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Temple Beth Shalom

From the Bimah: Our Rabbi's Message

An Open Letter to Temple Beth Shalom

Dear congregation, in previous bulletins, I have made every effort to bring you articles that were full of Biblical, historical, and Talmudic insights in an effort to further your spiritual growth. With this issue of the bulletin, as I anticipate the coming of the Hebrew year 5776 and the opportunity to spend time together during the fall holidays, I am overwhelmed with many emotions. So, I wanted to take a moment to share some thoughts with you personally, from my heart.

Can you believe that it has been a whole year since I became your "student" rabbi? What a remarkable year it has been for me personally! To be able to study Bible and Talmud, to prepare for and lead services, particularly to learn and chant Torah and Haftorah, and to teach Sunday School are activities that bring me the utmost of personal joy and sense of fulfillment. The privilege of doing these things as your

"official" spiritual leader and to be able to receive compensation for doing them fills me with gratitude that is difficult to put into words. When I accepted the position as your rabbi, I made the commitment to Adonai that for every service and Sunday school I was responsible for, I would give my utmost in preparation and service delivery. In the coming year, I want to renew that commitment and pledge to do even more to make Temple Beth Shalom a place where every soul can make a connection to the Almighty, to our temple family, to the greater community, and to our rich Jewish heritage.

The decision I made, almost twenty-five years ago now, to formally convert to the Jewish faith and to become a member of Temple Beth Shalom is one of the best decisions I have ever made in my life. I have said many times, and I say again, that this congregation is blessed with the most amazing assembly of souls. Your superior intellect, talents, personalities, commitment to others, and love and respect for our Jewish traditions has always impressed me, and still does. I am honored just to be a member of this unique

group, and to be your rabbi—gives me a sense of purpose and personal fulfillment for which I am deeply, deeply grateful. In my prayers, I thank God *daily* for this privilege. And, I also want to thank you as well.

As I look back at the previous year, I remember how nervous I was as I prepared to lead High Holiday services for the first time. I remember telling my wife, Kathy, “I just need to make it through the High Holidays then it will be all downhill from there.” She quipped, “You mean the quality of your services?” “No,” I replied, “just the level of my nervousness.” Now, in retrospect, as I consider those holiday services and all of the monthly services that followed, from my perspective, things went very well. The positive feedback that I have gotten from all of you *surpassed* all of my expectations. As this year’s fall holiday services approach, rather than being nervous, I am filled with a sense of anticipation and excitement. I hope you share that excitement with me. It has made my preparations this year even more joyous than last.

I have, over the past year, received much beneficial constructive feedback as well. I extend my thanks to those of you who have shared your thoughts with me honestly in that regard. Some have said

to me that they find it difficult to share constructive feedback because they like me personally and do not want to hurt my feelings. But, I want you to know that I view that feedback as an opportunity for personal and professional growth. I am ever aware that I am a “student” rabbi, and this is truly a learning process. I welcome your input; I take it very seriously, and I use it as a guide for future service preparation and delivery. So, if you have ideas on ways to improve services, educational opportunities, or other activities at Temple Beth Shalom, please share those with me. I will make every effort to accept your feedback graciously and to use it for the betterment of our Jewish community.

Many have asked me about my rabbinical studies, so let me share just a brief word about those. I am thankful that we live in the Internet age. In a previous time, I might not have been able to avail myself of enrolling in a rabbinic studies program and to be your rabbi. Fortunately, most of my learning and academic requirements are able to be fulfilled over the Internet. When I originally considered the course requirements of my school, Rabbinic Seminary International, I set a personal goal of accomplishing ordination in four years. I am pleased to report to you, that



after one year in the program, I am just under one fourth of the way through my coursework. I must be honest with you that teaching full time at Alexander Central High School, trying to fit in time for exercise and healthy eating, spending quality time with family, and preparation for my role at Temple Beth Shalom has given me less time to devote to rabbinic studies than I might have liked. But, with Adonai’s help, I am making slow but sure progress, and I appreciate your patience and the patience of my teachers at the rabbinical seminary.

