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Temple Beth Shalom  
P.O. Box 9142  
Hickory, North Carolina 28603  
[www.hickoryjewishcenter.com](http://www.hickoryjewishcenter.com)

# Temple Beth Shalom

## From the Bima: Our Rabbi's Message.

### Shavuot: Marking one of God's Greatest Gifts to Humankind!!

I am always surprised at the lack of attention the holiday of Shavuot receives from the modern progressive synagogue. Biblically speaking, in the list of holidays presented completely for the first time in the Torah in Leviticus 23, Shavuot receives its fair share of attention. Seven verses are devoted to the method for counting the time leading up to Shavuot and to the explanation of how the holiday is to be observed. That compares with only two verses in Leviticus 23 devoted to Rosh Hashanah. In fact, that holiday is not even called Rosh Hashanah in the Torah, but rather "*Shabbaton Zikaron Teruah*—a Sabbath memorial of the trumpet blast." Rosh Hashanah became the holiday's name in the post-biblical period. And yet today, synagogue seats are filled to overflowing on Rosh Hashanah, but on Shavuot, one finds meager attendance when there is a service at all.

Perhaps it is that Shavuot does not have any prominent symbols that we can cling to—no *shofar*, no *sukkah*, no Hanukah gifts or *menorah*, no *matzah*. In fact, the holiday does not even have a *real* name. The term, *Shavuot*, in Hebrew, only refers to the weeks that we are instructed to count leading up to the observance of the holiday. (Lev. 23:15-16; Deut. 16:9-10) It seems ironic that on this oft ignored holiday the rabbis of the Talmud tell us that Israel's *most precious gift* was bestowed. **According to our sages, it was at the time of Shavuot that the holy Torah was given on Mount Sinai.** (*Talmud Shabbat 86b-87b*, see also Ex. 19:1 ff.)

The Torah instructs us in Leviticus 23 that Shavuot is to be a full-fledged *yom tov*, on the order of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, first day of Sukkoth, and the first day of Pesach. The Torah states, "On this same day you shall make a proclamation as well; you are to have a holy convocation. You shall do no laborious work. It is to be a perpetual statute in all your dwelling places throughout your generations." In honor of the giving of the Torah on this day, it has become the custom of many observant

Jews to spend the entire night of Shavuot engaged in the study of Torah. Referred to in Hebrew as, "*Tikkun Leil Shavuot*—an act of completion/perfection on the night of Shavuot." The all night study traditionally ends at daybreak when the participants turn their attention to the saying of *Shachrit*, morning prayers. (Rabbi Shraga Simmons, "ABC's of Shavuot,"

<http://www.aish.com>) The saying of morning prayers on Shavuot has become an event of amazing proportions in modern Jerusalem, where several hundreds of thousands of Torah students conclude their evening studies by walking to the *Kotel*, the Western Wall, to engage in morning prayers. This event has occurred since the Six Day War in 1967. While the Temple Mount was liberated in early June of that year, Jews were not allowed into the area where the temple once stood for security reasons. On the holiday of Shavuot in 1967, the Western Wall was first opened to visitors, and upwards of 200,000 Israelis spontaneously crowded into that area. (Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, *Jewish Literacy*, p. 593)

Another widespread and ancient custom on Shavuot is the eating of dairy foods *only*. While as many as four possible reasons are given in support of this custom, none

is truly definitive. It may connect to the biblical book Song of Songs which is allegorically applied to the Torah, stating, "Your lips...drip honey; honey and milk are under your tongue..." (4:11) Alternately, a commandment in the Torah, Exodus 23:19, juxtaposes language connected with Shavuot, "the choice first-fruits of your soil," with the famous, "you shall not boil a kid in the milk of its mother," the basis for our prohibition of mixing meat and milk. There is, of course, also the Torah reference to the Holy Land as "a land flowing with milk and honey." (Ex. 33:3) This reference has been cited as a possible reason. Perhaps the most interesting possibility of all is the idea that upon receiving the Torah the children of Israel, for the first time, grasped the importance of the laws of *kashrut*, so they ate only dairy until the laws of *sh'chita*, kosher slaughter, could be more fully expounded. (Simmons, "ABC's of Shavuot")

In the Mishnaic Period (100 B.C.E.-200 C.E.), there was much debate regarding the appropriate Torah reading for the holiday of Shavuot. Some of our sages preferred Deuteronomy 16 which recounts the instructions to the people of Israel to count for themselves seven weeks and then to celebrate the "*Chag Shavuot*—Feast of Weeks" to the LORD their

