

TEMPLE BETH SHALOM

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From the Bimah: Our Rabbi's Message

Dennis Jones, Student Rabbi

The Most Profound Miracle of Passover...



Those of you who know me, know that I speak often about the profound effects that the writings and teachings of Judaism have had on the other two major Western religions, Christianity and Islam. Through those two faiths, concepts of the Creator and principles which *originated in the Torah* have been disseminated worldwide. I would ask, “Is this just an accident of history, or is it part of a Divine Plan?” In this article, I will share my answer to that question, based on what the Hebrew Prophets had to say on the matter. The original Passover, was a critical link in the development of the Jewish faith-tradition. As we prepare for our annual observance of that ancient holy

event, my thoughts turn to what might be the *greatest* Passover miracle of all: through faith in the Almighty God, a battered down and oppressed group of slaves was ultimately liberated and transformed into a chosen people, a blessed nation, and a **“light to all nations.”**

In the early chapters of *Bereishit*, Genesis, we read that the Creator’s interactions with humankind got off to a rocky start. There was the killing of Abel by Cain, which apparently led to the spread of such violence in the earth that a cleansing flood was necessary to purge the bloodshed and give mankind a new beginning on the earth. Even after the flood we find that the rebellious nature of man seems to persist as evidenced by the story of the Tower of Babel, which again required a Divine intervention in the form of a confusion of the languages and a scattering of the people. It was at that time the Eternal initiated what I call “The Family Plan” for the spreading of God’s way and message to mankind. The plan began, of course, with the calling of the family of Abraham and Sarah. We read in Genesis 12: “Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go forth from your country and from your relatives and from your father’s house, to a land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you, I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed (vv. 1-3).” For insight as to why the Almighty chose *Abraham* and his family, one might take note of Genesis 18 where in God’s own words it is recorded, “For I have chosen [Abraham], in order *that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice*; in order that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what God has spoken concerning him (v. 19).”

After a long sojourn in Egypt, estimated from various sources to have been between 250 and 430 years, originally necessitated, of course, by a famine in the land of Canaan, the descendants of Abraham and Sarah had become enslaved by the ruling class of Egypt. Known at that point in history as the children of Israel, that is of Jacob the grandson of Abraham and Sarah, the labor of the Israelites was exploited by the Egyptians for the building of their famed cities and temples. The hard bondage of the Israelites became so intense and unbearable that the Creator decided once again to intervene in the affairs of mankind. The deliverance from slavery in Egypt appears to have fulfilled a twofold purpose, keeping promises made to the matriarchs and patriarchs while at the same time establishing a platform for the next step in the family outreach plan. As Moses is commissioned to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt, God declares in the *Shemot*, Exodus, “I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage; and *I have remembered my covenant...* I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. Then I will take you *for my people*, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians (Ch. 6:vv. 5-7).” Through a series of events that can only be described as miraculous, this oppressed group of slaves did manage to attain their freedom from what truly would have been the greatest superpower on earth at that time,

the nation of Egypt. After their escape, as the people of Israel stood at the foot of Mount Sinai, about to receive instructions from the One who had provided their freedom, God affectionately instructs Moses to tell the people of Israel, “If you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, then you shall be *my own possession* among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me *a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*” This amazing proclamation was immediately followed by the giving of the Ten Commandments.

The “**light to the nations**” passage I mentioned earlier is found in Isaiah 49. It picks up on this same theme. The verses containing the passage are among a group of similarly themed messages in Isaiah known as the “servant songs.” And, while scholars agree that they refer to the calling and commissioning of the prophet Isaiah himself, it cannot be denied that the “servant songs” have a deeper and transcendent meaning applicable to the whole people of Israel. This can be seen in chapter 49, verse 3, where the Almighty states quite explicitly, “*You are my servant, Israel*, in whom I will show my glory.” This statement is paralleled by another servant passage in the book of Isaiah in which the entire nation of Israel, at that time, is clearly being addressed, “You are *my witnesses*, declares the Lord and *my servant whom I have chosen* in order that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am. Before me there was no God formed and there will be none after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and there is no savior besides me (Ch. 43:vv 10-11).”

