongue from evil, your lips from speaking deceit." But with God it is best to be vocal. Abraham argues with God: "Far be it from You to slay the righteous along with the guilty... shall not the Judge of all the world do justice?" (Genesis 18:25) So does Moses, even appealing to God's vanity: "If you slay every one of this (Israelite) people, the nations who hear of it will say, It is because the Eternal was unable to bring this people to the promised land that God slaughtered them in the desert" (Numbers 14:15-16). The foreign seer Balaam, forbidden by God to visit Moab (Numbers 22:12), continues pestering God until he receives permission (Numbers 22:20). For the Talmud (Sanhedrin 105a), this proves that "*Chutzpah* prevails even toward heaven."

Judaism embodies a certain tension between clamor and quiet. Moses finds God amid thunder and commotion (Exodus 19:16-19), Elijah in a still small voice (I Kings 19:12-13); Abraham calls out boldly to God (Genesis 12:8), but Hannah prays silently (I Samuel 1:13). We invoke all these figures at the season of spiritual accounting. But as 5775 gives way to 5776, we Jews only have ten days to atone for a year's transgressions. We don't have time to pussyfoot. Other religions may expect you to repent quietly. In Judaism, this is something we do at top volume.

Mazal Tov
to
Michelle Leversee
West Virginia Foreign Language
Teacher of the Year

Shabbat Women's Service Sermon, 10 July 2015

By Lee B. Kass

When Rabbi Joe asked me to give the sermon for the Tree of Life Congregation Shabbat Women's Service, I was drawn to Numbers 27: 1-11, the story of the daughters of Zelophehad: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah (the early feminists, as we might consider them). These women, on their way to the promised land with the Israelites, forced a change in the laws of property inheritance.

About 30 years ago, after crossing my wilderness to the academic promised land of tenure and promotion, I, along with 10 other women presented our case for equal pay for equal work to the chieftains – the Dean and President of the small liberal arts college where I was employed at the time. We were being discriminated against in salary due to our gender, and we gathered our data, and believed, like the daughters of Z (as I will call them), that making a just case under Title IX, would result in fair practice. After 10 years of litigation, two of us prevailed, but only after obtaining a Federal Court date, upon which the College settled out of court. My fight for women's justice has a clear precedent in our Jewish history, as reflected in the story of Z's daughters. Addressing the problem of not receiving part of a share in the Land of Israel, the daughters approached Moses and Eleazar the priest, and in front of the tent of meeting, before all the congregation, provided a rationale for their right-

ful inheritance: Their father was not a rebel who went against Hashem. He died in the wilderness and left no sons. Why should their father's name be lost because he had no sons? They asked Moses to share the inheritance of their father among them.

Moses took their case to God, who agreed and told Moses to give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren and cause their father's inheritance to pass to them.

Additionally, God gave Moses new inheritance laws for Israelites who have no children or brethren.

The story of Z's daughters is important to me since my father had three daughters and no sons. God provided justice for the daughters and gave a fair share to those families who had no children. Rabbi Lauri Rice tells us that many others have written about the second class status of women in the Bible, such as that of Z's daughters.

More important was her comment that, "Perhaps we are meant to read this story and others like it, not simply to engage in a dialogue about feminist rights (as important as that ongoing conversation may be), but to always be asking the larger question: **Who are the marginalized within our community?**"

My clash with the administration at my former College was not my first battle for civil rights. As a child of 12, I left Orthodox Judaism because I perceived that I was considered a second class person, marginalized to sit upstairs with the women, which was not comfortable for me. As an undergraduate member of SDS, I marched for civil rights in the 1960's, for peace in the 1970's as a

graduate student, and for Women's Lives in the 1980's. I then took responsibility as advisor to my College's Gay and Lesbian organization to confront the administration for rights for these students. Closer to home, I felt that God sent me to WV to join the TOL board to support the search committee in their decision to recommend a Rabbi, who it seems was controversial but not because of his outstanding qualifications.

