

# Shmoozeletter

Temple  
Or Olam



**SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:**

- Feb. 25 service at 7:00 p.m.
- Feb 12, 2011 party for our Rabbi
- Please respond to your e-vite
- Arthur Kingberg distributing Or Olam flyers to local realtors
- Will King and the Building Committee exploring options

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**Kabbalat Shabbat Service Feb. 25**

**EVERYONE WHOSE  
SPIRIT MOVED HIM  
CAME, BRINGING TO  
THE LORD HIS  
OFFERING (EX. 35:21)**

This beautiful passage in Torah describes the Israelites as so moved that they bring Moses more gifts than are actually needed (just imagine!). The text describes the rich and extraordinary nature of those gifts and highlights – in particular – the role of the Israelite women. The entire community participates with a whole heart.

In this moment, the Israelites know what it is to be a sacred community. They have a holy purpose: Building a Tabernacle that will sanctify the space in which they affirm their relationship



with YHVH.

During this service we will discuss the nature of giving and becoming in our own age, with our own hearts, together with our congregation.

*Dr. Barbara Thiede, Rabbi*

Kabbalat Shabbat Service  
**February 25**  
7:00 p.m.  
McGill Baptist Church,  
5300 Poplar Tent Road  
Concord



## MILEV HAPARDES

## FROM THE HEART OF THE ORCHARD

NAASEH

V'NISHMA.

We will DO! (Ex. 24:7)

We have spent half the year with dysfunctional families, tyrannical rulers, great escapes, and dramatic treks through the wilderness. We have learned lessons from tales of sibling rivalry, marital relationships, and conversations with talking animals. Now, Torah shifts its emphasis from narrative to

law. From this point on, we will read about hundreds of ways in which we can sanctify our relationships and become a holy nation.

**Torah tells us that we are responsible for building safe communities.** Do not carry false rumors. We are not just warned not to utter *sheker*, falsehoods and lies, but also *lashon hara*, slander. Do not say negative things about someone to no good effect. Even *r'khilut*,

truths about a person that are not defamatory but communicated for no good reason, constitute gossip.

If someone comes to us with stories of someone else's bad behavior, we often choose to listen and affirm. It's easy to believe we are filling the role of sympathetic friend. But Torah tells us that listening to gossip feeds bad feelings. Imagine us all refusing to listen to negativity and redirecting it in healthy



Rabbi Dr. Barbara Thiede

## WE WILL DO – AND THEN WE WILL UNDERSTAND

We can  
become a  
holy  
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doing.

ways: “Instead of talking to me, how about going directly to (fill in the name)? You two can work it out, I bet.” We can be responsible for creating a community in which adults act responsibly to solve differences.

**We are responsible for social justice.** Our laws remind us that justice must be meted out equally to poor and rich alike, that we are

obligated to care for those in need: “You shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the feelings of a stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt” (Ex. 23: 9).

If we fear the homeless instead of housing them, if we do not act in response to real needs everywhere around us, we cannot build a just society. Just as we lis-

ten to gossip and feed discontent, so can we ignore real pain and feed apathy, self-indulgence, and disinterest instead.

When given the chance to take on the law – before they knew every last requirement, every last mitzvot – the Israelites all answered, the Torah says, with one voice. “We will do!” (Ex. 24.7).

## A FOUNDATION AND FUTURE

**Naaseh v'nishma.** “We will do,” they said. We will do and then we will understand.

We can become a holy people by doing. We can redirect complaints and concerns so that we feed peace and resolution instead of discontent and frustration. We can take on the *tikkun olam* projects waiting for our active affirmation. “She whose works exceed her wisdom, her wis-

dom shall endure.”

We have reached a critical juncture in our congregational life. We have narratives of family discord and sibling rivalry behind us. We have known tale bearing and discontent. But through the last seven years I have been convinced that this congregation, the congregation I built and I love, is capable of good things. We are strong enough now

to turn to the tasks before us: Securing a foundation and future for the next generation of Jews, finding a home we can use to good and Godly purpose, becoming a sacred community that engages actively and deeply with the needs of the world around us.

*Naaseh v'nishma.*

Rabbi Barbara

## LETTER FROM THE BOARD – FEB. 2011

RABBI  
DR. BARBARA  
THIEDE

That is the official title of our very own newly ordained rabbi. Our congregation's children have decided that she should be called by her Jewish name, so she will be Rabbi Shulamit for them.

Several members of the congregation traveled to Boulder, CO in January to attend the ordination ceremony. A few people arrived early to support one of our members who met with a beit din (house of judgment) for last steps in what some Renewal rabbis call the 'convergence' process (not "conversion"). Some Temple Or Olam members attended services on Friday evening and/or Saturday morning

whether non- Jews should be allowed to carry or read from the Torah. Stay tuned for a session in which she will tell us the answer...

It was a wonderful experience and one that we will all treasure and remember.

## CELEBRATION

Please join us in celebrating this congregational milestone on 2/12/11 at 7pm at McGill Baptist Church. Please respond to the e-vite so that we can plan for the right amount of snacks and drinks and bring

along with everyone else from ALEPH who attended the Ohalah conference.

We met rabbis and cantors and rabbinic pastors and also students studying to become the same. We met Rabbi Steve Silvern, who was an enormous help advising the board almost two years ago. We walked around the area surrounding the hotel and had views of beautiful mountains. And then on Sunday, the day of the ordination, we woke up to see snow accumulating over the landscape. We all began to worry about getting home, of course. Meanwhile, inside the hotel, all was peaceful and joyful.

Each of the ten students had a part in the ceremony and

healthy snacks to share. In addition to our congregation, others who are important to Rabbi Shulamit's life have been invited.

## THANK YOU

We still have plenty of wine for Oneg Shabbats thanks to Jason and Doris Gordon. If you are responsible for Oneg set up during the next few months, please contact Robbin Smith, who is storing it and will bring it to services on the date that you need it.

spoke about what was in his/her heart. Rabbi Shulamit and her partner, Rabbinic Pastor Matia Rania Angelou, spoke about the people they served. They described the diversity and range of those people to show why the Jewish people is, as Torah says, an *erev rav* (mixed multitude). Ashley Owens caught most of the weekend and the ceremony on video. Angela Hodges captured many beautiful moments with her camera.

It was quite a moment when the ten students were blessed with their new titles of rabbi, cantor and rabbinic pastor. In addition, Rabbi Shulamit was one of two students who were granted permission to make halachic (legal) decisions. This was based on her *t'shuvah* (her rabbinic thesis) on

Thank you to Arthur Kingberg, who is distributing Temple flyers to Concord area realtors. One realtor was so excited about the idea that he asked for permission to make and distribute his own copies.

Thank you to Will King, who, as the head of the property search committee, continues to investigate opportunities for finding our own home.



*Please respond to the e-vite for Rabbi Barbara's ordination party.*

## Y A H R Z E I T S

02-17 Robert Henry Horowitz, father of Alexander Horowitz  
02-26 Gene Frances Malin, mother of Judah Malin



[www.or-olam.org](http://www.or-olam.org)

02-12 Havdala and Smicha celebration for Rabbi Thiede

## BIRTHDAYS

02-01 Stephen Smith  
02-03 Charlie Mace  
02-10 Jason Roberts  
02-13 Bennett Leder  
02-18 Teresa Malin  
02-21 George Washington

## C O N T A C T I N F O R M A T I O N

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## T H E B O A R D

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Treasurer: Arthur Kingberg  
Membership Director: Jill Partridge

