



Shmoozeleter

Temple

Or Olam



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Jan. 20 Service
- Rabbi Thiede to be ordained as Spiritual Director
- Torah Study increasingly popular
- Religious School to resume Jan. 22
- Arthur Kingberg's story, pt. 2
- Bi-Lo card linked to Religious School



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JANUARY 20:

PARASHAT VAERA - WHAT'S IN A NAME?

In the first nine verses of this parsha, Moses is reminded of God's true name. He is also told that God hears the pain of the Israelites and promises them freedom and redemption. But when Moses tells this all to his people, the Israelites are not able to hear or understand. 'Their spirits,' the Torah tells us, were 'crushed by cruel bondage.'

Can we believe in God's redemption? Do we know whether God hears? Are we like our ancestors - too crushed by the chains and fetters that enslave and oppress us to know God's presence?

Join us for Kabbalat Shabbat Service for some soul-searching questions we can ask in the warmth and safety of community. And please bring something to add to the delight of our oneg Shabbat. We look forward to seeing you there!

When: Friday, Jan. 20 at 7 p.m.

Where: McGill Baptist Church, Concord NC

MILEV HAPARDES

FROM THE HEART OF THE ORCHARD



I sat with a bat mitzvah student a little over a year ago to study the Mourner's Kaddish. I spoke to her about the history of the prayer. I asked her if she could explain why a prayer said in memory of a loved one didn't mention death.

"I guess so that we remember to love God even when our heart hurts," she said.

We talked more about grief and sadness, about the way having a community around you to help you with something as elemental as saying a prayer can help provide comfort. Then I asked her to read Mourner's Kaddish.

By *b'al'ma di v'ra khir'utei*, her voice had lost its steadiness. By *ba'agala uviz'man kariv* I saw the first tears fall.

We stopped the prayer reading. She told me why she was crying: She had not had the opportunity to say goodbye.



Rabbi Dr. Barbara Thiede

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

'Do you think you still can talk to your grandmother?' I asked. 'Would she hear you if you tried?'

We were really talking about God, and what the girl believed about life after death. I wondered aloud: How would she feel if she wrote out all the things she would have liked to tell her grandmother before she died? Why not write to her grandmother about her bat mitzvah, her high school graduation, the college she would attend?

Spiritual direction is trying to discern God's presence in the real and actual life of the individual. The director's *ka-vannah* (intention) is to guide the seeker in exploring his or her relationship with God, with what is sacred, with the state of their own soul. Wisdom, intuition, and staying open to God's presence helps both the director and the seeker to be aware of God's nearness – or distance. Prayer, meditation, journaling, ritual – all these can be part of spiritual direction.

Spiritual directors must meet people where they are. Do they find God to be present in the dilemmas they face and the fears they experience? If not, do they yearn for that Presence? Do they rage or hope?

Spiritual direction is to listen, above all, to the heart. Though many Jews might not think of spiritual direction as a Jewish discipline, it is fair to say that rabbinic traditions – particularly Chassidic ones – provide plenty of historical precedent for the way spiritual direction is practiced in our time. Rebbe Nachmann, who advised meditation and talking directly to God, was most surely engaging in a form of spiritual direction.

While I studied for the rabbinate, I learned that being able to offer spiritual direction was as critical as knowing how to lead an engaging Torah study group, or a rewarding and enriching service. We all have questions – about how to expand our Jewish practice, about how to connect to the Holy One beyond the boundaries of the siddur, about how to cope with loss and grief.

This January, I will be ordained as a spiritual director, after a three-year training program with ALEPH, the Alliance for Jewish Renewal. I will be grateful for that training, for it has served to help me serve.

We all can acknowledge each other's hearts – that takes nothing more than quieting ourselves and listening for the presence of God. As we meet whatever life brings us, may we know that these things are elementally Jewish practices, ones we can all embrace.



Rabbi Barbara

MEET THE MISHPOCHE

THIS COLUMN IS ABOUT OUR CONGREGANTS AND WHAT THEY DO FOR A LIVING OR THEIR HOBBIES OR THINGS THEY'VE DONE FOR THE CONGREGATION (AND MISHPOCHE MEANS FAMILY!)



Arthur's childhood synagogue in Frankfurt (destroyed during Kristallnacht)

This month we continue with Arthur Kingberg's story of escape from the Holocaust, coming of age in the Philippines, and meeting his future wife, Ruth Kingberg.

Please note that both articles from last month and this month cover only a tiny portion of Arthur and Ruth's story. Arthur will honor us with a discussion about his life experiences in the spring in observance of Yom HaShoah.

As we left Arthur's story, the Philippines had been invaded by the Japanese on the same day that they invaded Pearl Harbor. Arthur volunteered to be a special civilian scout with the armed forces. He and his team were needed to infiltrate behind enemy lines. He wore a transmitter on his back and was dropped off at night by a PT boat near shore. He and his team swam to shore, got behind enemy lines, and reported the Japanese position. The Japanese were bombed by single-engine Piper planes and lost the battle. Arthur served for 2½ years, until 1947.

At that time, Arthur was able to get a visa because he had mishpocha in New York, and he arrived in San Francisco on 9/21/47. When asked about

his work history, he said that his longest time at one company was ten years at a Jewish company. He was hired as a plant engineer where he designed and improved machinery and improved production. He was promoted to plant manager. Arthur was very adaptable and was self-taught. He had been in the jungles of the Philippines when he should have been in college. He had finished grade school in Germany, became a Bar Mitzvah, and then left Germany. He taught himself English and continued home study. He has a talent for languages. He can speak Philippino, Japanese, and a little Spanish.



