

# Shmooze letter

January 2014



Temple Or Olam  
welcomes  
its newest member  
**Azalee Dora  
Everhart**

Dec. 30, 2013

## Services

### Jan. 03 Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 7:00

Relax with us in an atmosphere of warmth and joy as we open 2014. Our service will include a chance for everyone to engage in a little Torah study on Parsha Bo, wherein the Israelite slaves ask themselves how they shall worship and who will be coming with them on their journey into freedom. This service will be especially appropriate for guests and friends with children.

### Jan. 24 Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 7:00

This service will be at **Piedmont Unitarian Universalist Church**. It will include a Torah reading from Parsha Mishpatim. Mishpatim includes rules for forming a just society. Interestingly, the Israelites commit to upholding the law even before they know what it contains. Moreover, Moses and Aaron, Nadav and Avihu, and seventy elders of Israel ascend part-way up Mount Sinai, witness the God of Israel, and live to tell the tale. Join us for an exploration of this fascinating piece of Torah.

## in this issue:

Services Jan. 3 and Jan. 24	1
MiLev HaPardes	2
President's New Year address	4
Israeli Dancing Jan. 11	6
Board of Directors' Meeting	7
News for the Jews	7
Kvelling Corner	9
Know your Aleph Bet: ט	10
Geh Gezunt	11
Precious Moments	14
Calendar	15
Birthdays, Yahrzeits, donations	16

## Did you know?

Temple Or Olam has a [web presence](#). Our [Facebook page](#) features videos and pictures; we also have a [YouTube channel](#) and a [Flickr account](#). Rabbi Barbara blogs on Jewish life on [adrenalinedrash](#). Explore, participate, have fun!

## These are my Heart's Desires... *Eileh Chamda Libi*



I would like to take a survey. It will be easy, I promise.

My survey would only ask all of us to name those things that our hearts desire for Temple Or Olam. It would ask: What is sacred to you in your Jewish community? What must you have to feel sustained, nourished, safe?

Would it be the Torah reading, and hearing it chanted regularly in the cadence you know so well?

Or is it the moment during services before the Barchu, when everyone looks at each other with gratitude and pleasure? We are realizing (again) how much we mean to one another.

Or perhaps it is that moment when a child learns something about Yiddishkeit that makes the teacher and parent nearby fill with pride and hope for our future. Or the picture of Noah Huneycutt raising Little Torah high in hagbah. Or the one of Julia Chait running a yad across Hebrew words.

Or maybe it's the easy humor that is so characteristic of Temple Or Olam? After stepping up to our non-existent bima and energetically singing our English version of Aleynu, John reminds the rabbi that she forgot a line. Everyone laughs. The rabbi does, too.

Certain members pun and others groan. Others tell a story of a family success and everyone nearby is really and truly happy to share in the naches.

We are a tiny community with really good things going for us, though it happens – frequently – that newcomers say that they had no idea we existed for the longest time. Members come from far away to attend our services because (we think), they have fun when they are there.

What is absolutely sacred to you in your Jewish community?

Is it the knowledge that no one cares to ask if you converted or were

# Millev HaParodes

From the  
Heart of the  
Orchard

born into Judaism? At Temple Or Olam, I sense that no one keeps count of any category of members – and that includes those who aren't Jewish. We're a family, and that's all that matters. Which category anyone belongs to is a question we don't bother to raise. We're not about categories. We're about community.

That, in the end, is what is sacred to me.

When Brian Cutler and I founded Temple Or Olam (then Havurat Olam) we hoped to build a sacred community in which participants would feel both treasured and safe. We hoped for stability and security. We hoped we would build something that could help make a future for Jewish life in Cabarrus County.

What is absolutely sacred to you in your Jewish community?

Don't hesitate to write up a few words. Send them to our board members, who are busy at work on long-term planning for our congregation. Help us make a list we can subscribe to, a list that will tell us: These are the desires of our hearts. This is what is sacred to us.

