

shmooze

TEMPLE
OR OLAM

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It's Child's Play: Learning Hebrew with Kids' Books and Rabbi Barbara

This winter, Rabbi Barbara will be offering Hebrew lessons using the same children's books our kids use in our Religious School. That means that we will all learn how to read Hebrew AND learn about Shabbat prayers and what they mean as we go.

The class will be help on-line so that no one has to leave their house and graduates are eligible for the Biblical Hebrew class Rabbi Barbara will offer in the summer. That second class will focus on teaching students how to begin reading Torah in its original language.

If you are interested in learning Hebrew, please let Rabbi Barbara know by December 30 at Rabbi.Thiede@or-olam.org.

in this issue:

Learning Hebrew	1
MiLev HaPardes	2
Important Announcements	3
Torah Dedication Recap	4
Torah Dedication Photos	5-6
Birthdays / Yahrzeits	7

Kvell Corner

Our own ERIK THIEDE is the recipient of this year's Undergraduate Award for Excellence in Physical Chemistry. This award is given to the top student in physical chemistry courses. UNC Chapel Hill's chemistry department is ranked in the top ten in the nation. When you see his proud parents, be sure to give them your congratulations!

What's in a Word?



Say “Hanukkah” and what comes to mind? Lights and latkes, songs and gifts, celebration and family get-togethers.

Perhaps we recall the stories about the brave Maccabees and their struggles to free our ancestors from oppression and persecution. Or we remember the miracle that transformed a tiny cruse of oil meant for one day so that it would last eight full days.

The word *hanukkah* means “dedication” or “consecration.”

The Maccabean revolt ended with the painful discovery that the heart of Jewish spiritual life – the Temple – had been defiled and desecrated. Our ancestors saw the altar destroyed, the sanctuary attacked. They labored to

cleanse and rebuild.

We celebrate, in Hanukkah, the rededication of the Temple, the hope of a world made whole and sweet and safe for our people, for all people, in fact.

The rabbis parse *hanukkah* to extract additional meanings. The first letters of *hanukkah*, they say, come from the Hebrew *shoresh* (root) *chet-nun-hey*. That root means “to settle oneself,” “to rest.”

The letters that follow are also numbers. In in this case the *kaf* and the *hey* add up to twenty-five. So, the rabbis say, *hanukkah* also means, “on the twenty-fifth they rested.” We celebrate Hanukkah on the 25th of the Hebrew month Kislev. On the 25th of Kislev our ancestors settled themselves. They rested. The battle was over.

We, too, need time to let go the struggles and battles of the world. At Hanukkah, we can do so in the light of the *hanukkia* – soft and gentle light, indeed.

Hebrew numbers, like letters and words, carry multiple associations. The twenty-fifth word in Torah is *ohr*, “light.” We celebrate the festival of lights on the twenty-fifth day of the darkest month in the year.

Hanukkah is about dedicating ourselves to discovering the light inside us, the light that needs to be nourished and strengthened in order to illuminate a world filled with darkness.

Now, take just the first two letters of *hanukkah*: They are a *chet* and a *nun*. The word that results is *heyn*, “grace.” When we watch the lights of the *hanukkia*, the menorah with the eight branches, flicker, what do we see? The fragility of light in the darkness? The illumination in the faces of our beloved ones?

Grace is a gift to be found in this holiday of lights.

Passover tells us about the light of freedom. Shavuot reminds us of the light of Torah. The Days of Awe speak to the light of forgiveness.

Hanukkah calls us to acknowledge a time of resting and reflection. Hanukkah asks us: What can or should we reconsecrate, rededicate, in our own lives? Hanukkah invites us to consider the gifts of grace we can find in our lives

It's all in a word.

FROM THE
HEART OF THE
ORCHARD

Millev HaPardes

Announcements & Save-the-Dates

Service THIS SATURDAY MORNING, December 8th

This week will mark our first service with our new Torah. Come be part of our joy as we chant from this new (and beautifully decorated!) text for the first time. The service starts at 10am!

Hanukkah Party on December 15th @ the Jensen's home, 5:00 - 8:30pm

This year's party is going to be a friendly affair with fresh latkes, games, and some singing. If you don't know where Tom and Ginger's home is located, please check the member directory for the address — more information to follow!