Where did I and the daughters of Z get the courage to fight these injustices? I'd like to believe that it was because their mother, as did mine, taught them not to ignore the plight of the stranger, or the homeless or the hungry, or anyone less-fortunate than ourselves. Further addressing the question: **"Who are the marginalized within our community?"** Rabbi Rice wrote, "When we remain silent on controversial issues, such as the need for increased gun control, they are our children." I would add, if we do not support diversity or equal protection under the law, or those without health care, they could be our families.

Rabbi Rice believes that Z's daughters "were the lucky ones. How many of our disenfranchised, our marginalized, our forgotten go unheard? **It is our Jewish responsibility to listen for their voices and to respond to their pleas.** They, too, have names--first names and last names."

The week's Parashah therefore prompted me to ask: **"Who are the marginalized within our community?" And what can our congregation do to support them?**



Introducing Parker Finn Solomon

Deva and Heidi Solomon are happy to share the arrival of their son, Parker Finn Solomon. Parker made his debut on August 5, 2015 and weighed 8 lbs, 3 oz and was 20 3/4 inches long. The Solomon's are overjoyed with their darling baby boy!!



Invitation to share in a Baby Naming Ceremony

The Tarlovsky-Tucker Family invites the TOL congregation to share their joy as their daughter is given her Hebrew name during the TOL Shabbat morning service, September 12, 2015. The weekly Parashat Nitzavim conveys God's commandment that the bond and obligations between God and the Jewish people should be transferred from generation to generation. The sermon theme will emphasize the haftarah (Prophetic selection): "You shall be called by a new name" (Isaiah 62:2).

A baby naming is the most joyous of life-cycle events. It marks a baby's entrance into relationship with God and the community. Every child is a unique and amazing gift from God. Family members who sponsor the baby and share responsibility for her religious upbringing, are the *kvater* (godfather) and *kvaterin* (godmother). Rabbi Joe will offer prayers to preserve the child for her parents, announce her Hebrew name to our community, and the parents will say a few words about what the name means. The person who holds the baby, the *sandak* (family elder), will lead the guests in congratulating the parents.

Please join us for this joyous occasion welcoming a new member to our congregation, and for the Kiddush to follow the service.

Cemetery Plots Available

Although none of us like to think about it, advance planning for our final resting place is a wise step to make so that our families know of our burial wishes. Tree of Life owns plots in a beautiful section in the Garden of the Ten Commandments at the Beverly Hills Cemetery. In addition, Tree of Life owns a number of plots in the Gethsemane Garden. The Tree of Life Board has decided to offer plots at the following prices through December 31, 2016:

Members in good standing:
\$1,200 per plot
Non-Members:
\$2,000 per plot

Prices will be revisited by the Board during the fall of 2016 and are subject to increase at that time. If you are interested in purchasing plots and guaranteeing these prices, please contact Merle Stolzenberg at (304) 292-6767 (evenings and weekends) or mpstolzen@yahoo.com for more information.



"The People of the Book" need ... BOOKS!

Are you looking for the perfect way to honor someone for a special occasion or memorialize a loved one? Tree of Life needs more prayer books and this means that you now have the opportunity to make that special donation! For each prayer book you would like to donate, please send the following:

1. \$45 per prayer book
2. Inscription you would like in the book

Mail your check and inscription information to:

Tree of Life Congregation
ATTN: Treasurer
PO BOX 791
Morgantown, WV 26507-0791



Adult Education

By Rabbi Joe Hample

We are rebranding the adult education program for conversion students primarily, though of course anyone is still welcome to attend. The program has been renamed Judaism 101, and will focus on the major content and themes of our tradition, not the esoterica that fascinate the rabbi but baffle the congregation.

Classes will continue to be offered on the second Wednesday evening of the month, 7:00 to 9:00. We will start with two very basic topics: Torah as Text on September 9, and Torah in Practice on October 14. We look forward to seeing you then.

Bnai Mitzvah and Beyond: 2015-2016

Margalit Persing

As in previous years, the teen program will include educational and social activities for pre and post Bnai Mitzvah age youth under the guidance of Steve Markwell and Margalit Persing, with Rabbi Joe as our advisor. Activities resume in October after Sukkoth.