*Rabbi Barbara*



# Launching a New Year

From the President of Temple Or Olam



This is the tenth anniversary of Temple Or Olam, and we have entered a year of challenge and dynamic change. Driving this change are our two major objectives for this year: to achieve universal participation in our community, and to attain financial stability and sustainability.

Temple Or Olam is our home for religious observances, spiritual counseling and guidance, outstanding education for congregants of all ages, social gatherings, celebrations, and opportunities for tikkun olam and volunteerism. Our Shabbats, b'nai mitzvahs, and other observances continue to bring us the spiritual fulfillment and personal gratification that bind us to our Rabbi, to our temple, and to our fellow congregants. Our Religious School provides our children the finest educational experience, now based on Institute of Southern Jewish Life curricula. Our Fundraising Committee is bringing us a flea market in the spring and our annual gala fundraising dinner on February 8, with proceeds shared with Dove House Children's Advocacy Center, a child abuse center in Iredell County. Our Adult Educa-

tion Committee is lining up activities throughout the year that will be instructive and enjoyable.

Your involvement in these activities as well as your volunteerism are of vital importance to the welfare of our temple and to the success of our programs. There are so many opportunities to lend your time and talent, such as setting up for Shabbats, donating or assisting at onegs, serving as greeter for religious observances, and participating in the work of our committees that serve a wide range of functions for our temple and for our congregants.

The cost of our religious home is now supported primarily by our members through dues and donations, while we continue to seek support from other resources, such as grants. But our future will best be secured by the growth of our congregation.

Word-of-mouth is the most important instrument for growth. We need your help – you are key to our growth and long-term security and sustainability. Talk to family members, friends, colleagues and acquaintances about what is special about our temple, observances, educational opportunities, and celebrations. Tell everyone you meet that we welcome all who wish to participate in Jewish life – singles, couples, and families – regardless of denominational background, age, or sexual orientation. We recognize that our members' diverse lifestyles, backgrounds, ideas, and levels of observance bring value to our community; that interfaith families are a welcome part of our congregation. Bring people to our Shabbats, Holy Day observances and celebrations and introduce them to Rabbi Barbara, to our membership director, or to me so that we can personally welcome them.

Accessibility for potential new members is essential for growth of our congregation. The Board of Directors has broached the question of whether growth will require moving closer to a population that would be attracted to our unique religious practices and traditions. To address this question, the Board has appointed an ad hoc committee that is charged with studying and bringing back to the Board recommendations with respect to several questions surrounding our current facilities and their suitability for growth. The Ad Hoc Venue Committee will bring its findings and recommendations to the Board within the next few months. Meanwhile, the Board will be planning several 'round table discussions' – opportunities for you to meet with board members to discuss these issues and provide your valued thoughts and recommendations. We will announce these meetings in the near future.

On behalf of your leadership and the Board of Directors, I wish each of you a Happy New Year! I know you join me in looking forward to another vibrant year as members of the congregation of Temple Or Olam.

Earl Greenwald

President, Temple Or Olam



## Israeli Dancing with Penny

January 11, 2014 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. at McGill

Rediscover the exhilaration of traditional Israeli dances and breeze into the new year! We need at least twelve preregistered adults, so please register today! We are encouraging advance payment to avoid handling money on Shabbat if at all possible. To preregister, please go to [www.or-olam.org](http://www.or-olam.org) and click on the PayPal link; specify "Israeli Dancing." Prices are \$10 for adults, \$5 for children.

For questions, please call Arlene Filkoff at 704-875-2352 or e-mail [afilkoff@gmail.com](mailto:afilkoff@gmail.com).