In our modern age, a call to be a light to the nations might seem controversial or intimidating to some, but I assert that to a very large extent the commission is already achieving success, and in a way that many people might not even realize. Keep in mind that the primary purpose for the original call of Abraham was the teaching of God’s laws first to Abraham’s family, but by extension to all mankind. Is it merely coincidence that *those laws have become incorporated* in the religious precepts of what is already the majority of the world’s religious population? Jews, of course, have followed the laws in the Hebrew Bible for generations, but they are only a tiny proportion of the world’s current population, 0.2% according to a 2012 Pew Research analysis of 2010 population data. But, Christianity, whose roots are also in Judaism, deemed it appropriate to accept the Hebrew Bible into its own canon of scripture, thus bringing the laws and traditions of Abraham and his descendants to the world’s 2.2 billion Christians. That is approximately 31.5% of the world population as of 2010. Add to that the Muslim faith, whose roots are in Christianity and Judaism, which has also ratified and brought forward many of the laws and traditions of the ancient Hebrews in its own holy writings, and one finds the laws of the Creator, originally enunciated in the Hebrew Bible, reaching another 1.6 billion people, or 23.2% of the world population (For a brief analysis of how the Ten Commandments have been incorporated in the Koran, see http://submission.org/The_ten_commandments_in_the_Quran.html). These three major Western religions alone, all tracing their traditions back to the patriarch Abraham, accounted for a total of almost 55% of the world’s population in 2010, a majority already. Based on my research, I would also posit a connection between the ancient Hebrew tradition and the teachings of Hinduism (15.0%), and Buddhism (7.1%),

bringing the world influence of the “Abrahamic faith” up to 77% of 2010 world population, but that connection will have to wait for a future article.

You see my point, that the One who willed this creation into existence, the One who chose Abraham and Sarah and their descendants, and the One who miraculously brought the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt and entrusted them with lofty precepts and a worldwide mission, is now known and revered worldwide because of that mission, *just as the Hebrew Prophets foretold*. But, there is still much to be done. We as Jews have experienced the bondage of slavery in Egypt, so we must never fail to take up the cause of those who are still oppressed in our modern world. We experienced starvation then, so our compassion must remain with those who still do not have enough food. We were strangers in a strange land; let us continue to reach out to all who are disenfranchised in any way. As we celebrate the *Divine gifts and miracles* provided to our ancestors at *this holy time of Passover*, will you commit to join me in carrying the mission forward to be in the words of our holy writings, “*a light to the nations*”? *Ken yehi ratzon*—May this be God’s will!!

The President’s Message

Marsue Davidson, TBS President

Temple Beth Shalom will have its annual meeting on Sunday, May 21st at 10am. Coffee and pastries will be served after a full agenda of guest speakers. This year’s annual meeting will provide important information about our TBS board activities. A finance presentation will be given by our new accounting firm. The security committee will report on safety issues. We will receive updates on cemetery plot information. We will learn of Sunday School achievements, and a new adult learning program. If you want to participate in decisions made at the annual meeting, but are unable to attend, please send me (Marsue.Davidson@epichealthservices.com) your proxy vote via email. A reminder email and hardcopy proxy vote form will be sent to all paid TBS members by the end of April.



The sisterhood will be sponsoring our Passover Community Seder again this year on Tuesday, April 11th at 6pm. Members of the sisterhood and other generous volunteers will prepare a delicious, traditional Seder meal for us, and Rabbi Dennis will lead us through the prayers, readings and songs of the Haggadah as we all come together for this most memorable holiday. If you have not yet made your reservations, **Please see the invitation attached to this newsletter, and RSVP NOW, as**

the deadline is April 1.

We want to hear from you! You may reach out to any board member if you have suggestions for improvements. The temple is blessed with a congregation that freely expresses their wishes for continued improvement and giving, and this is greatly appreciated by your Board of Directors.

Thank you to Rabbi Dennis for all your support and spiritual teachings. Your explanation and insight of the Torah readings month after month, has brought the children and adults closer together. Time spent with family and friends reflects the Jewish values of family and community. Thank you all for your continued support of Temple Beth Shalom.

TBS Sunday School Program

Marsue Davidson, Director Sunday School

The Sunday School had our Purim celebration on March 12th. We had a good turnout and we had lots of fun. We played carnival games, had lunch, and enjoyed Jewish music and dancing. The children got up on the bimah with Rabbi Dennis as he led the Purim service and the reading of the Megillah. Following our tradition, everyone came dressed in their Purim costumes and shared this time together with family and friends.

During April's Sunday School sessions, the children will be learning about Seder and Passover.