Dancing and Dessert event — save the date!

On February 2nd from 7:00—10:00pm Temple Or Olam will be hosting a fundraising event complete with fabulous desserts and dancing. DJ James Weeks will be providing music. The ticket price is \$18, and minimum age for attendance is 13.

More information to follow, so stay tuned!

A Multi — Bat Mitzvah on January 26th — save the date!

On Saturday, January 26th, three women will celebrate a long-awaited milestone. Terri Malin, Robbin Smith, and Angela Hodges will be called to Torah as extremely well-studied and joyful students, hopefully with much of their congregation surrounding and encouraging them.

Look for an Evite as the date approaches!



Sofer Neil Yerman presents Temple Or Olam's new Torah.

Torah dedication

The Five Books of Moses and our Torah Dedication

It was, without question, the most successful interfaith event that we know of in Cabarrus County. At least ten churches were represented at our Five Books of Moses program. We received press in The Charlotte Observer and Cabarrus News. We raised money for our Torah fund, heard nationally-recognized sofer and artist Neil Yerman explain hidden meanings behind Hebrew letters that go back to Sumerian times, and celebrated the presence of over 150 people gathered in McGill Baptist Sanctuary.

None of those present will ever forget what it was to write in our new Mizrahi (Middle Eastern) Torah scroll at the congregational program that followed. The crowns decorating the *Shirat Hayam*, the Song of the Sea fairly dance across our new scroll to the verses proclaiming the revelation at Sinai.

Our heartfelt thanks to all those who made this day possible. Several congregants made special contributions to make the program possible: Thanks to Rabbi Barbara and husband, Ralf, Cheryl and Earl Greenwald, Ginger and Tom Jensen, and Steve and Robbin Smith for helping to supply the extra funds to bring Neil to Cabarrus County. Thanks to our Temple Administrator Charlotte Miller for working with Patsy Lawing and Ronald Hartsell at McGill to arrange location, set-up and wiring so we could film the program (and thanks to Ronald and

Patsy, too!). Thanks also to Charlotte for filming and providing programs for the day, making sure Neil had something to eat, and generally remembering all sorts of special and important details that could have gone forgotten otherwise. Thanks to Michelle Filkoff for filming during the dedication program, the amazing fundraising committee (Cheryl and Earl Greenwald, Barbara Hellman and Barbara Goldstein, Heidi Yalowitz-Lasser, Michael, Arlene, and Michelle Filkoff, and all their aides-de-camp) in the creation of the extraordinary chocolates and save-the-date notes for our February fundraiser. If we have forgotten anyone, please forgive us, of course.

And most of all, thanks to Neil for teaching us so generously – you gave us a day none of those who attended will forget!

Thanks to YOU!

Our fundraising is going splendidly!

If you have yet to make your donation, we ask that you do so at Causes.com at the link below. Our generous supporter, Ken Klawans, who heard about us through the spouse of one of our members, has offered to match up to \$6,000 so that we can raise the \$12,000 to cover the purchase of our new Mizrahi Torah. We're almost there!

<http://www.causes.com/actions/1690785>





December

BIRTHDAYS

12.03
Caleb Malin

12.14
Jimney Jacobson

12.08
Ralf Thiede

12.20
Roz Gantwerk

12.28
Sergio Chait

YAHRZEITS

12.02 – John Jensen, father of Tom Jensen

12.07 – Beno Chait, father of Sergio Chait

12.07 – Belle Gantwerk, mother of Roz Gantwerk

12.12 – Dr. Irving Joffe, husband of Ellie Joffe

Contact info:

If you need to add a date to the temple calendar or check the availability of meeting space, contact our administrative assistant at templeadmin@or-olam.org

For information about Temple Or Olam's religious school, email religious-school@or-olam.org

Corrections or submissions to the Shmooze can be directed to webmaster@or-olam.org

Rabbi Dr. Barbara Thiede's email is rabbi.thiede@or-olam.org

On the web

Temple Or Olam's website:
<http://www.or-olam.org>

Please "like" us on Facebook at:
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Temple-Or-Olam/135017053202476>

Treasurer

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