Social activities generally take place on the third Saturday evening of the month and are open to all pre and post Bnai Mitzvah age youth. That includes anyone in the Bnai Mitzvah class and all post Bnai Mitzvah age youth. Our first social will take place at TOL on October 17 at 7:00 pm. It will be a Pizza and Planning event. Come, watch a movie (TBA), and let us know what social activities you would like to see this year.

Teen Education is open to all post Bnai Mitzvah age youth and takes place monthly on the second and fourth Sundays from 12:15-1:15, during Hebrew lessons. Hebrew Madrichim are always excused from class duties to participate. This year's overall theme is "My Developing Jewish Identity" and will include guest teachers from the congregation and community. Teen Ed will meet on October 11 for the first time. This year's topics will include exploring expressions of Jewish identity through Jewish art and artists, looking at other faiths, and Jewish music, food, and ritual.

We are a small congregation with a growing number of post Bnai Mitzvah youth. Last year we had a small but very dedicated group. It would be great to see our numbers grow a bit this year. Hope to see you all at our October gatherings!



Adam
Rosefsky

President's Message

It's hard for me to believe we are approaching our 4th High Holiday service with Rabbi Joe. The time has flown by so fast, that it doesn't seem like four years has gone by. And yet, it is difficult to believe that it is only his fourth year since he seems to have always been a member of our community.

The High Holidays are also our time of year when we renew our pledges to Tree of Life. As always I will urge you to keep up, or raise your pledges. What kind of President would I be if I weren't always appealing for money?

Last year the board and I asked everyone to dig deep and increase your dues, and everyone came through brilliantly. I again ask that you give generously. When you fill out the renewal form, please see if you can again match or beat last year's pledge.

This year however, I need to ask for a second pledge. That is a pledge of time. I know that we are all busy. I know that we all cherish our free time. I know that we all want to spend more time with our families and friends. But I need to ask anyway.

Our community functions because of our volunteers. The board members volunteer to help guide the temple. The officers especially spend a lot of time on temple duties. We do this because we love this community and want to see it prosper. Unfortunately, many of our officers and committee chairs are in the process of life changing events, and need to reduce some of their duties. I urge you if you haven't served on the Board or on a committee please volunteer.

We are a community. And as a community we all need to pull together to keep ourselves vital and healthy.

Shalom, Adam

Children's Education

Rabbi Joe Hample

The new Sunday school year began on August 23. We want to profusely thank Laurie Brager, Michelle Leversee, Zevi Lowenberg, and Kyra Schlosser, who taught last year but are unable to return this year. We're delighted that Jenni Whitener, who taught for us two years ago and then went to study abroad, is back this year. We warmly welcome new teachers Adam Pollio and Robyn Temple-Smolkin; as well as Rosa Becker, who is not exactly new, but will be playing a larger role this year. Rich Cohen, Jaimie Russell, and Alan and Merle Stolzenberg have also generously agreed to help out as circumstances permit.

This year the religious school returns to the theme of Jewish stories, which we pioneered in 2012-13. This means Bible stories and holiday stories primarily, with an emphasis on how they become our own stories and inform our own lives. We continue last year's experiment of alternating weekly between skits, games, and kid-written sermons as the keynote activity of the morning assembly. A new idea is to read a one-sentence Torah portion and a one-sentence *haftarah* in the worship service. This will give us a vehicle for teaching the Torah and *haftarah* blessings, thus saving time in the future when the children begin preparing for *b'nei mitzvah*.

The Hebrew program will now encourage kids to start in the 2nd grade, rather than the 3rd grade as before. We will mainly use the same books as last year, *Z'man Likro* (primer) and *Hineni* (reading comprehension), but with enrichment materials to develop both sacred and secular Hebrew. A new angle is to relentlessly reiterate four high-frequency words/roots of religious Hebrew: *baruch* (blessed), *kadosh* (holy), *tov* (good), *melech* (ruler). If the children know these *Arba Kanfot* (four corners) of prayerbook Hebrew, they're well on their way to understanding the liturgy.

The Morgantown Chapter of Hadassah

Invites all the women of
Tree of Life
to join us for brunch as we
celebrate our

40th Anniversary

**Sunday, October 18th
10 am - 12 noon**

At Linda Jacknowitz's home
329 Wagner Road
Feel free to bring a friend.
Be sure to bring a dairy/
veggie dish to share.