# Board of Directors' Meeting

December 22, 2013

7:00 p.m., via conference call

[Earl Greenwald, Cheryl Greenwald, Charlotte Miller, Michael Filkoff, Ginger Jensen, Robbin Smith, and Rabbi Barbara Thiede]

The TOO Board of Directors met via conference call on Sunday, Dec. 22, at 7 p.m. Below are highlights from that meeting:

- ✧ Discussed new policies on process for new and renewing members. Everyone agreed that growth is best served by orderly dissemination of information for new member involvement.
- ✧ Adult Education has several future events in process.
- ✧ Dinner Dancing & Dessert is moving along well. Ticket packets to go to member families for selling. Having a full house is vital to success of the event.
- ✧ Guidelines for greeters in services have been approved and will be implemented.
- ✧ Ad hoc committee on facility evaluation has been constituted and will soon begin its work to be completed by end of February.

## Another Fundraising Success

Or Olam members stepped into the breach on Christmas Eve to man the wrapping table at Bass Pro Shops at Concord Mills. For ten full hours of last-minute shopping, our intrepid volunteers raised a total of \$421.25 from grateful shoppers who took home beautiful packages.

Thanks go to Michelle Filkoff for snagging this lucrative day, the TOO Fundraising Committee for finding interesting ways to support our congregation, and to the wrappers from these families: Berkowitz, Marshall, Thiede, Greenwald, Filkoff, Jacobson, Spivock, Garcia, Gordon!

## Are you current?

It's the end of another tax year and time to wrap up your finances. Are you current in your pledge payments to Or Olam?

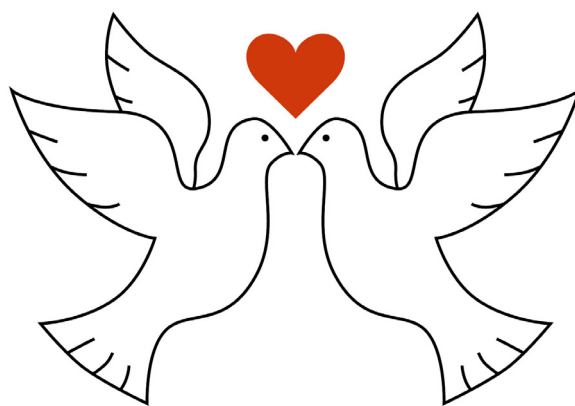
One of the big steps we took as a congregation in June was to contract with Rabbi Barbara for her talents, meaning a stipulated monthly payment. The fundraising committee is doing its part to make the budget that supports our temple and its rabbi. Are you? Get those payments to the treasurer soon via mail or pay on the website with Paypal. Be sure to note what your payment is for.

TOO Treasurer, Box 362, Huntersville, NC 28070-0362

News for the Jews

## It's the Big One, Honey!

Or Olam's biggest fundraiser of the year is quickly approaching. All local current members have been mailed packets of six tickets that we need you to sell to your family, friends, and neighbors. The event this year is exponentially improved from last year with a full buffet dinner, live music, dance floor, silent auction, live auction, raffles, and beer and wine. Give your honey an early Valentine's treat on Saturday, February 8.



**Save the Date: February 8**

## Benefits of Temple Or Olam Membership

- ✧ Ordained permanent rabbi
- ✧ Shabbat services twice a month, one of which is a Torah service
- ✧ B'nai mitzvah education and service
- ✧ Life cycle events
- ✧ Access to our Religious School
- ✧ Torah study weekly
- ✧ Holiday and festival services as part of a community, without charge
- ✧ Adult education program
- ✧ Men's and women's groups
- ✧ Yom HaShoah candle program

What may you be asked to pay to be part of this community?

- ✧ Membership fee
- ✧ Religious school tuition
- ✧ B'nai mitzvah training
- ✧ Specialized adult ed class fees
- ✧ Passover Seder cost

## What is Or Olam Worth to You?

One pack of cigarettes per day	\$5.14
One Starbucks Grande latte per day	\$3.26
One TOO family membership for a day	\$2.74
Being a member of an accepting community	Priceless





## Tell Us What You Think

Members of the Board of Directors want to hear from you on Friday at oneg. What ideas do you have on our facilities and on how we use them? Are there alternatives that you can suggest? Seek out this 'talking table' Friday after the service.

