

TEMPLE BETH SHALOM

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Temple Beth Shalom
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www.hickoryjewishcenter.com

From the Bimah: Our Rabbi's Message

Dennis Jones, Student Rabbi

Who Puts this Stuff in their Sacred Literature?????

At our next weekend of services at Temple Beth Shalom, November 17th and 18th, we will be exploring the sixth reading of the Torah reading cycle, Torah portion Toledot, Genesis 25:19-28:9. This portion begins with Isaac taking Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel, and sister of Laban, to be his wife when he is forty years of age (25:19-20). In the



biblical account, it would seem that immediately following their marriage, Rebecca becomes pregnant with twins (25:21-26), but we learn in verse 26 that in actuality twenty years have elapsed, since Scripture records that Isaac was sixty years old at the birth of the twins, Esau and Jacob. We learn that Esau grew to become a skillful hunter, “a man of the field,” and that Jacob became an “*ish tam*-perfect man(?), dwelling in tents.” While in those tents, Jacob must have developed some amazing cooking skills, because he was able to wrest the birthright away from Esau in exchange for a bowl of lentil soup (25:27-34). At that point, the

Bible tells us “there was a famine in the land,” meaning, of course, the land promised to Abraham, the land that would eventually become Israel. Isaac was instructed by the LORD not to go down to Egypt, the neighboring superpower of that time, so he stayed in Gerar, near the land of the Philistines. While there, Isaac deceived the Philistines into thinking that Rebecca was his sister because he was afraid they would kill him and take her if they knew she were his wife. (26:1-16) In spite of his *dishonesty*, Isaac eventually made peace with Abimelech, the king of the Philistines, because Abimelech could tell that Isaac was being blessed by the LORD. (26:17-33) By this point in the story, the twins have reached the age of forty, and Esau takes two wives, Judith and Basemath, from among a local tribe, the Hittites. Apparently these Hittite ladies “made life miserable for Isaac and Rebecca” (26:34-35). Nevertheless, Isaac plans a special blessing for his firstborn, Esau. Upon hearing of Isaac’s intentions, Rebecca and Jacob conspire together to formulate a plan for Jacob, through *deception*, to get the blessing for himself (27:1-29). Isaac and Esau were both enraged when they learned of Jacob’s deception and taking of the blessing. Esau was so angry, in fact, that he planned to kill Jacob after their father’s passing. Once again Rebecca steps in. Upon hearing of the plan, she arranges for Jacob to be sent to Haran, the land of her relatives, purportedly to find a wife, but more obviously to get him away from Esau. (27:30-28:9)

I have always appreciated that the Hebrew Scriptures do not “whitewash” the lives and actions of our patriarchs and matriarchs. When wrongs or dishonesties are committed, the Hebrew Bible lays them out for all to see. Now, one might argue that Jacob’s taking of the birthright from Esau, the true firstborn, was actually just shrewd business practice. Jacob had labored all day producing a stew, while Esau had spent the day in the field, obviously pursuing game. Esau was famished after all of that hunting, so he asked Jacob for some of the soup he had been making. Jacob demanded Esau’s birthright in exchange for the soup. Esau obviously thought he was about to perish from hunger and that the birthright would be of no use to him, so he willingly made the exchange. Now, the birthright in ancient near Eastern cultures was no small acquisition. It entitled the holder not only to the family leadership and decision-making, passed down from the father, but also to a *double portion* of any property inheritance. (See Deut. 21:15-17)

I believe it is somewhat harder to justify the *outright deception* that was involved in Jacob’s taking of the blessing. Isaac had grown old and “his eyes were too dim to see.” He commissioned his son, Esau, to go on a hunting expedition and bring him back some of his favorite game, so that after he had eaten he might pronounce a blessing on Esau. Upon overhearing the plan, Rebecca instructs Jacob to quickly go among the herd and take two young goats. Rebecca took the meat of the goats and prepared a “savory dish.” She put the skins from the goats over Jacob’s neck and hands so that he might appear hairy like his brother. She also had Jacob put on Esau’s clothing; thus Jacob would both smell and feel like his brother Esau to the aging Isaac. As Jacob approached his father, Isaac, with the delicious meal, he answered all questions cunningly to continue the deception. So, Isaac, thinking Jacob to be the firstborn, Esau, pronounced his blessing upon him: “Now may God give you the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and an abundance of grain and new wine; may peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be master of your brothers, and may your mother’s sons bow

down to you. Cursed be those who curse you, and blessed be those who bless you.” (Gen. 27:28-29) Then, just as soon as Jacob had left Isaac’s presence, Esau returned from his hunt. He prepared his game and brought it to his father, Isaac. It was only then that both realized the deception that Jacob had perpetrated. The biblical account tells us that Isaac “trembled with a very great trembling,” obviously enraged. Esau, on his part, was so angry he plotted to kill his brother after the passing of their father.

