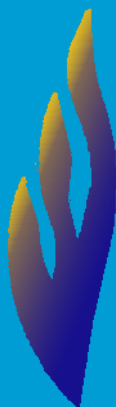


Shmooze Letter



May 2014



May 09 Religious School Leads Kabbalat Shabbat, 7:00

Our children will do the singing. Rabbi Barbara will be (mostly) back-up. Please join us for our end-of-year Religious School service and enjoy seeing and hearing all the beautiful prayers that our children have learned this year.

May 23 Torah Service and Kabbalat Shabbat, 7:00

We are just beginning Parsha B'midbar ('in the wilderness'). We call this section of Torah the Book of Numbers in English, and the book begins with a census. Moses, we learn, is told to count up the people. (It's good to know your numbers...). But what is the B'midbar about, anyway? A generation-long trek through the wilderness. Revolts and rebellions among the people. Seers who appear to be blind to what's in front of their noses. And a talking donkey, too.

Rabbi Barbara will introduce us to the book of Numbers and chant a few right out of the Torah scroll. Please join us as we begin our travels (again) through the wilderness .

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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.com](#). Explore, participate, have fun!

The Role of Non-Jews at TOO This Year's Theme



What is the first day of unmitigated national exaltation in Torah?

We know that day. It is described in Parsha Bo, in the book of Exodus. In that parsha, the Israelites leave Egypt and make their way toward Sinai in a rush. 'A mixed multitude went up with them,' the Torah reads, an *erev rav*.

Just imagine the sounds. A great number of people walking, singing, experiencing, for the first time, complete freedom. See them before you – the children skipping, adults striding, young and old dancing as they walked. And there were animals too, apparently. Lots.

Some are the inheritors of the patriarchal blood lines, descendants of Abraham and Sarah. But at this point in our story we have clearly grown up. We are no longer an extended family. We are more than a tribe, now – we are a nation, and a multifaceted one at that. Our national history begins now, at this point, when everyone has packed their things, left their homes, and wedded their lives to the Israelite project. They headed to Sinai – together.

Look around some time at that nation of many colors, of many histories, of one conviction. They are us and we are them and we are all together. An *erev rav*. A mixed multitude.

So is it with us today. For its size, our community has included an extraordinary mix of ethnicities. Temple Or Olam has, over the past decade, been home to Jews with roots in Asia, Europe, Africa, and Latin America. American Lutherans and Japanese Buddhists have been part of our community. Our members and their families include folks who grew up Baptist, Methodist, and Episcopalian. We all came to this community because we support the creation of Yiddishkeit, Jewish-Renewal style. Some of us do so as Jews. Not all.

Millev HaParodes

From the
Heart of the
Orchard

Millev HaParades

This next year, Temple Or Olam’s leadership has decided to invite the congregation to help us explore salient issues for our community. What kinds of roles do we offer to dedicated family members and supporters of our congregation who don’t happen to be Jewish? Are there boundaries regarding ritual and liturgical practice that we feel we need to subscribe to?

Over the past decade, we’ve largely adhered to boundaries recommended by Jewish Reconstructionist congregations around the roles of Jews and non-Jews. Now, we feel we are ready, with your help, to explore the many different roles played by all the members of this congregation.

We acknowledge that we are an *erev rav*. We acknowledge that there are distinct and important differences among our congregants. But we also want to take the time to consider who we want to be. So look for us to be asking you and your families for input and responses. If you are interested in being part of a core study group on this subject, let me know.

As we move into our second decade, I hope that we can be certain to honor our diversity and our richly variegated heritage. Now, it’s about who we want to be as well as about who we are, just as it was for the *erev rav* who left Egypt thousands of years ago.

Rabbi Barbara



Board of Directors' Meeting

April 22, 2014

7:00 p.m., via conference call

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

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

- ✧ We realized a net profit over the costs of the seder, the total of which will be credited to the Religious School education fund for conferences and teacher training.
- ✧ We approved a policy of Board duties and responsibilities. All policies and guidelines will be reviewed at a face-to-face Board meeting in late June for both continuing and new Board members, following the elections at the annual meeting.
- ✧ Five constitutional amendments were signed and presented to the Board for inclusion at the annual meeting on June 6. Only four will proceed, as one is an editorial change that doesn't require the amendment process.
- ✧ Our proposal for using the Piedmont Unitarian Universalist Church was quickly accepted by its Board of Trustees. Currently working with PUUC to iron out an agreement.
- ✧ Michael Filkoff, Director of Membership, presented a plan to advertise our eventual presence at Piedmont to the University/Harrisburg area.
- ✧ Nominating committee is moving on schedule to be ready for elections at annual meeting.
- ✧ President Earl Greenwald read a letter from Arlene Filkoff resigning as chair of the Adult Education Committee. Her assistant, Marilyn Atlas, will be contacted for interest in assuming that role. [Marilyn has subsequently accepted the chair position.]
- ✧ Adjourned at 8:05 p.m.
- ✧ Next meeting, Sunday, May 18, via conference call at 7:00 p.m.