E-mail Charlotte Miller at  
[templeadmin@or-olam.org](mailto:templeadmin@or-olam.org)

# Kvelling Corner

This month's superior kvelling came from watching and enjoying our congregation's "Mother of Chanukkah Party!" I thought that the Israeli dance teacher was incredible. I could not believe that twirling around, figuring out what hand to use and starting on the wrong foot could be so exhausting! Our temple administrator, Charlotte, created such a beautiful flier and as always did an excellent job of organizing this lovely event. Charlotte also sent a List of Hanukkah Hurrahs. They are as follows:

- ✧ To Everybody for the great food. What a spread!
- ✧ To the Spivocks for fresh and delicious latkes. You may have a permanent gig.
- ✧ To Robbin and Steve for lifting that table and toting that chair one more time.
- ✧ To Arlene and Marilyn for arranging the dancing.
- ✧ To Heather, Brenda, and Keri for keeping the glue flowing at the craft table.
- ✧ To Rabbi Barbara for her always-special stories and songs and Ralf for his percussion in the midst of an incredibly busy week.
- ✧ To the children who confidently showed us what a wonderful religious school we have. Thank you, parents!
- ✧ To everyone who stayed to clean up. Jason, King the the Table Decorations. 'That Was Easy!'

Here's to the next Hanukkah celebration!!! Also, Best wishes for the Healthiest and Happiest  
NEW YEAR

[Marilynaf@aol.com](mailto:Marilynaf@aol.com)

# Know your ALEPH-BET

## The Least-used letter in Torah: Tet

It occurs a mere 1,802 times in Torah, the lowest frequency of any of its 304,805 letters. But it is the rare things that we consider special.

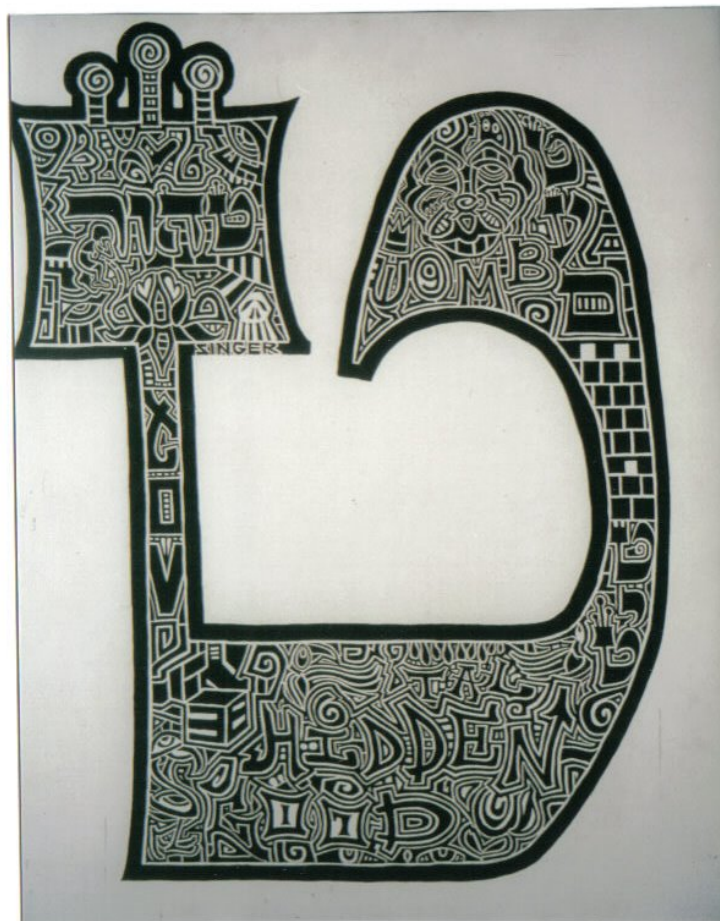
The Phoenician  $\oplus$  ('wicker basket') gave rise to both the Greek theta  $\Theta$  and our Hebrew  $\text{ט}$ . Even though we also have the numeral cypher **6** from that letter, its numeric value in Hebrew is 'nine.'