I want to say just a few words about the Sunday school program at Temple Beth Shalom. During my ten years as president, I always longed to be more involved with our temple youth, but never seemed able to make the time. Over the past year, working with the Sunday school students and their parents has been one of my greatest joys. It has meant so much to me to get to know the kids and their parents on a much more personal level. My affection for the students

and interest in their individual spiritual growth has grown week by week. I believe that the young people sense that, because they have reciprocated my affections, and we have bonded in a very real way. When I became “student” rabbi, I was committed to “beefing up” our educational opportunities for young people. I believe that has happened, but in the coming year I want to do even more not only to educate the students, but to involve them in all aspects of temple life, particularly service participation.

I cannot say enough good things about Temple Beth Shalom’s president, Barbara Laufer, vice president/bulletin editor/Sunday School principal, Marsue Davidson, secretary, Tiffany Hull, treasurer, Mark Faruque, and the entire Board of Trustees. These dear souls constantly give of their time, talents, and resources, and *never* ask for anything in return. They truly have my deepest admiration and appreciation. As we began the year together, it was perhaps awkward at first to have the rabbi present at every board meeting. That is something that was new to all of us. The experience has been an unparalleled opportunity for growth and improvement for me. I love to have my “finger on the pulse” of the congregation and its needs. I truly hope the dedicated members of our

Board have enjoyed the experience as I have.

In closing, I want to once again express my sincerest thanks to the entire congregation for the past year. I am humbled and honored that you have chosen to renew my contract for another year, and I look forward to making the next year even better than the last. With your help, I know we will. My earnest prayer for each of you is that the New Year will bring you the utmost of health, happiness, and prosperity. L’shanah tovah tikatevu!— “May you be written down for a good year!”

Your rabbi, Dennis



President’s Message

Barbara Laufer, TBS President

Rosh Hashanah offers each of us a chance to redefine our intentions, our priorities and our sense of spiritual connectedness or the teshuvah to which we are called. Yom Kippur, our most special day of the year,

provides us with the spiritual unity that comes with forgiveness or the uplifting sense where “atonement” becomes “at-one-ment”. The Talmud says, “Every blade of grass has its angel that bends over it and whispers ‘grow, grow’...” We are blessed to have volunteers and an exceptional board of “angels” who are committed to have the temple grow.

We will need volunteers to host services for the remainder of the Jewish calendar year, so please let Tiffany Hull know if you will be able to serve along with a board member. The duties of “hosting” are posted on the bulletin board and have become vastly simplified with the hiring of April and Glenn Eckard to prepare food and clean-up after services. We are also asking for volunteers to bring special food for the Break Fast (Those whose names fall between “A-J” please bring main dishes and “K-Z” bring desserts).

Larry and I will not be able to be with you this year as we are traveling west to visit family and national parks. Hopefully we will be able to visit a body of water and indulge in the Rosh Hashanah custom of Tashlich (emptying our pockets of crumbs to cast away guilt and letting go of the previous year). As Rabbi Richard Israel joked you need to bring the right kind of bread for the right kind of guilt: “For

ordinary sins, use white bread; for dark sins, use pumpernickel; for auto theft, use caraway; for being money-hungry, use raw dough; and for being holier-than-thou, use bagels." At this special time I wish each of you Shanah Nechamah, a year of comfort; Shanah Hazakah, a year of strength; Shanah Skelahavah, a year of commitment and love; and Shanah Tovah, a year of goodness and peace.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The High Holidays are just around the corner so if you are interested in Torah honors please let Dennis know.

Welcome to new members Karen and Clyde Ferguson, Karen is the daughter of Harriet and Bert Sederholm and was Bas Mitzvot at our temple.

The Institute for Faith and Learning at Lenoir-Rhyne University has a free and open to the public speaker series in Grace Chapel at 7:00 P.M. On September 24th the first speaker will be Amy-Jill Levine. Dr. Amy-Jill Levine describes herself as a "Yankee Jewish feminist who teaches in a predominantly Christian divinity School in the buckle of the Bible Belt." A professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt University, her books include "Short Stories by Jesus: the Enigmatic

Parables of a controversial Rabbi", and "The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus." Dr. Levine combines historical-critical rigor, literary-critical sensitivity, and a frequent dash of humor with a commitment to eliminating anti-Jewish, sexist, and homophobic theologies. Press releases for future programs will appear in future bulletins.