Please RSVP to Merle:
mpstolzen@yahoo.com or
304 292 6767

Looking Ahead:

Hadassah Hanukah Party Dec. 9th
"Mystery Trip" for April
Book Brunch in June

Look for an email introducing
Hadassah's "Gifting Campaign."

The birthday of the world

by Marge Piercy

On the birthday of the world
I begin to contemplate
what I have done and left
undone, but this year
not so much rebuilding
of my perennially damaged
psyche, shoring up eroding
friendships, digging out
stumps of old resentments
that refuse to rot on their own.
No, this year I want to call
myself to task for what
I have done and not done
for peace. How much have
I dared in opposition?
How much have I put
on the line for freedom?
For mine and others?
As these freedoms are pared,
sliced and diced, where
have I spoken out? Who
have I tried to move? In
this holy season, I stand
self-convicted of sloth
in a time when lies choke
the mind and rhetoric
bends reason to slithering
choking pythons. Here
I stand before the gates
opening, the fire dazzling
my eyes, and as I approach
what judges me, I judge
myself. Give me weapons
of minute destruction. Let
my words turn into sparks.

Yiddish Lives!

Rosa Becker

I am writing this article at the Pearlstone Jewish Retreat Center, where "Yiddish Voch", Yiddish Week, is being held. This year marks the 40th anniversary of this special week, probably the only place (outside of an extreme orthodox community) where one can be immersed in Yiddish language and culture. Only Yiddish speakers may attend so it wasn't until last year that I felt I could qualify. It is a "mechaya" to be here, surrounded by people of all ages who love Yiddish. Especially delightful are families with young children who have made a conscious decision to raise their children with Yiddish. In the pool everyone is splashing around and speaking Yiddish. A kid comes with some swimming noodles and another request to use a "lokshn" too! A mischievous adorable two year old runs around saying "No" and is constantly being corrected to say "nayn"! People know lots of songs and the Friday night tradition here is, following a Shabbos dinner, to gather and sit around a large "tish" table and sing with great zest into the night.

The schedule for the week is printed only in Yiddish and transliteration. Classes vary each year depending on the talents of those attending. This year includes, Yiddish literature, poetry, water color painting, knitting, mishna, tango and more. For shabbos, there were both egalitarian and orthodox services. Havdalah was conducted in Yiddish. Most amazing was an eight year old boy reading flawlessly from the Torah. (His dad is a cantor and mother a rabbi!) One of the stalwarts here, who gave the dvar Torah, has also translated popular children's books into Yiddish, including *The Cat in the Hat*.

The anchor family here is the Schaechter family. Mordche Schaechter was a legendary professor of Yiddish at Columbia University and author of numerous textbooks. His offspring are carrying on the tradition with great enthusiasm. Binyumen, his son who is an outstanding pianist and choral director, will be entertaining us tomorrow with a concert featuring his daughters, the Schaechter techter.

Zei gezunt, be well, and consider exploring the wonderful world of Yiddish!

THANKFUL FOR THE GIFTS BESTOWED

I am thankful for the gifts bestowed
upon me.

They are not earned.

I am very human

With many flaws.

Why I have come to receive these
gifts I do not know.

It is a mystery.

It compels me to do better.

I remind myself each day

To strive to be more:

Grateful

Giving

Respectful

Loving

Humble

And to praise G-d,
the source of all there is
and will be.

Barry Pallay

Meditation - August 7, 2015



מצוה

Volunteer for the Soup Kitchen

TOL will host the Saturday morning Soup Kitchen meal on Saturday, Oct. 31.

If you would like to volunteer, please arrive at the Trinity Episcopal Church (at the top of High and Spruce streets) at 10:00 a.m.

We will finish at noon.

If you have questions, please contact Susan Brown at (724) 878-5611 or at srbwva@gmail.com.



Mazal Tov to Nathan Tauger, son of Mark Tauger and Eva Segert-Tauger, winner of a Fulbright grant to the United Kingdom in science communication.