God. That reading was usually paired with a Haftorah portion from the book of Habakkuk. Another group of sages favored the reading of the revelation of the Torah at Mount Sinai contained in Exodus chapters 19 and 20. This reading was followed by the mysterious "Chariot" Haftorah portion of Ezekiel 1. In places outside of the land of Israel, where the holiday of Shavuot is observed for a two day period, both customs are followed in deference. The book of Ruth is also traditionally read on Shavuot, presumably in honor of Ruth an ancestor of King David who is connected with Shavuot in that, according to tradition, he was both born and died on that same holiday. (Rabbi Hillel Hayyim Lavery-Yisraeli, "Shavuot: The Day of the Giving of the Torah?" [www.ConservativeYeshiva.org](http://www.ConservativeYeshiva.org))

As I pointed out in last month's article the miraculous redemption of the children of Israel from Egypt and the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai were part of an overarching Divine plan for humankind. That plan was to spread the way of God through molding a particular family group into a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation," (Ex. 19:6) who through observance of the Creator's laws would eventually become "a light to the nations, so that [God's] salvation may reach to

the end of the earth.” (Isa. 49:6) Our rabbis often referred to the covenant at Sinai between the Almighty and the nation of Israel as a contract or even a marriage. In the words of Rabbi Dovid Rosenfeld, “The Torah was the symbol of our bond, the gift God granted to the betrothed to consummate their relationship. The Talmud (*Berachot* 57a), discussing the verse ‘[the Torah] is the heritage (*morasha*) of the congregation of Jacob’ (Deut. 33:4), comments, ‘Do not read “*morasha*” (heritage) but “*me’orasa*” (betrothed).’ We are wedded to God. And as a result, we are wedded to the Torah, God’s wisdom.” (“Shavuot: Crazy, Stupid Love,” <http://www.aish.com>)

There is no question that the more we study the laws and precepts of the holy Torah, the more we understand the mind of the Creator God in whose image we were made. It follows that the more we apply the Torah’s commandments, statutes, and acts of loving-kindness to our own daily walk, the closer we will be connected not only to God, but also to our fellow man and woman. The Almighty has a plan for the restoration of the cosmos, *tikkun olam*. The gift of the Torah, given at the time of Shavuot some 3500 years ago, is a *key element of that plan*. Will you join me in observing this coming Shavuot perhaps as no other

before? We will begin the holy day with an Erev Shavuot service on Saturday night, May 23 at 7:00 PM. Join me then for a time of celebration, prayer, and worship. Who knows, we may just stay up all night studying.



## President’s Message

*Barbara Laufer, TBS President*

I am so proud to be a member of Temple Beth Shalom. The congregation is to be congratulated for their involvement. At the May 3<sup>rd</sup> annual meeting the required quorum of 40%, either in attendance or via proxy, was far exceeded with 60%+ available. It is with gratitude that I report that congregants supported the decision made by the Board of elected officers regarding the following cemetery policy:

### TEMPLE BETH SHALOM/HICKORY JEWISH CENTER CEMETERY POLICY

Those qualified for burial in the Temple Beth Shalom/Hickory Jewish

Center section of Catawba Memorial Park must be Jewish or the spouse of a Jew or the child, stepchild or adopted child of a Jew.

Burial services for a non-Jew may be performed at the funeral home in a non-denominational manner by the clergy of choice, but not at graveside. Christian markers and symbols will not be permitted in the HJC section at any time. No burial can be performed on a Saturday or Jewish Holiday.

Non-temple members who qualify for burial can buy a space for 150% of the current price and full payment must be made prior to burial.

Spaces which have been paid for in full may be resold either to the Temple Beth Shalom/Hickory Jewish Center Cemetery Fund for an 80% refund of the paid price, or to anyone judged qualified for burial by the temple Board of Trustees. If the latter circumstances apply, the price may be negotiated by the buyer and seller. Spaces cannot be transferred without consent of the temple Board of Trustees.

If you have a situation not covered by the above policies you must receive written approval by the temple Board of Trustees. These policies will be binding upon all who wish to be buried in the

Jewish section of Catawba Memorial Park.

### **MANAGEMENT OF TEMPLE BETH SHALOM CEMETERY SPACES**

In 1984 the board of Temple Beth Shalom/Hickory Jewish Center established a Jewish section in Catawba Memorial Park and purchased additional spaces in 1995. If practical, we hope to continue making this opportunity available to the temple membership.

Management of the Jewish section of Catawba Memorial Park will be carried out by the Board of Trustees of Temple Beth Shalom/Hickory Jewish Center. Two thirds of the board members must be present to rule on any Cemetery issues, and any decision requires a majority.

Any amendments or additions to the above Cemetery Policies can be made by the Board of Directors at any time if 75% of Board of Trustees members are present and at least two thirds favor the proposed changes.