Some delightful interpretations come from  $\text{ט} =$  'nine.' Some say that the letter resembles the mother of all containers – the womb (and pregnancies last, of course, 9 months). Since the letter first appears in Torah with the word *tov* 'good' (God saw that the light was good), Kabbalah came to interpret the letter as hiding goodness within it.

Certainly, there is some magic in 9. Multiply 9 by 1, 2, 3, 4, ... and any result you get will spell out the number nine again when read as a series of cyphers: 18 (1+8=9), 27 (2+7=9), 36 (3+6=9), 45, 54, 63... Except for eleven times nine, 99, which adds up to 18 sideways. Interestingly, if you multiply the amount of *tet*'s in Torah by their value nine,  $1802 \times 9 = 16218$ , the cyphers of that number also add up to 18. And 18 stands for *chai* 'life,' which elegantly brings us back to giving birth to the goodness contained within.

In earlier installments of 'Know your Aleph Bet,' we have met gimel ('camel') and zayin ('sword'). Now, with tet ('wicker basket'), we can understand Deborah Pessin's story 'Tet Goes on a Journey.' Just turn the page.

*Ralf*



## Tet Goes on a Journey

by Deborah Pessin

The letters of the Hebrew alphabet were watching the Jews march through the Great Desert, away from the land of Egypt. There were so many of them they reached for miles and miles over the desert sand. Some rode on donkeys. Some rode on camels. Most of them walked. At the head of the long procession went Moses, leading his people toward the land of Canaan.

‘Look at my friend Gamal the Camel,’ said the letter Gimel. ‘He is carrying an old man between his humps.’

‘And look at those fine swords the guards have in their belts,’ said Zayin. ‘They look like me.’

The letter Tet, who looks like a basket, was interested in the baskets.

‘There’s a fine one made of straw.’ He pointed to a basket a woman was carrying on her head. ‘It’s just right for going to the market. And there’s a basket made of bulrushes,’ Tet went on. ‘It’s for a baby to sleep in.’

Tet was silent for a moment, then he said anxiously: ‘Didn’t Moses tell the Jews to take all their possessions with them?’

‘Yes,’ said the letters, ‘he did.’

‘Then where is the basket the baby Moses slept in when he floated on the Nile River?’ asked Tet.

None of the letters knew.

‘They should have taken the basket with them,’ said Tet. ‘They should not have left it for the Egyptians.’

The letters looked carefully at the things the Jews were carrying with them from Egypt. They saw tents and blankets and jars of food and jugs of oil. They saw toys and fine clothes and leather sandals. They saw red baskets and green baskets and yellow baskets. But there was no sign anywhere of the basket of the Baby Moses. The Jews were not taking it out of Egypt.

Tet did not like that at all.

‘I’m going to Egypt,’ he said. ‘I’m going to find out what happened to that basket.’

And Tet rushed off to Egypt to find the basket of the Baby Moses.

First he went to the Sphinx that sat like a giant of stone in the Great Desert.

‘O Sphinx,’ said the letter Tet, ‘they say you know many secrets, though you are always silent. Can you tell me where to look for the basket of the Baby Moses?’

The eyes of the Sphinx stared straight ahead. The lips of stone remained closed. But from the depths of the Sphinx came a voice like the

Geh  
gezunt

share and enjoy

# Geh gezunt

rumbling of a deep volcano.

'I know many secrets,' said the voice of the Sphinx, 'but I do not know the secret of the basket of the Baby Moses. Go to the pyramids. On the walls of the pyramids are the stories of the Pharaohs who have died. The stories are written in the letters of the Egyptian alphabet. Perhaps they can tell you the story of the basket of the Baby Moses.'

The voice of the Sphinx was silent. The giant statue stared out over the hot sands of the desert. And Tet walked on to the mighty pyramids.