News for the Jews

News for the Jews

Did You Know...

...that Temple Or Olam has five standing committees that operate for you, the member? We can help, educate, fund, commune, and do important work for our members whatever the age. Do not hesitate to call upon those committee members if you have a need or can lend a hand.

<u>Adult Ed. Committee</u> Marilyn Atlas, Chair	Tasked with arranging activities and classes for adults marilynaf@aol.com 704-658-9676
<u>Caring Committee</u> Heather Chait, Chair	Tasked with assisting members in need of temporary help heschait@yahoo.com 704-644-7387
<u>Fundraising Committee</u> Cheryl Greenwald, Chair	Tasked with organizing fundraising to support the budget cg@greenwalds.net 704-528-1432
<u>Men's Group</u> Steve Smith, Chair	Tasked with creating group opportunities for Or Olam men stevesmithnc@bellsouth.net 704-948-0911
<u>Religious School</u> Keri Huneycutt, Director	Tasked with imparting Yiddishkeit to our children kerihuneycutt@yahoo.com 704-455-3882

Our Local Holocaust Museum

Around this time every year, the Community School of Davidson sixth-graders turn their middle school classrooms into a Holocaust Museum. They have worked all year to present a sophisticated display, appropriate for viewers sixth grade and older. This month it will be open at the following times. If you have an opportunity to go, please express your appreciation and let them know you are from Temple Or Olam.

Community School of Davidson
656 Griffith St (next to Harris Teeter at I-77 Exit 30)
Davidson NC 28036
704-896-6262
Friday May 30, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Monday June 2, 4 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Changing of the Guard

Being able to make a leadership change with barely a ruffle is a sign of a caring community. We did just that when Arlene Filkoff resigned as the chair of Adult Education and her assistant, Marilyn Atlas, agreed to step into the role.

Thank you, Arlene, for getting Adult Ed off to an active and engaging start. And thanks to Marilyn for her willingness to continue that tradition. We look forward to ever more interesting activities.

Don't Miss a May Gathering

We are wrapping up a very involved Or Olam year with three gatherings/services in May. Something for everyone; don't miss them!

Friday, May 2, 6:30 pm: Kabbalat Shabbat Sing-A-Long and Potluck Supper
Home of Tom and Ginger Jensen
7700 Windsor Forest Place
Harrisburg NC 28075-9507

Friday, May 9, 7:00 pm: Kabbalat Shabbat service featuring the Religious School students
McGill Sanctuary

Friday, May 23, 7:00 pm: Kabbalat Shabbat Torah service
McGill Sanctuary

For Women Only

Be a part of the appreciative crowd on Sunday, May 18, from 2-5 pm for a trunk show fundraiser. Linda VanArsdale will present the Ruby Ribbon spring and summer show and donate her income to Or Olam. Invitation emails have been sent to all households with eligible guests.

Sunday, May 18, 2-5pm
At the home of Pat Alleshunas
10975 Hat Creek Lane, Davidson, NC, 28036

Annual Meeting

Our Annual Meeting of the congregation is fast approaching, and this year it will be a trifecta! Catered supper, annual meeting, and Kabbalat Shabbat service. What more could one want?

Friday, June 6, 6:00 pm
McGill Fellowship Hall
Packets of relevant documents should be in your email box over Memorial Day weekend.



Kvelling Corner

Marilyn Atlas

This month I wanted to kvell about our **Board of Directors**. First, there is our fearless leader, **Earl**, who not only has an amazing ponytail but also has devoted so much time, concern, and expertise in being our President. Second, there is **Robbin**, who has been so dedicated and efficient in being our past TOO president, treasurer, and membership coordinator. Since I began coming to TOO, she has always been an officer. Hip Hip Hurrah for Robbin! Third, there is **Ginger**, who is always ready to smile and to impart her amazing grasp of Torah and Jewish tradition. (Please participate in the Torah study groups, and you will see what I mean.) **Michael Filkoff**, thanks for coordinating the Yom Hashoah candles, and **Michael Berkowitz**, thanks for stepping up to the plate to become our new treasurer. The other members of the board, **Cheryl** and **Charlotte**, have already been kvelled over in the past. I also want to express my gratitude to all of our past presidents and members of the board. Whew! This one was a long kvell, but always remember that kvelling is good for the soul!

Reproduced from The Charlotte Jewish News, May 2014, page 20

Walking to Sinai

By Charlotte Miller, Administrator, Temple Or Olam, Concord

We have finished escaping from those narrow that hold us fast—to the hurtful, to the disrespectful, to harmful habits, to unresolved issues, to the fear of the new and the choices it demands. I say 'we' because this year I was included at the congregation's Seder table for the first time as more than a guest. I am now a 'convergence' seeker, a student of all things Jewish that can transform me—from questioning Christian to practicing Jew. I am finally honoring the Jewishness at my core.

