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March 7, 2010

21 Adar, 5770

Temple Or Olam



COMMUNITY SEDER

It's almost time for Temple Or Olam's community Seder. More details will follow, but for now, please note that it will be held on March 28th at 3:30pm.

The cost will be \$18/person, or \$36/family for members.

The price for non-members will be \$36/person and \$54/family.

The location will be at McGill Baptist Church. Hope to see everyone there!

The Jewish Community

The movie, "The Little Traitor," from last year's Jewish Film Festival, is showing at Regal Ballantyne Village Stadium 5 starting March 12th.

The 6th annual Jewish Film Festival is in progress now. Find all the showings here: <http://www.charlottejewishfilm.com/>

Keep your eyes open for an announcement about the Israeli Independence Day celebration at the JCC in April. A great band, Pardes, will be playing in this free festival.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- *March 13: 10AM Tot Shabbat*
- *March 13: 10:45AM Saturday morning service*
- *March 14: Religious School*
- *March 19: 7PM Shabbat Service*
- *March 20: 1PM Pesach cooking class*
- *March 28: 3:30pm Community Seder*
- *April 4: 2pm Torah study*
- *April 4: no religious school*

MiLev HaPardes

From the heart of the orchard by
Reb Shulamit student rabbi

Originally, the food brought to the house of the mourner was brought to the rich in silver and golden baskets; to the poor in baskets of twigs. The poor felt ashamed. Because of the honor of the poor, the rabbis ordered that twig baskets would be brought to all homes....

There are good reasons to delve into the legal texts of Jewish tradition. They are filled with deeply sensitive *halakhic* discussions from centuries ago – discussions that help demonstrate how to live an ethical life – how to be, simply, a *mensch*.

Take burial customs, for example. In ancient times, the rabbis legislated that Jews use colored glassware in a house of mourning. Colored glass was less expensive than clear glass. If all mourners had to use colored glass for their *shiva* guests, the poor would not worry about being shamed publicly when one of their own died. For this same reason, the rabbis insisted in long ago times that the dead had to be carried to the funeral in simple, wooden boxes – not on the elegant couches which the rich plainly preferred. “Because of the honor of the poor,” they explained.

We often imagine our legal texts to make for the dulllest of reading. Not so. Take, for example, this moving passage:

“Originally, the faces of the dead of the rich would be uncovered for the funeral. The faces of the poor, however, would be covered because often they would show the signs of starvation. The poor were ashamed. Because of the honor of the poor, it was ordered that at all funerals the faces of the dead would be covered.”



We can see how the rabbis tenderly revealed the anguish of those who were less fortunate – an anguish that the poverty-stricken of our own day know only too well. Our sages made kindness a legal obligation for the entire community. What an extraordinary way to legislate!

Torah tells us: “Justice, justice, shall you pursue” (Deuteronomy 16:20). Justice shall you pursue for the poor and the struggling, justice shall you pursue in your courts. Justice shall you pursue for your people, for all people.

It is almost Pesach, when we remind ourselves and our children that it is a precious gift to be free to define our lives, to make choices about what we eat and wear and where we go on vacation. May we remember to honor the fact that not everyone in our world has that freedom. For the honor of those who are imprisoned and enslaved to minimum wage jobs, to overpriced housing, to hunger and war, may we remember how beautifully our rabbis legislated kindness so many centuries ago, and may we, like them, pursue justice.

KVELL CORNER

Please send your Mazel Tov to Carla Eastis, who recently became a tenured professor!

LETTER FROM THE BOARD

Tu B'shevat

Most of us are ready for spring to arrive. One of the sure signs that spring is around the corner is the Tu B'shevat seder that our religious school students enjoyed recently.

Tu B'shevat marks the beginning of spring in Israel and celebrates the birthday of trees. Fruit from trees should not be eaten during the first three years; in the fourth year, the fruit belongs to [G-d](#), and after that, we can eat the fruit.

Sedar means "order" in that events happen in a specific order (from year to year and around the world). It is similar to the Passover seder with which most of us are more familiar. There are four questions. The students tasted different types of fruits and nuts and drank four different colors of juice (increasingly darker from white to purple) representing the four seasons of the year.

