

TEMPLE BETH SHALOM

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Temple Beth Shalom
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From the Bimah: Our Rabbi's Message

Rabbi Dennis Jones

We *Can* Overcome Racism!!!

“I have been far too silent for far too long. It is time to step up; it is time to speak up; it is time to act!”

One of the things I love about Judaism is that it has logical and workable answers to *every* human problem. You know that I often refer to our progressive Judaism as “the *thinking* person’s religion.” Perhaps this wealth of wisdom is because for almost 4000 years our people have overcome, I believe by the Hand of Adonai, almost every imaginable persecution, oppression, war, famine, and affliction. We as American Jews, are once again dealing with difficult times. The threat of the worldwide, novel coronavirus compounded by the ripping apart of our society as we wrestle with the age-old problem of racism which has become once again seared in our consciousness by the horrible mistreatment and killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmud Arbery, just to name a few of the **too many**. Because we are Jews, we know we must use these combined crises as a motivation to rise up, act, and overcome. We have done it many times in our history, and we can and will do it again! Judaism *has* the answer, and I speak of it often—*tikkun olam*. Permit me, if you will, to remind you of the Biblical and historic basis of this much needed mission. It is my prayer that these words might stir *your* passion for the fulfillment of one of Judaism’s core hopes—a time when all humankind will be united under Adonai’s unchallenged rule. My heart rejoices on Shabbat morning, when we

pray: “Bless our country as a safeguard of peace, its advocate among the nations.... **Strengthen the bonds of friendship and fellowship among all the inhabitants of our world**” (*Mishkan T’Filah*, p. 259). We can make this happen!

Chapter 2 of Genesis makes two interesting assertions regarding the creation of humankind. In verse 5 the Torah tells us, “Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for The LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth; and **there was no human to cultivate the ground.**” After the creation of human beings, the Torah states, “Then the LORD God took the humans and put them into the Garden of Eden **to cultivate it and keep it**” (v. 15). From these statements, the view began to develop early within Judaism that men and women were created to be *partners with God in completing the creation* which God willed into existence. That understanding was ultimately expressed in the principle of *tikkun olam*, variously translated as “repairing the world” or “healing the world.” It is noteworthy that during the Persian, Greek, and Roman periods of religious history, when the emphasis of most major religions was transitioning from an earthly to a heavenly orientation, the rabbis and sages of Judaism kept emphasis firmly on the here and now—on our responsibility to the earth and to society.

The phrase “*mipnei tikkun ha-olam*” came into use in the Mishnaic Period. Sometimes translated, “for the better ordering of society,” the idea is credited to Hillel or to his grandson, Rabban Gamaliel the Elder (Telushkin, *Jewish Literacy*, p.121). Its use in the Talmud is applied to a number of social obligations, including rules for divorce, collections for widows, and redemption of captives. Our Rabbis were concerned that performing such *mitzvot* just because they were a Torah requirement might cause them to be misapplied or fall into disuse. Thus, the impetus of performing them for the betterment of the community was invoked.

The concept of *tikkun olam* was expanded greatly by Rabbi Isaac Luria, a renowned 16th century Kabbalist. In brief, it involved light from the Creator being lost in the creation and intermixed with the material world. Performance of the *mitzvot* was seen as one means to restore *balance to the creation*. The expansion that Rabbi Luria made on the concept of *tikkun olam* was that he applied the principle as a motivation both for acts of social welfare and for acts of a more traditionally religious nature, such as prayer, meditation, and the saying of blessings (Noparstak, J., “Tikkun Olam,” <http://learningtogive.org/>).