There he found the cold grey tombs of the Pharaohs of Egypt. On the walls of the tombs, engraved in the letters of the Egyptian alphabet, were the stories of the Pharaohs who had died.

'Tell me, O Egyptian Alphabet,' said Tet, 'where can I find the basket of the Baby Moses?'

The letters of the Egyptian alphabet looked down at Tet from the stone walls.

'We do not know,' they said. 'On the walls of these tombs are only the stories of the Pharaohs of Egypt. Go to the palace of Pharaoh. There you find the library of papyrus scrolls. On these scrolls are written all the stories of Egypt. Ask the scrolls for the story of the basket of the Baby Moses.'

Tet went on to the palace of Pharaoh. There he found a great chamber filled with papyrus scrolls. There were large scrolls and small scrolls. Each scroll had a story written upon it. One had the story of Joseph, who had saved Egypt from famine. One had the story of the Nile River and how it overflowed its banks and made the land fertile. Another had the story of the beautiful Princess Thermutis, who had taken the Baby Moses from the Nile River.

'Tell me, O Papyrus Scrolls,' said Tet, 'do you know the story of the basket of the Baby Moses?'

The scrolls rustled on the shelves of the great chamber. Then they spoke in voices that crackled like dry leaves.

'No one has ever written the story of the basket of the Baby Moses,' they said. And they were silent.

But one of the smaller scrolls said to the letter Tet: 'I am made of papyrus reeds that grow along the edge of the Nile River. When I was still a clump of reeds growing beside the river, I saw Miriam put the basket that held her brother Moses into a bed of bulrushes. Follow the road from the palace till you come to the Nile River. There you will find the bed of bulrushes. Perhaps they can tell you what has become of the basket of the Baby Moses.'

Tet left the library of papyrus scrolls and followed the road from the palace till he came to the Nile River. There he found the bed of bulrushes.

'O Bulrushes,' said Tet, 'can you tell me where to find the basket of the Baby Moses?'

The bulrushes swayed gently back and forth in the breeze that blew over the Nile. Then they spoke in their soft, murmuring voices.

'The basket of the Baby Moses was made of bulrushes like us,' they said. 'But we do not know what happened to it. When Princess Thermutis took Moses from the basket, the river current snatched it up and carried it away. Ask the river current where the basket is.'

Tet turned to the river current that swept along between the fertile banks.

'O River Current,' said Tet, 'can you tell me what happened to the basket of the Baby Moses?'

The current flowed past the riverbank as it spoke in its deep, watery voice.

'Come,' said the current, 'I will take you to the basket.'

Tet mounted the current. He rode swiftly on the surface of the water, past lotus plants and papyrus reeds. He was carried around little islands fringed with lilies and rushes. Between rows of stately palm trees, Tet sailed down the Nile River.

The rays of the sun glittered on the face of the water. Fish swam by, and birds and insects circled overhead. Tet looked everywhere for the basket of the Baby Moses, deep within the water and along the riverbanks. But there was no sign of it anywhere.

At last the river turned, then opened with a wide sweep. A golden stretch of water lay between low, peaceful banks. Brightwinged birds dipped and circles over the shining river. On the grassy banks grew every tree of the land of Egypt, the date tree and the olive tree, the apricot tree and the lemon tree. The shadows of the trees reached into the water like the columns of cool palaces.