Sunday School parents – Sunday School will be held on the day of our TBS annual meeting, Sunday, May 21st. We will have dedicated teachers who will be helping the children with a community project - preparing snack bags for the Soup Kitchen in Hickory, while the grown-ups attend the meeting. Sunday School parents and Temple members are being asked to please bring canned meats, snacks, jello's, or other packaged food items to be used to build snack bags for the homeless and the needy. The children will be sending letters and decorating these snack bags and learning about giving to others in need. Each year we enjoy teaching the



children about giving back to our community and sharing thoughts and prayers as well.

Please plan to attend the annual meeting. We need and want your participation in the annual meeting because your input and involvement with the temple is very important. Families dedicated to Jewish learning promote the values of our religion, and develop future generations of Jewish families in our community.

This school year will soon be coming to an end, and we are so thankful to Rabbi Dennis, Kathy, Heidi and Jamie, for all their hard work and commitment to the Sunday School program. Without this loving family, the Sunday school program would not exist. Our children are learning about their religion, values, and spiritual connections because of them. We thank you, Jones family, for all you have brought to our temple and the love you continue to share. Sunday school parents, temple members and the Hickory community are all invited to share in this year's special events. Please mark your calendar for 2017 services and special celebrations.

TBS Sisterhood

Lin Gentry, Sisterhood President

Sisterhood is looking forward to hosting our annual community Seder this year on Tuesday, April 11th at 6:00pm. Now's the time to make your reservation if you haven't already! Please make your check out to "TBS Sisterhood" and mail it and the reservation form to Barb Laufer. We're excited about seeing everyone then! Reservation forms are conveniently located at the end of this newsletter and on our website, www.hickoryjewishcenter.com.

Join us to set up for the Seder on Sunday, April 9th at 11:00am. After services on Saturday, the 8th, we'll move the blue chairs out of the way and put out the tables. The first person to email Lin the words manual labor will win a prize.

Sisterhood is collecting items for the Women's Resource Center's pantry. When you come to temple; whether for services, the Seder, or Sunday School, please consider bringing any of the following items which cannot be bought with food stamps:

Paper towels	Dryer sheets
Toothbrush/toothpaste	Kleenex
Razors	Toilet paper
Laundry or dish detergent	Deodorant/soap, body wash
Other household cleaners	

Thank you--the Women's Resource Center doesn't get money from United Way, only from grants and donations.

Our next meeting will be Wednesday, April 19th at 6:30pm at Bob Evans. Please let me (Lin) know if you're coming so I can let the restaurant know how many of us to expect.

Harriet Sederholm Scholarship Fund



The Harriet Sederholm Scholarship Fund was established by a long-standing Temple member, Burt Sederholm, to honor his wife Harriet, who died shortly after her retirement after 25 years with the Catawba County Department of Social Services. Mr. Sederholm's efforts provided the initial funding from generous family members and friends and it has been added to over the years. The scholarship fund dividends are used to provide scholarship awards. **Scholarship awards are available to students, and may be used for college, summer camp, or other educational enrichment programs.** Temple members are looked upon favorably, but one does not need to be a temple member nor Jewish to apply. Candidates must submit an essay to any one of the committee members. The essay will explain who the candidate is, what they are doing currently, what their plans are for the future, how the scholarship funds will be used and, if applicable, what the connection may be to Jewish life.

Interested students should submit their essay by April 30th. The scholarship season runs from May 1 to April 30. All applicants will be notified in writing if their application has been approved or declined by May 15th. Awards should be mailed to recipients by May 31st.

The essay should be emailed to any of the committee members: Lin Gentry, Julie Owens, Sandy Guttler, or Karen Ferguson. Naturally, the committee encourages everyone to make a tax-deductible donation to the Scholarship Fund at any time.

Temple Board

Our next board meeting is scheduled for April 5th at 7pm. Board meetings are open to all temple members. Please join us and become a part of our TBS family.



TBS Board members are:

Student Rabbi:

Dennis Jones

Officers:

Marsue Davidson, President

Vice-President TBA

Treasurer - Susan Reider

Secretary - Tiffany Hull

Past President - Barbara Laufer

Members at Large:

Liz Correll

Marion DuBow

Debra Engelmann

Lin Gentry

Sandy Guttler

Pam Jones

Aaron Tosky

Karen Ferguson

Ritual Committee

Aaron Tosky (aaront9348@aol.com) is the chairperson of the Ritual Committee, and the members are Dennis Jones (rabbi), Jane Mandle, Pam Jones, Barb Laufer, Ron DuBow and Marsue Davidson (ex officio). They plan to update wedding and building use policies and the Temple Beth Shalom Index of Life Cycle Events (birthdays, anniversaries, and yahrzeit). Please provide any information you might want included in the Life Cycle Events. You may contact either Aaron or a committee member if you have any questions regarding temple ritual and/or have suggestions.