Ruth and Arthur Kingberg, in full swing.

Arthur met the love of his life when he moved to NY and Ruth was his neighbor. He watched her go to work every day on the subway. A girlfriend of Ruth's introduced them on a train. He offered to drive her to work every day downtown to 23rd Street. However, he worked in Brooklyn, so Ruth had to take the subway home in the evening. They dated for 6 months and got married. They have been happily married for 60 years.

Arthur's hobby used to be photography, but he now enjoys gardening. He and Ruth used to attend services in Charlotte (too far and too expensive). Ruth read an article by Barbara Thiede in *The Charlotte Observer* and discovered that there was a rabbi in Concord! Ruth contacted her, and the Kingbergs became founding members of Havurat Olam, which was created by the Thiedes and Brian Cutler. Havurat Olam became Temple Or Olam in 2009.

Asked about what he likes best about Temple Or Olam, Arthur said #1 was 'the Rabbi and her husband' and #2 was 'the togetherness with other Jewish people – that's the most important.'

Please say hello to our new members and our longer term members – you never know what you'll learn.

Robbin Smith

J E W S I N T H E N E W S

HOW OUR TORAH STUDY HITS THE [JEWISH] 'SPOT'

For much of the year, I am one of those Jews who is surrounded by people of other religions. I live in a very small town in the foothills, and no one I know believes as I do, family included. I expect that – if for no other reason than our location – several of us must suffer a similar condition. Aside from the people we know from temple, our circle of Jewish acquaintances is small, if not nonexistent. In the past year, I have attempted to remedy my shortage of exposure to All Things Jewish by involving myself in every possible aspect of our community life. One of the most rewarding activities I have undertaken (albeit not as frequently as I might have liked) is our weekly Torah study, which takes place late on Sunday afternoons via conference call.



In order to express to you all the WONDER that is our Torah study, I have compiled a list of fantastic things that make our Torah study group one of a kind, things that – let's face it – you're just not going to find as you navigate a regular week in and around Cabarrus County.

1. You've heard the saying 'two Jews, three opinions'? Well, at our Torah study we pay a happy homage to that statement every week. No matter how many people show up, we always have way more than our share of opinions, and we wouldn't have it any other way.
2. Every year it's new again. No matter how many times you read a Torah portion, the next time through, you're likely to spot something you didn't see the first time. And unlike most other occasions, during Torah study, *you actually welcome the opinions and viewpoints of others...*it's astounding! Who knew people could be so brilliant?
3. Everybody talks at once sometimes, but then they politely decide to take turns and listen to one another and nobody gets offended. It's all the noise you love without any of the bickering!
4. We might say we start at 5, but we mark time kibitzing until five or ten after. Although it's never explicitly stated, it's clear that we're waiting for the arrival of those who might be on 'Jewish time.'
5. Although you're in a (virtual) room full of people, no one can see you. This means you can wear your favorite pajama bottoms or laugh and spill tea all over yourself without enduring the ridicule. For me, these are real pluses.
6. Occasionally, our rabbi provides us with historical facts and language lessons to supplement our weekly readings. Apparently, she has a paying gig as a teacher when she isn't hanging around with us... our Torah study is a steal at *twice* the price! (Please note: *still FREE!*)
7. All the smart people are doing it!

If you'd like to participate in our amazing Torah study, please drop a note to Ginger Jensen, our Director of Religious Services. We'd all be thrilled to have new voices in the mix!

Angela Hodges
Director, Public Relations

S C H O O L O F T H O U G H T

WE ENCOURAGE UNDERAGE THINKING

During December our Religious School kids focused on commandments. We discussed the big 10, and even spent some time discussing other commandments and how they relate to the children's lives. While learning about the Ten Commandments, the children were able to weigh in on how commandments from God differ from commandments that may be handed down by, say, parents. The children examined the commandments and how they apply to our lives. To complete the month of school, the children prepared for their skit that was so beautifully preformed at the Hanukkah party. We had a rabbi, a mother, even a little Jewish boy...err, girl! We will resume religious School on January 22, 2012 with a Hebrew assessment, so diligent students of ours, be sure to be practicing!



Jessica Waldmann
Director, Religious School

Y A H R Z E I T S

No Yahrzeits are observed in our congregation during the month of January.

www.or-olam.org

BIRTHDAYS

01-01 Carole Bombardier
01-06 Benjamin Roberts
01-08 Stephen Billings
01-12 Leanna Jensen
01 15 Paige and Sarah Billings
01-16 Heather Chait

D O N A T I O N S

Judah and Teresa Malin for the Sukkot celebration.
Steve and Robbin Smith for the Rabbi's discretionary fund.
Steve and Robbin Smith in honor of Arthur and Ruth Kingberg's 60th anniversary.
Ralf and Rabbi Thiede in memory of Ralf's father, Wilhelm Thiede

B I - L O B O O S T E R C L U B C A R D S

These are similar to the Harris Teeter VIC card. The Bi-Lo card is linked to the Temple Or Olam Religious School. Bi-Lo will donate 1% of purchases to our school. The Bi-Lo Booster Club card simply needs to be swiped at the Bi-Lo cash register once and you will be set for the entire school year. (Be sure to have the cashier swipe it before that first purchase and then you are done for the rest of the school year - no more swipes required).

Please contact Robbin Smith at 704-948-0911 if you want a card. Remember, it's free money for our school. Cards will be available at services too.



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

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