Remember a loved one
with a
Yahrzeit Plaque

\$400 DONATION

Contact: Al Berrebi
aberrebi@gmail.com

New Procedure for High Holiday Honors

This year the Ritual Committee has decided to change the procedure for assigning English readings during Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur services.

No phone calls will be made to the membership soliciting volunteers. Rather, those who wish to read during services will need to call or email, at least a week prior to services, to indicate their willingness to read.

Aliyot for Rosh Hashana will continue to be group Aliyot, however, Aliyot for Yom Kippur will be assigned by Ritual Committee members who will contact congregants to determine availability and willingness. Torah and Haftarah readers will be solicited by Ritual Committee members.

If you wish to volunteer to do an reading, or to read the V'ahavta in Hebrew, **you must call Linda Jackowitz prior to September 6th**. You can contact her at: ljackowitz@frontier.com or at 304 685 0523

CHARM CAMPAIGN

Tree of Life
Building for our Future
Please join the effort.

Send your
Pledge/donation
to our treasurer
Al Berrebi

at
Tree of Life, PO Box 791,
Morgantown, WV 26507-0791

*We note with sorrow
the passing of*

*Toshiko Onishi
Mother of Yuki Cather*

*Shirley Bellman
life-long
Tree of Life Congregant*

*Don Rasmussen
friend of Bob Cohen*

*Alyse Rosen
Aunt of Rabbi Hample*

*Robert Victor Sippin
Brother of Marty Sippin*

*May their memory
be a blessing*



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

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



SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2015			
9/3/15	Thursday	Rabbi's drop-in office hours	1:00-5:00 pm
9/4/15	Friday	Mazzal Tov Shabbat & oneg (August & September)	7:30-9:00 pm
9/5/15	Saturday	"Everyone's a leader" participatory service	10:00 am – 12:00 noon
9/5/15	Saturday	S'lichot movie & service	8:00-10:00 pm
9/9/15	Wednesday	Judaism 101: Torah as Text	7:00-9:00 pm
9/10/15	Thursday	Rabbi's drop-in office hours	1:00-5:00 pm
9/11/15	Friday	Healing service & oneg	7:30-9:00 pm
9/12/15	Saturday	Shabbat service & baby naming	10:00 am – 12:00 noon
9/13/15	Sunday	Erev Rosh ha-Shanah service & kiddush	7:30-9:00 pm
9/14/15	Monday	1 st day Rosh ha-Shanah service	10:00 am – 12:00 noon
9/15/15	Tuesday	2 nd day Rosh ha-Shanah service	10:00 am – 12:00 noon
9/17/15	Thursday	Rabbi's drop-in office hours	1:00-5:00 pm
9/18/15	Friday	Shabbat Shuvah service & oneg	7:30-9:00 pm
9/19/15	Saturday	Torah study: Va-Yelech	10:00 am – 12:00 noon
9/20/15	Sunday	Kever Avot (cemetery visit) at Beverly Hills	2:00-2:30 pm
9/22/15	Tuesday	Erev Yom Kippur (Kol Nidrei)	7:30-9:00 pm
9/23/15	Wednesday	Yom Kippur services & break-the-fast	10:00 am – 7:30 pm
9/24/15	Thursday	Rabbi's drop-in office hours	1:00-5:00 pm
9/25/15	Friday	Wine and Cheese Shabbat	6:30-7:30 pm
9/26/15	Saturday	Torah study: Ha'azinu	10:00 am – 12:00 noon
9/27/15	Sunday	Build sukkah	10:00 am – 12:00 noon
10/1/15	Thursday	Rabbi's drop-in office hours	1:00-5:00 pm
10/2/15	Friday	Pizza in the Hut & Sukkot service	6:00-8:00 pm
10/3/15	Saturday	Torah study: Ecclesiastes	10:00 am – 12:00 noon
10/4/15	Sunday	Simchat Torah celebration	10:00 am – 12:00 noon
10/8/15	Thursday	Rabbi's drop-in office hours	1:00-5:00 pm
10/9/15	Friday	Garden of Eden Shabbat & oneg	7:30-9:00 pm
10/10/15	Saturday	Bagel brunch & short service	10:00 am – 12:00 noon
10/14/15	Wednesday	Judaism 101: Torah in Practice	7:00-9:00 pm
10/15/15	Thursday	Rabbi's drop-in office hours	1:00-5:00 pm
10/16/15	Friday	Mazzal Tov Shabbat & oneg (October)	7:30-9:00 pm
10/17/15	Saturday	Torah study: Noach	10:00 am – 12:00 noon
10/18/15	Sunday	Hadassah Brunch @ Linda Jacknowitz's home	10:00 am—12:00 noon
10/22/15	Thursday	Rabbi's drop-in office hours	1:00-5:00 pm
10/23/15	Friday	Mostly English service & oneg	7:30-9:00 pm
10/24/15	Saturday	Torah study <i>in Fairmont</i> : Lech L'cha	10:00 am – 12:00 noon
10/29/15	Thursday	Rabbi's drop-in office hours	1:00-5:00 pm
10/30/15	Friday	Family potluck & Shabbat service	6:30-8:00 pm
10/31/15	Saturday	Soup kitchen at Trinity Episc, 247 Willey St.	10:00 am – 12:00 noon