Open Zerden Board Seat

About ten years ago, one of the temple founding-members, Mr. Howard Zerden died and donated \$500,000 to Temple Beth Shalom. The donation led to the formation of the Howard Zerden Trust. The mandate of the trust is to help fund the cost of a rabbi or student rabbi.

The trust has experienced great success and has reimbursed our temple for rabbinical expenses for the past ten years.

One of our original board members, Esther Greene, has decided to retire from her board seat. For over ten years, Esther has provided excellent focus and dedication to the Zerden Trust.

The board meets once a year for about one hour. Eight of the nine seats are filled and we encourage members to volunteer for the recently vacated ninth board seat.

If you are interested or have questions, kindly contact the Board Chairman, Sandy Guttler, at

TBS Member Business Directory

Dr. Ron DuBow
 Internist,
 Geriatric Specialist (elderly care)
 Pediatrician
 2651 Morganton Blvd SW
 Lenoir, NC 28645
 828-757-8950

Dr. Laura Faruque
 A Womans View
 915 Tate Blvd SE
 Suite170
 Hickory, NC 28602
 828-345-0800

Dr. Mark Faruque
 Bethlehem Family Practice
 174 Bolick Lane Suite 202
 Taylorsville NC 28681
 828-495-8226

Marsue Davidson, RN DCS
 Unifour Nursing
 805 W. 25th Street
 Newton, NC 28681
 828-464-0244
www.unifournursing.net

Robyn Diamond
 Certified Health and Wellness Coach,
 Specializing in Digestive
 Health and Stress Management
 843-991-6338
Robyn@HealthHappyYou.com
www.HealthHappyYou.com

Temple Beth Shalom Life Cycle March Events

Birthdays

Aidan Weatherly 4/2
 Wayne Cole 4/4
 Ron Cohn 4/6
 Ryan Läufer 4/10
 Dennis Jones 4/12
 Whitney Dominique 4/14
 Pam Jones 4/14
 Jim Correll 4/18
 Braeden Richards 4/21
 Ben Peltzer 4/22
 Stuart Shubin 4/23
 Baylee LaBarge 4/30

Anniversaries

Jon and Laura Levinson 4/15
 David and Pam Jones 4/25

Yahrzeits

David Cohen 4/3
 Sue Brisbane 4/5
 Ruth Leifer 4/19
 Fania Suess 4/25
 Rose Miller 4/26



Peter & Joy Kastan
 2008 Mosteller Estate
 Avenue SE
 Hickory, NC 28602

Member Business Directory

Alice Guy
The Hickory Wine Shoppe
238 Union Square NW
Hickory, NC 28601
828-334-4441
Info@HickoryWine.com

Marc Fedder M.D., F.A.C.P.
Frye Care Internal Medicine of Hickory
915 Tate Blvd Suite 186
Hickory, N.C., 28602
828-303-2131

Karen Ferguson, MAIT
Certified Professional in Learning and
Performance
KB Learning Designs
kblearningdesigns.com
karen.sederholm@gmail.com

Scott and Julie Owens
Taste Full Beans Coffeehouse
29 2nd St NW
Hickory, NC 28601
828-325-0108
www.tastefullbeans.com

Michelle Oxenberg Jordon
Managing Director of Design
3166 Main Ave. S.E.
Hickory, North Carolina 28602
828.322.3480 Ext. 271
michelle@robertabbey.com

Dr David Peltzer
Newton Family Physicians
767 West First Street
Newton, NC 28658
828 465-3928
www.newtonfamilyphysicians.com

Community Fundraising

Temple member Pete Sobotkin is raising funds for two life saving charitable events.

Pete is team captain for the Catawba County Sheriff's Office team for the **Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation walk, Saturday, April 29th, at Lenoir Rhyne University**, raising money for a cure for Type 1 Diabetes.

Pete is also team captain for the Catawba County Fraternal Order of Police team for the American Cancer Society's **Relay for Life All Night walk, Friday and Saturday, June 2nd & 3rd**, at the Catawba County Fairgrounds, raising money for a cure for cancer and to support cancer patients.