TBS Sunday school Program

Marsue Davidson, Sunday school Chair

Our first day of the new Sunday school session was a success. The parents will be participating with the younger children by sharing in the educational process of their Judaica studies. Dennis and Kathy have prepared a year of advanced biblical studies and Hebrew immersion.

This next year will be dedicated to expanding our youth's spiritual awareness and increasing their involvement in the weekend services and provide them an

example of how to live a Jewish life.

Please reference the last page of this bulletin for Sunday school dates, lesson plans and services. Our next scheduled session will be in the middle of the holidays and the children will share their personal traditions and reconnect their spiritual soul.

TBS Sisterhood

Lin Gentry, Sisterhood President

We had a productive first meeting in August and look forward to our new year ahead.

Our next meeting will be Thursday, September 17 at 6:30pm at The American Honor Ale House, 883 Highland Ave SE (it used to be a mill, close to Lenoir Rhyne).

Some of the activities we talked about doing this year are having Charlotte's temple comeback to sell items in November. We will be hosting a yard sale in the spring, and having a 'deli night'. We all are also excited about our special spa day. We also are still planning to revamp the kitchen, so we're looking for fundraisers for that.

Join us this year--the dues are \$36 for the year and you don't have to be a member of the temple or be Jewish to join sisterhood. Looking forward

to seeing you all on September 17th.

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, 2016. 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 Beth Shalom Life Cycle Events

Birthdays

Eliana Richards 9/3
 Ken Bonfield 9/4
 Nadine Igdal 9/17
 Joseph Garrick 9/17
 Keegan Blankenship 9/19
 Tyler Faruque 9/22
 Chris Weatherly 9/25
 Freddie Sokol 9/29

Anniversaries

None this month

Yahrzeits

Temple Board

Our next board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 16th at 7pm.

As a reminder, all board meetings are open to all temple members. Please join us and become a part of our TBS family.

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 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. 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

Professor Gitlin Hebrew Lessons

109 6th 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

**Michelle Oxenberg Jordon
Managing Director of
Design**

3166 Main Ave. S.E.
Hickory, North Carolina 28602
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**Scott and Julie Owens of
Taste Full Bean**

29 2nd Street NW
Hickory, NC 28601
828-325-0108
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Schedule for Rabbi Services and Sunday School 2015-2016

<u>DATES</u>		<u>SERVICES SCHEDULE</u>	<u>NEWSLETTER DEADLINES</u>
September	13	Rosh Hashana 7:00 PM (Sunday)	August 30
	14	Rosh Hashana 10:00 AM (Monday)	
	20	Sunday School/Theme: High Holidays/Sukkot Decorations	
	22	Yom Kippur/Kol Nidre 7:00 PM (Tuesday)	
	23	Yom Kippur 10:00 AM and 5:00 PM followed by Breakfast	
	27	6:00 PM Pizza Party/Decorate Sukkah/Short Erev Sukkot Service/Lulav-Etrog <i>(In lieu of Sunday School that morning)</i>	
October	6	Simchat Torah Evening Service 7:00 (Tuesday)	October 3
	11	Sunday School	
	16-17	Services	
	25	Sunday School	
November	8	Sunday School	October 31
	13-14	Services	
	22	Sunday School	
December	6	Sunday School (Hanukah starts at sundown)	
	11-12	Services /Sunday School/Congregational Hanukah Party Saturday night <i>(In lieu of Sunday School the next day)</i>	
	23 24	Sunday School	
January	8-10	Services /Sunday School	
February	5-7	Services /Sunday School	January 23
	21	Sunday School	
March	4-6	Services /Sunday School	February 20
	20	Sunday School/Prepare for Purim and Passover participation	
	25	6:00 PM Pizza Party/Friday night service/ Megillah reading—Purim	
April	8-10	Services /Sunday School	March 27
	23	6:00 PM Passover Community Seder <i>(Young People participate in Seder service in lieu of Sunday School)</i>	
May	13-15	Services /Sunday School	April 30
	22	Sunday School	
June	3-5	Services /Sunday School End of Year Party	May 21
	11	7:00 Erev Shavuot Service (Saturday night)	