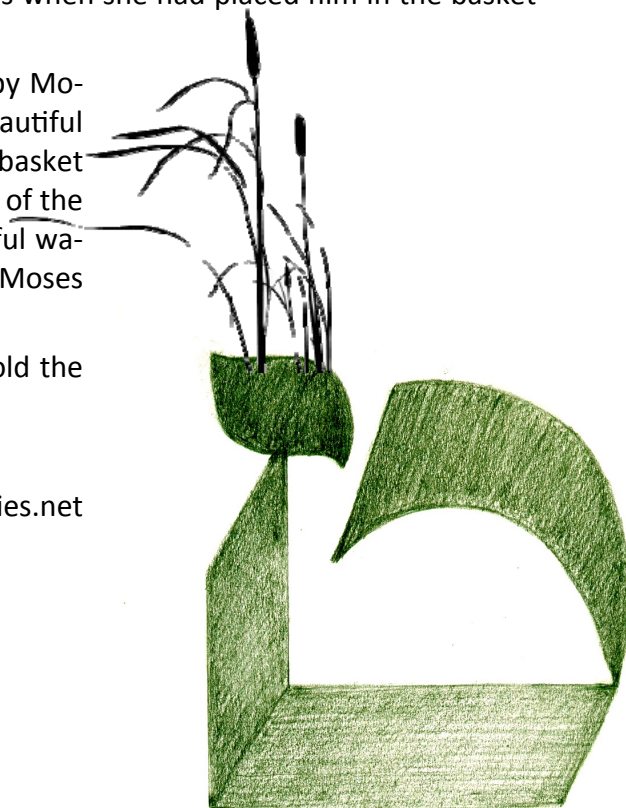
Against one bank of the river grew a bed of bulrushes. The bulrushes were tall and green, and they swayed gently back and forth in the breeze. And as they stirred, their rustling voice sang a soft lullaby.

Tet listened to the song of the bulrushes. It was the lullaby of Yochebed, the mother of Moses. Long, long ago, she had sung it to the Baby Moses when she had placed him in the basket of bulrushes.

At last Tet knew the secret of the basket of the Baby Moses. The river current had carried it to the most beautiful spot on the Nile River. There the bulrushes of the basket had unwound, one by one, and sunk back into the bed of the river. And there they remained, singing to the peaceful waters and to the birds and to the trees the lullaby that Moses had heard when he was a baby.

Tet was happy. He returned to the alphabet and told the letters the secret of the basket of the Baby Moses.

torahstories.net



## Precious Moments



Spotted during the rabbi's visit to baby Azalee Dora Everhart in the hospital: The contents of Jonas Everhart's pockets piled on a window sill. This dad is ready for any occasion.



Charlotte Miller carved out a little space for Chanukkah on her desk at home. It is such little spaces that have such a great impact.



**CALENDAR**

- R Jan. 02      7 p.m. Adult Hebrew – want to join us?
  
- F Jan. 03      7 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat family service at McGill - guests welcome
  
- Su Jan. 05      5 p.m. Torah Study
  
- R Jan. 09      7 p.m. Adult Hebrew
  
- Sa Jan. 11      4 - 6 p.m. Israeli dancing with instructor – see the flyer on p. 5 of this issue
  
- Su Jan. 12      5 p.m. Torah study
  
- R Jan. 16      7 p.m. Adult Hebrew
  
- Su Jan. 19      5 p.m. Torah study
  
- R Jan. 23      7 p.m. Adult Hebrew
  
- F Jan. 24      7 p.m. Torah Service at Piedmont Unitarian Universalist Church
  
- Su Jan. 26      5 p.m. Torah study
  
- R Jan. 30      7 p.m. Adult Hebrew
  
- Feb. 08      Save the date: Dinner, Dancing, and Dessert!

## January BIRTHDAYS

01-05  
Charlotte Miller

01-06  
Benjamin Roberts

01-12  
Leanna Jensen

## YAHARZEIT

01-21  
Henry Dorzback  
father of the late Ruth Kingberg

## Donations

We would like to thank the following members and friends for donations to Temple Or Olam:

- ✧ Ginger and Tom Jensen and family for donations to the Adult Education Fund and to the General Fund in honor of John Jensen becoming a bar mitzvah.
- ✧ Connie and John King (parents of Will King) for donations to the Torah Fund and to the Ruth G. Kingberg Children’s Education Fund.
- ✧ Rubin Salant (father of Camille Kanofsky and grandfather of Sierra, Sage, and Collin) for his donation.

If you need to add a date to the temple calendar or check the availability of meeting space, please contact:

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