As of August 1, 2015 the cost of spaces for members will be 50% of the current price charged by Catawba Memorial Park. Spaces may be paid in full, or a 50% deposit may be made with the balance due within two years. However if the final payment is not made with 60 days of the due date the initial deposit

will be forfeited to the temple cemetery fund.

Approved by Board of Trustees of Temple Beth Shalom (April 2015)

In order to provide transparency to our congregation future major policy decisions will be published and a policy handbook will be available this summer.

The Board and congregation is also to be commended for last year's work which accomplishing the following: hiring of Student Rabbi Dennis Jones' revitalization of Sunday school; completing a memorial garden (David Engelmann, Eagle Scout project); new format for monthly bulletin; exterior bulletin board for posting of services; donation box in foyer; updated phone system; WIFI; updated web page ([www.hickoryjewishcenter.com](http://www.hickoryjewishcenter.com)); updated and distributed membership directory; Donation to soup kitchen; One Torah repaired and other in process; new siddurs (80 purchased with donations) and implementation at services; bookplates for new siddurs; new room divider; flashing and gutters repaired; Luncheon for Elaine Zerden; New security system; New security lighting; Sisterhood hosted Seder; Tosky, Jones and Laufer participated in interfaith presentations; cemetery policy updated;

policy manual being developed; Facebook page added to website; significant donations made by congregation to Catawba Department of Social Services; and replacement of garbage can.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The results of the elections at the annual meeting are Marsue Davidson as Vice-President; Tiffany Hull as Secretary; At large members Lin Gentry; Robyn Diamond, Liz Correll, Sandy Guttler, Pam Jones, Debra Engelmann, Aaron Tosky, Marion DuBow, Susan Rieder, and Whitney Cohn-Dominique. Barbara Laufer-President and Mark Faruque-Treasurer will continue in their two year term. All will take office as of July 1<sup>st</sup>. Sam Shames is to be commended for his many years of service as Secretary. Per approved change in the Constitution and Bylaws "the rabbi or student rabbi shall serve as an ex-officio member in a non-voting capacity on the Board of Trustees". Please feel free to contact any board member with any concerns you may have and/or attend any board meeting.

The response to the new siddurs has been very positive. Anyone wishing to purchase a personal copy of the *Mishkan T'Filah: A Reform Siddur* for \$36 please contact Barbara Laufer

([blaufer@ahrs.net](mailto:blaufer@ahrs.net)) by July 1<sup>st</sup> so a group order can be sent.

Gates of Prayer may be purchased for \$10.00 after any service. Contact Barbara or any temple member if you are interested obtaining a prayer book as a keepsake.

Any high school senior who plans to attend UNC-Chapel Hill in the fall is welcome to call Hillel at the campus. Their phone number is 919-942-4057 and students will be sent information about Hillel UNC

## **TBS Sunday school Program**

*Marsue Davidson, Sunday school Chair*

The Sunday school program is coming to an end and the children have really enjoyed the teachings and activities of this year's Sunday school program. The children created beautiful Mother's Day cards and painted and wrote wonderful messages to all their beloved mothers. Dennis discussed the Judaic meaning of Mother's Day and the children enjoyed music and songs together.

Special Thank to Alec Davidson for babysitting the children after Sunday School so the parents could participate in the annual meeting. Thanks you Alec for a great job and the kids really enjoy the time you spend talking and planning with them. Our end of year party planning is in full swing and we have a special event we are planning with the children. All temple families and members are welcome to this event and future announcement will detail the date, time and location.

The children's Tzedakah money will be used for this celebration at the end of the Sunday school year. Our continued love and appreciation to Rabbi Dennis for his continued enthusiasm and patience. He has developed a bond and connected with the children and encouraged the children

to live a Jew life and incorporate all his teachings into their day to day activities and life.

## **Update: Looking for a benevolent Tzedakah opportunity?**

Thank you to everyone who so graciously donated to Jaimi Jones' collection for children entering foster care. Through both the monetary and item donations, Jaimi was able to collect a total of 1,555 diapers ranging in sizes from preemie to six, 38 packs of wipes, 25 assorted rash creams and baby hygiene products, 44 bottles, 12 sippy cups, 19 pacifiers and teething rings, 11 onesies, bibs, and wash cloths, one pack n' play, and other assorted baby cleaning and safety items. The Apparel Development Class at Alexander Central High School made over 30 diaper bags using material that was donated by Elite Swatch Card Services Inc. All of the items were then donated to the Alexander County Department of Social Services Child Protective Services Unit. The agency staff were ecstatic to receive such a large donation, and stated that they will be able to help a lot of children and families with these items. Child abuse and neglect prevention begins with community awareness and support of those families in need and at-risk. Thank you

### **Temple Beth Shalom Event Calendar 2015**

#### **May 2015 hosted by Stephen and Marsue Davidson**

15<sup>th</sup> at 7pm Friday night services  
16<sup>th</sup> at 10am Saturday morning services  
17<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am Sunday school will studying Shavuot  
23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00pm Erev Shavuot services

#### **June 2015 hosted by Susan Rieder in celebration of Andrew's Bar Mitzvah**

7<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am Sunday school Year End Celebration  
19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm Friday night services  
20<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am Andrew Igdal Bar Mitzvah

for helping to make a positive difference!