Some commentators make an effort to relieve Rebecca at least partly of blame for this deceptive plan by pointing to a prophecy she received just prior to the birth of the twins. While the twins were in her womb they “struggled together,” apparently causing her some discomfort. When she inquired of God about this situation, the Torah tells us “the LORD said to her, “Two nations are in your womb; and two peoples shall be separated from your body; and one people shall be stronger than the other; and the older shall serve the younger.” (Gen. 25:23) According to some sources, when she realized that the blessing of her husband, Isaac, was about to go to the firstborn Esau in contravention of the prophecy, Rebecca obviously felt compelled to step in. (See, e.g., “The Tragedy of Good Intentions,” Rabbi Lord Sacks, <http://www.aish.com>)

Other commentators do not try to mitigate the level of deception involved in the story, but use the situation to emphasize another point, that such difficult circumstances often arise when parents play favorites. You will notice that early in our Torah portion, we are told “Isaac loved Esau, because he had a taste for game; but Rebecca loved Jacob” (25:28). Such a blatant statement of parental bias and disagreement must convey some meaning in the context of our story, according to these sources. With such division and favoritism existing how could the family not have struggles among siblings? (See, e.g., “Parenting 101,” Noah Chertkoff, <http://www.reformjudaism.org/learning/torah-study/toldot>)

Another possible observation we might glean from this story is the importance of spousal communication. When Rebecca learned of Isaac’s plan to bless Esau, knowing full well this went against a message from the Almighty that Jacob would be the son to come to a position of preeminence in the family, why did she not just approach Isaac and discuss the matter with him? A simple exchange of information and coming to parental consensus may have avoided the need for the deception that followed. Isaac may well have planned a blessing for both sons, just intending to deliver Esau’s first, but we will never know. (See “Toledot 5771,” Rav Michael Susman, <http://harova.org/>)

Finally, many commentators point out that while acquiring the blessing came by deception for Jacob and Rebecca, it was not without great cost and consequence. Jacob incurred the ire of his father and brother. He needed to flee from both and ended up living, basically in exile, in the region of Syria for over twenty years. Rebecca, for her part, had to endure that long separation from her favorite son. Upon Jacob’s return from Syria, his beloved wife, Rachel, died in childbirth with her second child. Ultimately, near the end of his life, when the Pharaoh of Egypt meets Jacob and inquires about his age, Jacob tells Pharaoh, “The years of my sojourning are one hundred and thirty; few and unpleasant

have been the years of my life, nor have they attained the years that my fathers lived during the days of their sojourning.” (Gen. 47:8-9)

Because the Torah is *so honest and straightforward* about the lives and actions of our patriarchs and matriarchs and the consequences that followed, we who are living almost *four thousand years* after their time can still discuss, debate, and derive meaning from these ancient texts. The Constitution of the United States is often referred to as a “living document” because it is debated and interpreted based on changing times and events after just over two hundred years of history. Can you imagine that after four thousand years, any other document could have anywhere near the relevance of the Torah, the document which has become the *cornerstone* of the world’s three major Western religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam?

The President’s Message

Marsue Davidson, TBS President

Our next upcoming special event will be the annual Hannukah party on Saturday, December 16th following the morning service. Everyone is invited and welcome to bring a favorite Hannukah dish to share. Lunch will be followed by BINGO. This being an intergenerational event, there will be prizes that will interest both adults and children. Please put this event on your calendar. We hope you will come out and celebrate with us.

While we are thinking about temple events, Sisterhood recently sponsored a movie night, using our new AV system. This event, and future movie nights, are open to all movie lovers. Everyone who came had a great time and we will do it again, so watch out for more information.

In light of recent social tragedies, and those in particular that have taken place in religious houses of worship, the TBS Board is taking the issue of our security very seriously. While our hearts and minds are with those who are in mourning and in need of healing prayers, we are also actively working on a safety training program for all temple congregants. This is just one aspect of the Emergency Preparedness Plan that our Security Committee is working on.

We have included the TBS services and Sunday School schedule for your review on the last page of this newsletter and on the temple website. Please direct friends and family to our website for the list of temple events.