In the 1950’s, Shlomo Bardin (founder of the Brandeis Camp Institute in California) brought the concept of *tikkun olam* into our modern consciousness, when he connected our obligation as partners in the creation with a line in the *Aleinu* prayer. Bardin asserted that, “*l’taken olam b’malchut shaddai*—then the world will be perfected under the rule of the Almighty” encapsulated the obligation of all Jews to work toward the *perfection of the world*. Over the course of the ‘50’s, ‘60’s, and ‘70’s this understanding became ever more popular, becoming the motivation for unprecedented social action, *tzedakah* (charitable giving), and *gemilut chasadim* (acts of compassion) in the Jewish community (Rabbi Daniel Danson, <http://www.jewishvaluesonline.org/>).

The Prophet Isaiah, in line with most of the Prophets of the Hebrew Bible, gives us some breathtakingly positive glimpses of humankind's future. A particularly powerful and oft-quoted prediction is Isa. 2:4: "... and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; **nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.**" As I think of the incredible strides humankind has made in the areas of science, technology, medicine, and human rights in just the past 100 years, I am optimistic enough to hope that the vision of the Hebrew Prophets *is*, in fact, possible. I tell my students frequently that the American constitutional experiment has yielded amazingly beneficial results. Never before in history have so many individuals been afforded such equal rights under the law, or such broad access to food, shelter, medical care, and wealth. I believe that our country's movement in such a positive direction is principally *because* it was founded and has continued to operate on the deeply embedded Judeo-Christian values of honesty, hard work, and acts of generosity and kindness. These are at the heart of the concept of *tikkun olam*. **But, our work is not done! We are not *there* yet!!**

An individual's behavior has repercussions in the community and in the world in proportions beyond our immediate perception—much like ripples in a pond. The tiniest of pebbles, when thrown into a pond, produces waves that proceed outward in concentric circles, ultimately encompassing the entire pond. So it is with good deeds. One person performs an act of kindness. Another is helped or touched, and passes along the kindness. Then another, and so on until a cycle of good can encompass an entire community, a country, and even the whole world. This cyclical expansion of positive effects will also flow from one generation to the next, then to the next, and so on. This is the process of *tikkun olam*.

In the words of our *Aleinu* prayer, we pray: "**O may all, created in Your image become one in spirit and one in friendship**, forever united in Your service" (*Mishkan T'Filah*, p.589). We are in difficult times! Will you join me in overcoming these by committing to *increasing* our acts of kindness, compassion, and social justice? May our motivation not *just be* that the Torah implores us to do so, but because of the beneficial effect it has on ourselves, our families, our communities, and our world—*tikkun olam*. *My conscience is seared* by this latest string of unacceptable incidents of the extrajudicial killing of people of color. While I have always been silently supportive of social justice, I now believe that **I have been far too silent for far too long. It is time to step up; it is time to speak up; it is time to act!** I have faith enough to believe that when a critical mass of people commits to *pursue good*, the day *will come* when the utopian vision of the Hebrew Prophets can be realized. *Ken yehi ratzon*—May this be God's will!

President's Message

Barbara Laufer, President

When I think over the years that I have had the honor of serving as TBS Board President, I am so very grateful to all who have supported my efforts to make the temple a place that meets the diverse needs of our local Jewish community. Together we have welcomed new members and let go of others. We have facilitated and enjoyed countless holidays and events; planned and executed a major building renovation; established a strong and active Security Committee; instituted the Community Relations and Social Action Program, as well as other avenues for giving to our larger community; celebrated the ordination of our, now full time, Rabbi; and the list goes on and on. I especially want to thank the members of the board who have worked tirelessly with me in so many ways. I look forward to serving on the board as Past President for this coming year.

TBS Sisterhood

Lin Gentry, Sisterhood President

Sisterhood is going to try to get together for a short meeting on Wednesday, June 24th, at 6:30pm, at the temple. We won't eat together (you can bring your own food if you want but we won't share food or drinks) and we'll spread out inside and see how it goes. Please wear a mask. Let me know if you're coming so we can set chairs out far enough apart.