## **TBS Sisterhood**

*Lin Gentry, Sisterhood President*

Our next meeting will be held Thursday, May 28 at 6:30pm at Mellow Mushroom on LR Blvd. We're inviting the brotherhood and any other men from temple who would like to join us to this social meeting. Please be on the lookout for my email asking for rsvp's when it gets closer to that time.

There is an interfaith meeting on the May 21st at Church of the Master UCC that our congregation is invited to, so we'll meet on the 28th to give you options.

## **Harriet Sederholm Scholarship Fund Announcement**

The Sederholm Scholarship was established by a long-standing Temple member, Bert Sederholm to honor his wife, Harriet, who died shortly after her retirement from work in Hickory. Mr. Sederholm provided the initial funding that has been added to over the years. The scholarship is available to students. Temple members are looked upon favorably but one does not

need to be a temple member or Jewish to apply. The scholarship fund is fully invested and the dividends are used to provide scholarship awards.

Interested students should submit an essay explaining their interests and desire for scholarship support by June 15, 2015. The essay can be sent to any of the committee members:

- Lin Gentry
- Julie Owens
- Sanford Guttler

Naturally, the committee encourages anyone to make a tax-deductible donation to the Scholarship Fund at any time and a check can be sent to Temple Beth Shalom and earmarked for the Sederholm Fund.

## **Temple Board**

Our next board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 3rd at 7pm. All board meetings are open to all temple members. Please join us and find out the new and exciting direction for TBS.

## **TBS Member Business Directory**

**Dr. Ron Dubow**  
Internist, Geriatric Specialist  
(elderly care), Pediatrician

2651 Morganton Blvd SW  
Lenoir, NC 28645  
828-757-8950

## **Temple Beth Shalom Life Cycle Events**

### **Birthdays**

Grayson Cohn 5/2  
Eric Richards 5/4  
Eileen Cangemi 5/6  
David Engelmann 5/7  
Dennis Cangemi 5/7  
Linda Guttler 5/8  
Michael Sullivan 5/15  
Ross Guttler 5/18  
Ariel Cohn 5/19  
Terri Sullivan 5/20  
Nancy Morewitz 5/21  
Damian Blankenship 5/21  
Amanda Garrick 5/24  
Kevin Huitt 5/26  
Al Garrick 5/27  
Mark Sobotkin 5/30

### **Anniversaries**

Aaron/Mary Lee Tosky  
5/4 Ron/Sue Cohn 5/6  
Bud/Connie Tosky 5/26

### **Yahrzeits**

Ruth Laufer 5/15  
Richard Fox 5/15  
Sam Griffin 5/17

**Dr. Laura Faruque of  
Womens View PA**

915 Tate Blvd SE  
Suite 170  
Hickory, NC 28602  
828-345-0800

**Dr. Mark Faruque of  
Bethlehem Family Practice**

174 Bolick Lane Suite 202  
Taylorsville NC 28681  
828-495-8226

**Marsue Davidson, RN DCS  
Unifour Nursing**

805 W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street  
Newton, NC 28681  
828-464-0244  
[www.unifournursing.net](http://www.unifournursing.net)

**Robyn Diamond, Certified Health and  
Wellness Coach, Specializing in  
Digestive  
Health and Stress Management**

843-991-6338  
[Robyn@HealthHappyYou.com](mailto:Robyn@HealthHappyYou.com)  
[www. HealthHappyYou.com](http://www.HealthHappyYou.com)

**Professor Gitlin Hebrew Lessons**

109 6<sup>th</sup> Ave NE  
Hickory, NC 28601  
828-328-9443

**Alice Guy of  
The Hickory Wine Shoppe**

238 Union Square NW  
Hickory, NC 28601  
828-334-4441  
[Info@HickoryWine.com](mailto:Info@HickoryWine.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](mailto:michelle@robertabbey.com)  
[www.robertabbey.com](http://www.robertabbey.com)

**Scott and Julie Owens of  
Taste Full Bean**

29 2<sup>nd</sup> Street NW  
Hickory, NC 28601  
828-325-0108  
[www.tastefullbea](http://www.tastefullbea)