TBS Sunday School Program

Kathy Jones, Sunday School Program Coordinator

Sunday School students started back on their Hebrew studies this past weekend, following the break for the Fall Holy Days. Ben Levinson has been studying particularly hard as his Bar Mitzvah will be this coming June at TBS.



Planning for this year's Hanukkah party was also finalized. Sunday School invites all of TBS to join us in celebrating the holiday on Saturday, December 16th, immediately following the morning Torah service. A Hanukkah themed luncheon will be served, after which all will be encouraged to join in playing the TBS most

beloved game of BINGO. There will be lots of fun prizes to win! Everyone is asked to bring a favorite holiday food or dessert to share. All of the students will be making their own "Hanukkah Hoodies" to wear to this year's party. They would like to also invite the congregation to join them in a contest to see who can come up with the most decorative Hanukkah outfits. There will be prizes awarded for the "most festive" adult and youth attire.

Please plan on joining us for this time of celebration of our Jewish heritage!

TBS Sisterhood

Lin Gentry, Sisterhood President

Sisterhood is having a fun Fall. We sponsored a movie night on Nov 4 at temple, utilizing our brand new screen. We had popcorn and candy, and enjoyed ourselves tremendously. We watched The Frisco Kid and everyone wanted to do it again. We'll decide on a date for another movie night at our next meeting.

We're excited about hosting the gift shop from Charlotte's Temple Beth El at our temple on Sunday, December 3rd from 10:00am to 1:00pm. This is our annual opportunity to be able to buy Judaica

without having to travel or go online. In the past, Beth El brought everything from jewelry, to hanukkiah, to games, to Hanukkah Sox, to kitchenware, and we're looking forward to what they'll bring this year. Put the date on your calendar. The first person to email me the words 'mensch on a



bench' will win a prize. Our next meeting will be Wednesday, November 15th, 6:30pm, at the home of Mary Lee Tosky. More details will come about dinner plans—we may order pizza.

Another event to be on the look out for is an additional Friday night Shabbat service that will be led by the women of TBS. We'll set a date at our next meeting. Be thinking about how you'd like to participate; all females are invited to join in.

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 is available to students. Temple members are looked upon favorably, but one does not need to be a temple member nor Jewish to apply. The scholarship fund dividends are used to provide scholarship awards. Candidates may 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-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, Karen Ferguson, or Sandy Guttler.

Naturally, the committee encourages everyone to make a tax-deductible donation to the Scholarship Fund at any time.



Looking for a way to give tzedakah?

Jaimi Jones, daughter of Dennis and Kathy Jones, and School Social Worker for Alexander County Schools, is trying to collect hygiene/cleaning supplies for families of Hiddenite Elementary School students. It is the poorest school in the district and has a high rate of families living in poverty. She

has already had calls from parents seeking help to be able to send their children to school with clean bodies and clean clothing. If anyone is willing to help her with this mitzvah by donating some of these supplies, please bring them to the next service at the Temple. **A box will be in the TBS foyer for the collection.**

They are in need of the following items for Kindergarten through 5th graders:

- Shampoo Conditioner Children’s and Adult Toothpaste and Toothbrushes Body Wash
- Bar Soap Boy’s and Girl’s Deodorants Shaving Cream Safety Razors Ultra Thin Kotex
- Toilet Paper Laundry Detergent Dish Soap Lysol Wipes

Temple Board

Our next board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 6th 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
- Barbara Laufer, Vice-President
- Susan Rieder , Treasurer
- Tiffany Hull, Secretary

Members at Large:

- Liz Correll
- Marion DuBow
- Debra Engelmann
- Lin Gentry
- Sandy Guttler
- Pam Jones
- Linda Greenfield
- Mary Lee Tosky
- Karen Ferguson



“... you shall keep My sabbaths, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations...” Exodus 31:13

One of the very special things about our Shabbat evenings together is the Oneg that follows the Service. We are looking for volunteers to participate in the host duties that make Shabbat so special. Please contact any Board member to find out how you can perform this mitzvah of creating Sweet Oneg Shabbat experiences at TBS.



TBS Message Board

*In loving memory of Kurt and Helmi
& in thanks to Rabbi Dennis
From Terri Berndt*

*In honor of Rabbi Dennis Jones
& Barbara and Larry Laufer
From Larry, Barbara and Steven Freiman*

*To temple "thank you for your warm welcome on Yom Kippur"
From Linda and Tom Friedman*

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 Marion DuBow at 2752 Brittany Dr., Lenoir, NC 28645. A greeting card will be sent acknowledging your donation and your message will appear in the next issue of the TBS Bulletin.