"We pray that this seder celebration of Tu B'shevat will inspire in us a deeper sensitivity to nature's gifts. May the day soon come when we can plant a tree ourselves in Israel in fulfillment of the commandments". (quoted from the students' service).

Money, Money, Money

Please send dues and donations to our treasurer:

Richard Jacobson
9723 College View Lane
Charlotte, NC 28262-9731

Check should be payable to Temple Or-Olam.

SHALOM YELADIM, BY LAIKO QUINTERO

Growth. We have been in the season of growth. Tu'B'Shevat begins this season as we rejoice in the coming of spring. At Temple Or Olam we have grown this past year in membership. Jill Partridge, the chair of the membership committee, has brought in new families with young children. Historically we have done a great job teaching our children at Religious School on Sunday mornings but, we had nothing for the littlest members.

We offer two opportunities to celebrate and educate our toddlers, religious preschool and a Tot Shabbat Service. Once a month the toddlers and their parents get together to celebrate the Sabbath. Parents have a place where they can talk to other Jewish parents about holidays and Jewish education for their children. Reb. Shulamit leads meaningful prayer and 'Torah' processions for the toddlers. The children are learning the Shema, Ein Keloheinu, and Mi chamocha. Afterwards we have an oneg where the children learn the hamotzi and kiddush. At the last Tot Shabbat, on February 20th, the children demonstrated that they are mastering the Shema while their parents look on proudly at their children's Jewish accomplishments. Through the Tot Shabbat services parents are learning how to bring Jewish prayer and worship into their homes through simple songs and relearning the importance of understanding Hebrew.

Sarah and Paige Billings extended their arms gracefully as Reb. Shulamit said, 'Adoini Elohenu,' the Lord is our God. Gabriel Quintero and Fernando Sanchez led the group in dancing during 'Bim Bom, Shabbat Shalom.' Eli Altschuler walked in the 'Torah' procession and allowed the Moms and Dads to touch their children service siddurim to the stuffed torah. Watching these mini menches love their Shabbat brought joy to the faces of all the parents.

Once a month we offer religious preschool at Mindy Birman-Sanchez's house. We celebrated Tu'B'shevat and had a seder. Keri Huneycutt led the children decorating tree print outs with leaves and sticks, we planted watermelon seeds (which have sprouted), and the children put stamps with their names in Hebrew on the tree decoration. Before religious preschool the children danced around the house to the Wiggles version of 'Leechol Yeladim'. Jason Gordon had a brilliant idea of taking the seeds of the watermelons we grow this year and replanting them every year. My dream is to one day plant a watermelon patch on the property of our own building from the original plant.

This Purim the toddlers will be dressed in costume and ready to learn about tzedakah. We will be decorating tzedakah boxes and donate the money before Yom Kippur to help children. The children will also be stuffing their own hamentashen with cherries or Hershey kisses.

Our children remind us of our Jewish heritage. They teach us to remember holidays. As the toddlers learn the Shema we are reminded (*V'shinan'tam l'vanekha v'dibar'ta bam*) "and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and you shall speak of them." The youngest children at Temple Or Olam are learning (*Sh'ma Yis'ra'eil Adonai Eloheinu Adonai echad*) Listen, Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One.



RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

On March 7th, the religious school had a special session...an introduction to Israel. Their guide was Asaf Shenhav, a college student from Israel, who is here in Charlotte sharing his knowledge of and love for Israel with local kids.

By the end of the session, the students had learned about the history and geography of Israel, as well as about many cultural tidbits, including rave reviews of the beaches!

After Asaf's wonderful lesson, Lisa Jewel led the students in creating Israeli salad, and hummus, and in making Elijah cups for Passover.

Thank you Asaf! And to Lisa Jewel for opening her home and planning this innovative, fun experience.



Birthdays

- Shannon Leder, March 1
- Seth Holtzman, March 11
- Zach Bombardier, March 29

Yahrzeits

Abraham Shapiro, father of Harriet Commike

11 Nissan, March 26, 2010

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