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

FIRST CLASS MAIL



Mazal Tov Shabbat

August and September Honorees will be recognized Friday, September 4th. October Honorees will be honored on Friday, October 16th. Corrections or questions, contact Linda: ljacknowitz@frontier.com

August 2015

Anne Behr
Denise and Al Berrebi
Ilene Blacksberg
Nina Drummond
Amy Gutmann
Henry Gould
Rabbi Joe Hample
Erik Edwards
Elliott Edwards
Debbi Hart
Art and Linda Jacknowitz
Millie Karlin
Martha Lass
Maureen and Yoav Kaddar
Lana and Robert Klein
Susan and Neal Newfield

Justin Ludmer
Johnathan Lederman
Ann and Marty Pushkin
Debbi Pariser
Bonnie and Steve Sharkey
Ruth Siegel
Leah Stern
Mark Tauger
Max Snider
Daya Masada and Rodney Wright

September 2015

Anne Selinger & Nyles Charon
Judy Cohen
Margie Goldstein
Monique Gingold
Donna Bolyard
Sharon and Bob Hildebrand
Norman Lass
Ken Lempert
Joyce Kohan
Neal Newfield
Eitan Price
Jeremy Price
Lisa and Michael Stern

Paul Siegel
Sheila Wexler and John Fuller

October 2015

Linda and Roger Abrahams
Craig Behr
Anne and Craig Behr
Ilene Blacksberg
Laura Cohen
Denise Berrebi
Rosa Becker
Jean and Henry Gould
Lee Kass and Robert Hunt
Emily Layman
Rusty Mall
Bennett Millstone
Gwen Rosenbluth
Susan Brown
Sarah Rosefsky
Rita Tanner
Cindy Tanner
Henry Temple
Barry Wendell
Alana Works

Please join the Tree of Life Congregation as we celebrate Rosh Hashanah and observe Yom Kippur.

Please bring a dish to share for each event

Rosh Hashanah Kiddush

September 13, 2015 (Sunday evening)

*Please bring food that can be eaten with the fingers:
Apples and honey, challahs, cut up fruit, cheese plate, cookies, or cake*

**Contact Oneg Coordinator Alison Bass (alisonbbass@gmail.com or 304-381-4259) to tell her what you will be bringing. Or send monetary donations,
payable to Alison, to
Alison Bass at 379 Maple Avenue, Morgantown, 26501.**

Yom Kippur Break the Fast

September 23, 2015 (Wednesday evening)

*Please bring GENEROUS amounts of one of the following:
Bagels/breads; kugels/main dishes; fruit, salads and vegetables, desserts*

**Contact Break the Fast Coordinator Julie Penn at (julietspenn@gmail.com or 304-296-8723) to tell her what you will be bringing) or send monetary donations,
payable to Julie, to
Julie Penn at
734 Courtney Avenue, Morgantown 26505.**

Volunteers are needed to help to set up and clean up.

Please let Alison and Julie know at which event you prefer to assist.