My husband is a Human Resources director and has put out letters to his company's employees the last few months. In one of his recent letters, he likens the pandemic to a baseball game. If you know Frank, it's not surprising that he'd think about it in sports terms. He said no one knows for sure, but we could be in only the 3rd or 4th inning of a nine inning game. We don't know when the greatest risk will be behind us, and this is definitely the most challenging time we've had to endure in many many years. I know it's been very hard to not visit with friends/family in person, and it's frustrating to read that the number of new cases in NC aren't headed in a downward direction. But we have to remind ourselves to be diligent in keeping our distance from others, wearing face coverings, and washing our hands often and for at least 20 seconds. If we all work 'together' on this, maybe it will help.

It has been very invigorating for me to be able to see Dennis and others online for some services. What are some things you've been doing to keep up your spirits? I'm singing to myself, reading, clearing out closets, and of course baking! (Thank you, Sheri, for the challah recipe!). At least I started walking around town also, and I give away most of what I bake. Call each other, or email, text, FaceTime, or whatever works for you. It's very helpful to be able to have contact with others in some way. Let me know if you'll be at the meeting on June 24th, and consider taking over as president starting in August.

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

Temple Board



Our next board meeting will be **Wednesday, June 17th at 6:00pm via Zoom**. Board meetings are open to all temple members. Contact Rabbi Dennis if you wish to join the meeting.

Current TBS Board members are:

Officers:

- Barbara Laufer, President
- Susan Goldstein, Vice-President
- Susan Rieder, Treasurer
- Tiffany Hull, Secretary

Members at Large:

- Liz Correll
- Marion DuBow
- Lin Gentry
- Amy Hedrick
- Mary Lee Tosky
- Karen Ferguson
- Kathy Jones
- Linda Greenfield

Our new TBS Board members beginning August 1st are:

Officers:

Susan Goldstein, President Elect
Susan Huitt, Vice President Elect
Barbara Laufer, Past President
Susan Rieder, Treasurer
Tiffany Hull, Secretary

Members at Large:

Liz Correll Mary Lee Tosky
Jodi Lavin-Tompkins Karen Ferguson
Lin Gentry Kathy Jones
Amy Hedrick Linda Greenfield

Donations

A donation of \$100.00 was made to the Mazon- Jewish Response to Hunger month of June.

Do you have a favorite charity you would like us to donate to? Let us know.

Please consider these funds for your next donation:
Building and Grounds Security
Sunday School Community Relations

LOST AND FOUND

When the rugs were cleaned at the temple a ring was found. If it is yours please call (828) 327-4081



When we do get back to temple again, please consider pairing with a board member(s) to host a weekend at Temple Beth Shalom. When members contribute to the life of our synagogue in this way, we all feel a part of our Jewish community and an active participant in assuring its well-being. There is a sign up sheet and ‘what to do’ list posted in the kitchen that make it easy. And please remember that all members present will be glad to help out. Volunteers are greatly appreciated.

TBS Community Mitzvah Projects

Many of our neighbors in Hickory and the surrounding area are still experiencing an unprecedented need for food and/or hygiene and cleaning supplies because of illness or high unemployment rates associated with the COVID 19 crisis. We encourage TBS members who can help out without risking their own safety, to continue to donate where these essential supplies are needed, like the Hickory Soup Kitchen; the Second Harvest Food Bank; The Lenoir Soup Kitchen; The Salvation Army of Taylorsville, Hickory, or Lenoir. If you know of other local organizations or individuals in need of support during this trying time, please contact the CRSAC Chairperson, Kathy Jones, at krsjones2002@yahoo.com.

TBS Message Board

The board sends wishes of healing and hope to all who are affected by the COVID 19 pandemic, at home, at work, and in hospitals and nursing homes.

If you wish to post a message to acknowledge a special event or achievement, condolence, or send a get well message, give or send your message and a \$5 donation to Temple Beth Shalom Message Board, PO Box 9142, Hickory, NC 28603. A greeting card will be sent acknowledging your donation and your message will appear here in the next issue of the TBS Bulletin.