Temple Donations

The following donations of \$100 each were made to:

- The Humane Society in honor of Mountain View Sound and Video
- First Baptist Church of Statesville in honor of Statesville Stained Glass
- Hospitality House in honor of Ryan Gilbert
- Crossnore School and Children's Home in honor of Ernie Sills
- Masonic Home for Children in honor of Beagle Electric; Larry Laufer
- Catawba Regional Hospice in honor of Northwest Drywall

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 of
A Womans View
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
Epic Health Services
805 W 25th Street
Newton, NC 28269
828-464-0244
www.marsue.davidson@epichealthservice.com

Local and Regional Events

Community Wide Free Event

GLOBAL DAY OF JEWISH LEARNING

A worldwide cultural event to celebrate our shared heritage.



**Sunday,
November 12
8:30am – 1pm**

Shalom Park
All events are free
Registration requested

This program is supported by a
JFCC Impact & Innovation Grant.

Beauty and Ugliness

Explore our world and nature through Jewish texts

8:30am Kick Off/Welcome Breakfast
9:30am Keynote Speaker, Justice Richard Bertram
Bertram was elected to serve on 8-year term on the Michigan Supreme Court.
Bertram has been elected an openly elected since 2014, as a result of reform legislation.
10am PJ Library Activity
10:15am Adult Learning (multiple sponsors), Cultural Arts & Youth Activity
11:45am Adult Learning (multiple sponsors), Cultural Arts & Youth Activity
12:45pm Lunch & Tikun Olam Projects

For details and registration visit www.jewishchelotte.org/GDL.
Free babysitting - must register in advance by calling 704.365.5007



Israeli Fashion & Jewelry

November 16th
6:15pm-9pm

Sam Lerner Center for Cultural Arts
5007 Providence Road
Charlotte, NC 28226
704.366.5007

Member Business Directory

Alice Guy

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

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.tastefulbeans.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



Temple Beth Shalom Life Cycle November Events

Birthdays

Rachel Faruque 11/4
Rachel Engelmann 11/7
Camden Dominique 11/7
Jon Levinson 11/8
Susan Huitt 11/9
Alec Davidson 11/10
Mary Lee Tosky 11/13
Jenna Gold 11/15
Laura Levinson 11/15
Sarah Levinson 11/16
Sue Cole 11/28
Aeden Gerds 11/29

Anniversaries

Whitney Cohn-Dominique 11/9
Steven and Bonnie Gold 11/17

Yahrzeit

Samuel Lippe 11/7
Doris Davidson 11/8
Clara Gitlin 11/9
Werner Cohn 11/9
Bert Yelin 11/9
Murray Asch 11/10

Schedule for Rabbi Services and Sunday School 2017-2018

Date	Event/Time	Bulletin Deadline
November	5 Sunday School 10:00 AM	November 4
	17-19 Services/Friday 7:30 PM/Saturday 10:00 AM/Sunday School 10:00 AM	
December	3 Sunday School 10:00 AM	December 2
	15-16 Services Friday 7:30 PM/Saturday 10:00 AM	
	Hanukah Party Dec. 16 (Saturday) 12:00 PM	
	21 Sunday School 10:00 AM	
January	5-7 Services/Friday 7:30 PM/Saturday 10:00 AM/Sunday School 10:00 AM	December 23
	21 Sunday School	
February	2-4 Services/Friday 7:30 PM/Saturday 10:00 AM/ Sunday School 10:00 AM	January 20
	18 Sunday School 10:00 AM	
March	2-4 Services Friday 7:30 PM/Saturday 10:00 AM/Sunday School 10:00 AM Purim (Megillah Reading/Festivities as part of Friday night service) Regular Sunday School on March 4	February 17
	18 Sunday School 10:00 AM	
	31 Passover Community Seder (Saturday) 6:00 PM	
April	6-8 Services/Friday 7:30 PM/Saturday 10:00 AM/ Sunday School 10:00 AM	March 24
	22 Sunday School 10:00 AM	
May	4-6 Services/Friday 7:30 PM/Saturday 10:00 AM/Sunday School 10:00 AM	April 21
	19 Erev Shavuot Service 7:30 PM (Saturday)	
	20 Sunday School 10:00 AM	
June	1-3 Services/Friday 7:30 PM/Saturday 10:00 AM/ Sunday School End of Year Party 10:00 AM	May 19

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.



Jewish Holiday Calendar



