

Any system which requires you to pause the tumult of your lives to devote your attention to food, wine, music, and candlelight is so impractical it could have been designed only by the Jews. Well, or the French.

Temple Or Olam vice president Ginger Jensen

The Temple Or Olam Shmoozeletter (formerly known as the *Havurat Olam Shmoozeletter...*)

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Welcome to our Newest Members

A very warm welcome to our newest members, **Kelly, Carole, Zach** and **Charli Bombardier**. In the past month we have learned that thirteen-year-old Zach likes interesting words (like "stoic"), that seven-year-old Charli likes face painting, teddy bears, and chocolate mousse, and that mom and dad like being friendly, which of course, they are. It's nice to find ourselves growing that way!

Another warm welcome to...

New Director of Press and Public Relations Jody Mace



You may have noticed some delightful contributions from freelance writer Jody Mace in recent *Shmoozeletters* (there's another one right below this entry, actually....). We are incredibly lucky to have Jody step into the role of Director of Press and Public Relations and want to thank her for her charming and witty texts. Enjoy, everyone!

Musical Moments at Temple Or Olam

by Jody Mace

The gentle drumming of fingers on the darbouka drum accompanies the lilting singing of a wordless melody. The "niggun" is at once relaxing and mesmerizing. By the time the prayer begins, congregants



have been drawn into a spiritual frame of mind. Now, they are truly ready to welcome the Sabbath. This is the power of music.

Throughout our Jewish history, music has been used to praise, reflect, rejoice and pray together. The psalms were meant to be sung, not recited responsively. Temple Or Olam honors Jewish musical traditions by incorporating music into all services, holiday parties, and events. Sephardi, Ashkenazi, Mizrachi, Israeli, and American Jewish music are all part of the repertoire.

We also create new traditions. In addition to the hand drum and singing, Friday night prayers are usually accompanied by a couple of guitarists, a teenage bassist who plays Pink Floyd songs when she's not playing at services, and, often, a teenage accordionist or piano player. Some other instruments you might here at services are banjo (have you ever heard a bluegrass version of Hinay Mah Tov?) violin, and flute. The music sets the mood, alternately joyful and contemplative.

But music is not a spectator sport at Temple Or Olam. Before many services, a basket of rhythm instruments is passed around, and children and adults alike grab tambourines, maracas, and the ever-popular "shaky eggs," all of which turn upbeat melodies into a party. Of course there is also the instrument that each congregant brings with him or her – the voice. This is not a congregation that sits silently while a rabbi or cantor sings prayers. Voices ring out, often in rounds taught by the children, who learned them at religious school. It doesn't matter if your voice is opera quality or "singing in the shower" quality; it's welcome here.

Coming up in July, we'll hold Temple Or Olam's first Beatles service. The spirit or sentiment of each part of the service will be interpreted and expressed through a Beatles' song. Come prepared for something new!

If you're interested in hearing more of the music of Temple Or Olam, there are two CD's available for purchase: "Likrat Shabbat," a collection of Shabbat songs, and "Musika Olam," a selection of Jewish world music.

But the best way to experience the music is to join us for a service. Services are held the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month, at 7PM at McGill Baptist Church in Concord. We hope to see you there!

Tikkun Olam

Our first year at Relay for Life

by Reb Barbara

During the first weekend in May, a small but vibrant team of Temple Or Olamites headed out to the annual Relay for Life. Team Temple Or Olam exceeded its goal the week before, raising over \$800. Our contribution was a drop in the ocean, of course, but that drop meant something to us.

Many of the teams had brought homemade things to sell to other walkers. We decided to improvise. One of our team members, Jody Mace, had brought baby bananas, and at the end of the day, she decided that we should sell them. So we walked around the track, hawking our last seven baby bananas for twenty-five cents each. We openly admitted that they were a bit bruised and unhappy-looking, but there was reason to buy them anyway. Or so we said.



“It’s for a good cause!” I exclaimed, sure that the cause would convince the skeptical.

“We’re told that they taste sweeter than regular bananas,” Jody pointed out.

We must have sounded pretty convincing. We sold every one of those bananas.

“Next year, let’s sell nutritional and healthy food,” said Carole Bombardier, one of our more sensible team members.

“Let’s dress as bananas!” Jody suggested. (Jody is always making those sorts of suggestions.)

“Let’s collect all the empty plastic water bottles people are throwing out and recycle them for everyone next year,” suggested Ralf Thiede.

You know, we walked until we hurt. But we had fun. We got to talk with one another for long periods of time. We got to study a little Torah. We did the chicken dance and the electric slide. We got to walk in circles for hours.

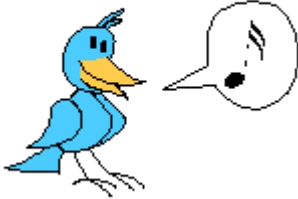
But we walked with hope – maybe our laps around and around and around again will help us all reach a straight path to real answers and real cures.

We can imagine a world without cancer. We did.

And we hope you’ll join us next year! Thanks to team members Jody and Kyla Mace, Jeremy and Ashley Gardner, Carole, Zach, and Charli Bombardier, and Ralf Thiede.

Friday Night Services

May 9 and May 23, 2008



This week’s service is the last one before our Religious School year ends, and we want the kids to give you a Shabbat filled with all the songs and prayers they learned this year. So that’s what we’ll do! Come and enjoy the seven stages of a Shabbat service with us as our younger set knows them, with a musical joy and variety that is particular to the Temple Or Olamites.

Event: Second Friday Family Service
Date: May 9, 2008
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Location: McGill Baptist Church
 5300 Poplar Tent Rd.
 Concord NC 28027 -9757 [map directions](#)

Bechukotai is hardly the easiest parsha to read. It includes blessings, of course, but also a series of dire warnings from God to the people Israel. Two of our confirmation class students will be chanting Torah this weekend, choosing to face, rather than avoid, a difficult text.

How do we explain what appears to be an angry and stern God, ready to rain down terrible punishment on a recalcitrant humanity? Can we explain such images at all? Is there any way to interpret such texts in the light of contemporary thinking?

We’ll be chanting from the more challenging part of this parsha and holding a straightforward and, we hope, intense discussion of a challenging part of our Torah.

Event: Fourth Friday Evening Service

Date: May 23, 2008
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Location: McGill Baptist Church
5300 Poplar Tent Rd.
Concord NC 28027 -9757 [map](#) [directions](#)



Upcoming Milestones

Spring and Summer Bat Mitzvahs

בת מצווה Our very first teenage bat mitzvahs (we're an unusual group – Temple Or Olam's first bat mitzvahs were two wonderful adult women...) will be taking place this spring and summer. Are we excited, or what?

Rebecca Smith and Pamela Partridge have been acting as teacher assistants all year for The New School for All Things Jewish together with confirmation students Jeremy Gardner and Kyla Mace.

So, Rebecca and Pamela: We look forward to your bat mitzvahs very much indeed. We know we will have reason to be very proud!

And Mazel Tov to Confirmation Students...

Jeremy Gardner, who has been selected to participate in the American Legion Boys State, one of the most respected educational programs of government instruction for high school students. High school juniors are selected by local American Legion posts to attend the program. Recently, Jeremy also helped out with the Special Olympics at Hickory Ridge High School, acting as a 'buddy' for a fifth-grade student. Thomas J. Smith, a counselor at the high school, wrote: 'I wish we had more students like Jeremy at HRHS.'

Kyla Mace, who received state recognition from Duke University's Talent Identification Program (TIP).

Enjoy the Spring!

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