If you would like to donate to either one or both these very important charities, it will be greatly appreciated. All donations are 100% tax deductible. Cash or checks made out to "JDRF" and/or the "American Cancer Society" can be given to Pete at temple services or mailed to:

Pete Sobotkin
1004 N Center St, Hickory, NC 28601

Local and Regional Events

Free **yoga classes** for adults and teens at Patrick Beaver Memorial library (375 3rd St NE) on Wednesdays from 6-7pm. Bring a yoga mat or towel to lay on. Call 828-304-0500 for more information.

Wintergreen hikes on Saturdays and Sundays at 11am. A leisurely walk along the one mile Hemlock Nature trail at South Mountains State park. Meet at the Jacob Fork

B'nai Brith will have an **annual retreat** for adults at Wild Acres near Little Switzerland August 15-17. This year will be the 70th annual retreat. They have speakers and entertainment, and participants have free time for hikes, bridge, mah jong, or getting to know the other 'campers'. More information will come in the next newsletter.

Shalom Friends,

I wanted to let you know about our Temple's Israel trip this coming October 2017.

We already have 20-25 participants but have space for another 20 or so. We worked diligently to put together a trip that is both reasonable in cost and gives participants a vibrant and diverse Israel experience.

We are reaching out to you as you are a smaller congregation in the Carolinas. We know it can be challenging to organize an Israel trip in our "haimish" communities, and we wanted to extend that opportunity to your members.

Attached is our trip flyer. Please feel free to contact our travel agent, Jeffrey Eggert, or me with any questions.

Kol Tuv (All the best),

Rabbi Michael Shields

Temple Kol Tikvah of Lake Norman

Davidson, NC

SECURE YOUR SPACE BY MAKING A \$350 (per person) REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT SOON

(if already sent, thank you)

Contact Jeff Eggert, 704-230-7160

TEMPLE KOL TIKVAH ISRAEL TRIP
OCTOBER 22 – NOVEMBER 1, 2017
 IT'S NOT JUST A TRIP...
 ...IT'S A TRIP OF A LIFETIME



- Led by Rabbi Michael Shields
- Travel Israel North, South, East, and West
- Visit special sites
- Certified tour guide
- 4 or 5 star hotels
- Most meals included
- 3-day extension available

Total cost: \$3,500

More information at www.TKTIsraelTrip.org, or call (704)-987-9980



Schedule for Rabbi Services and Sunday School-2017

Date		Events	Bulletin Deadline
April	7-9	Services Friday 7:30pm /Saturday 10am / Sunday School 10am	March 25
	11	Passover Community Seder (Tuesday) 6:00pm	
	23	Sunday School 10am	
May	5-7	Services Friday 7:30pm /Saturday 10am / Sunday School 10am	April 22
	21	Sunday School 10am/Annual Meeting 10am	
	30	Erev Shavuot Service (Tuesday) 7:30pm	
June	2-4	Services Friday 7:30pm /Saturday 10am	May 20
		Sunday School End of Year Party 10am	

Want to contribute to the TBS Bulletin? Send entries to Karen Ferguson at karen.sederholm@gmail.com no later than the posted deadline. All entries are reviewed by the TBS Board before publication.



SISTERHOOD OF TEMPLE BETH SHALOM

invites you to attend the April 11, 2017 Seder at 6:00 P.M.

EVENT WILL BE HOME COOKING FROM SISTERHOOD WITH ALL YOUR FAVORITES.

All RSVPs and checks need to be in by **deadline of April 1, 2017** or a late fee of \$5 will be assessed. We can't provide refunds and may not be able to accommodate walk-ins.



Prices are as follows for Temple Beth Shalom Members and their families:

- All children under age 5 free!
- Aged 6-12 will be \$15.00
- Aged 13 and up \$25.00
- 65 and over will be \$20.00
- Guests (non-members of TBS) \$30.00



Please remit with check made out to Sisterhood Temple Beth Shalom to:



Barbara Laufer
5231 Peninsula Drive
Granite Falls, NC 28630



Please put number of attendees in space below:

- 5 and under free _____
 6 -12: \$15.00 _____
 13 -64: \$25.00 _____
 65+: \$20.00 _____
 Guests to TBS: \$30.00 _____



Names: _____

Please indicate if you have any "table-mate" preferences as there will be assigned seating