TBS Member Business Directory

Let us know if you would like to list your business here in the Bulletin. It is a free benefit of TBS membership

Dr. Laura Faruque
A Woman's 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

Ghiora Mehler
The Southern Chickpea
Falafel Truck
thesouthernchickpea.com
828-999-0496



Temple Beth Shalom Life Cycle June/July Events

Birthdays

Bradley Haddock 6/3
Connie Tosky 6/14
Heidi Jones 6/14
Esther Greene 6/16
Ron DuBow 6/20
Sandy Guttler 6/22
Emily Sullivan 6/27
Ashley Brooke Cohn 6/30
Emily Tosky 7/3
Lin Gentry 7/7
Karen Ferguson 7/9

Daniel Jones 7/16
Tiffany Hull 7/17
David Peltzer 7/18
Eric Igdal 7/19
Seth Cohn 7/19
Mitch Weatherly 7/19
Debbie Engelmann 7/24
Benjamin Levinson 7/29
Alison Weatherly 7/20

Anniversaries

Dennis & Kathy Jones 6/9
Rich & Debbie Engelmann 6/10
Lin & Frank Gentry 6/14
Elaine Zerden 7/18
Karen & Clyde Ferguson 7/9

Yahrzeits

Harry Leifer 6/1
Roy Bowen 6/5
Mazzie Hull 6/11
Carole Bowers 7/16
Bernice Fedder 7/20

Elaine S Rockstein 7/5
Sylvia Kaufman 7/6
Stephen Schonberg 6/24
Leo John Maciejewski 7/19
Marvin Yelton 7/20

Member Business Directory

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

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

Local and Regional Events



*I walked all night
 so that one day,
 we will walk in a
 world without cancer*



Pete Sobotkin is team captain for the Catawba County Fraternal Order of Police team for the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life All Night walk, which will be re-scheduled for later in the year. Its purpose is to raise money for a cure for cancer and to support cancer patients. If you would like to donate to this very important charity, it will be greatly appreciated. All donations are 100% tax deductible. Cash or checks made out to the "American Cancer Society" can be mailed to: Pete Sobotkin, 1004 N Center St, Hickory, NC 28601.

Temple Beth Shalom has an active membership in the Catawba Valley Interfaith Council, where Rabbi Dennis serves as president. You can find out more about this organization and its activities at:
<https://www.facebook.com/CVICNC/>.

Interfaith Council

A note from the editor:

Tisha B'Av **תשעה באב** is the 9th day of the month of Av.

This year Tisha B'Av falls on July 30th.

“On Tisha B'Av, we mourn the loss of our sacred space, the Temple in Jerusalem, a loss born out of baseless hatred and senseless destruction. We remember and lament all the tragedies that occurred on this fateful day throughout Jewish history. We collapse time by grieving for old wounds as if they were only just inflicted, and reaching our hands to those who suffered long ago as if they were beside us” (https://ajws.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/tisha_bav_reading.pdf).

As the whole world seems to be crying out for Social Justice, I believe that we, the Jewish people, are adding our voices to the cries of millions throughout the world this year on Tisha B'Av.

Other Tisha B'Av resources: <https://ajws.org/blog/on-tisha-bav-connection-conquers-hate/>, <https://www.hebc.com/holidays/tisha-bav>;

https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/144575/jewish/What-Is-Tisha-BAv.htm

Schedule for Rabbi Services and Sunday School 2020

Date	Event	Bulletin Deadline
June 19-20	Services via Zoom - Friday 7:00pm/Saturday 10am	June 6
*July 17-18	Services (Fri. 7:30pm/Sat. 10:00am)	N/A

*At the time of this publication it is uncertain whether we can safely be back at the temple for Services and other events in July. Please check the website for event schedule changes.

Want to contribute to the TBS Bulletin? Send entries to Karen Ferguson at karen.sederholm@gmail.com. All entries are reviewed by the TBS Board before publication.