I am different from my Southern family members, most of whom marched nicely through their lives being the same social and cultural Christians as the community they inhabited. I was (am) stubborn, questioning, and passively disobedient from a young age. Even as an obstinate person, I managed to make the same social decisions—go to college, get married, have children, forego a career. It has been a good life, though the glimmer of what I really was has long been bubbling to the surface.

A chance meeting at Beth El's Comparative Religion series brought me to Rabbi Barbara Thiede and Temple Or Olam in Concord. It's a small communi-



ty. Small enough to know everyone well. Small enough to accept me as a vital part of the congregation. Small enough to study with Rabbi Thiede. I wanted to

begin that study.

Last year, she asked me what happened after I asked myself 'when.' I answered, 'why not now.'

It was time to learn. There is no way around the obvious fact that to be Jewish, a person must practice the rituals that remind us of the Covenant. I have begun at the base, with learning Hebrew and regular Torah study, attending services, and enjoying holidays and festivals. I look forward to lighting the candles on Friday night with wine, a good dinner, and peace at the end of the week. There are choices I must make as my husband becomes acclimated to a dual-religion household, but the path has been chosen.

Where is this willingness to take another path coming from? As someone with a long-time interest and comfort with Judaism, might I be a *gilgul*? Now I am realizing that other people saw what I was not able to admit. Many of the friends who are happy for me said they are

not surprised. If my nature has been that obvious to the outside, maybe with my public declaration I have given myself permission to express what has lain obscured for so long.

What about other reactions? Mostly 'if it's something you want, then go for it!' from friends. Children wanted to be certain this was a well-considered decision. I had a wonderfully long conversation with a friend whose family is ancestrally Jewish but now agnostic. That was a thoughtful opportunity to converse about what we both believe.

I look forward to the next year or so and how this process will unfold. I'm sure the euphoria of the first encounters will diminish as we all settle into what it means in the real world to apply practices and observances. We shall see what transpires; whatever it becomes, it will be interesting, and I am looking forward to the adventures along my path.



Know your ALEPH-BET

Lamed



Lamed is easy to spot: It is the one letter extending above all the others, hence many associate it with ‘reaching up.’ It could be as well the other way around, of course. In its Phoenician origin, *lamed* had the shape

Ⓕ, which appears to be a goad (a cattle prod with a hook) or a shepherd’s staff, that prods us. Thus, if there is any reaching up, it might be for prodding. The letter also gave us Latin **L** and Greek *lambda*, **λ**.

The word *lamed*, spelled למד, can be taken as an acronym for *lev meivin da’at*, ‘a heart that understands knowledge’ (‘Letters of Rabbi Akiva’). And indeed, the letter is intimately connected to learning and teaching. The shoresh למד means ‘teach, learn,’ and we see it in the word *Talmud*.

ל has the value 30. Thirty is supposedly a good age, when one reaches one’s full strength (*Pirkei Avot* 5:23) – Joseph was that age when he stood before Pharaoh (Gen. 41:46). Thirty is also the number of days in a full lunar month. At the same time, the letter is associated with the number 12, being the twelfth letter in the aleph-bet, and that adds a second association with time: twelve hours on the clock, twelve months in a calendar. Well, mostly (there are *two* months of Adar in leap years).

There is an iconic lamed in one auspicious word in Torah. Deuteronomy 29:27 describes how God, in a supersessionist fit, guided ‘them’ (i.e. us) into another land, to make a point. ‘And threw them out,’ it actually says – וַיִּשְׁלֶכְם *‘va-yash’likheyim,* using the same root שלך that we have in *tashlikh*,

‘throw out’ (our sins). And that rude bit of divine goading was a hard ‘teaching,’ so for that reason the lamed is written larger than the other letters in our Torah scroll.

The lamed has another special place, in Talmud. It is held that at any given time, there are 36 special people in this world, nicknamed the ‘Lamedvavniks’ (*lamed* = thirty, *vav* = six), that greet the *Shekhina* (divine presence, associated with the female spirit of God). Their quorum is more unforgivingly defined than the number of ravens in the Tower of London: Should the world fall short by *just one*, poof, we’re gone. So be good, for goodness’ sake.

Ralf





CALENDAR

- Fr May 02 6:30 p.m. Shabbat Sing-along and potluck, Jensen residence

- Sa May 03 10 a.m. Torah Study
 11 a.m. Adult Hebrew

- Fr May 09 7 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat featuring Religious School, McGill

- Sa May 10 10 a.m. Torah Study
 11 a.m. Adult Hebrew

- Su May 11 Religious School

- Sa May 17 10 a.m. Torah Study

- Su May 18 Religious School
 2 - 5 p.m. Women's event
 7 p.m. Board of Directors

- F May 23 7 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat Torah service, McGill

- Sa May 24 10 a.m. Torah Study
 11 a.m. Adult Hebrew

- Su May 25 no Religious School

- Sa May 31 10 a.m. Torah Study
 11 a.m. Adult Hebrew
 1 p.m. Fundraising Committee

May BIRTHDAYS

05-01

Rabbi Barbara Thiede

05-12

Judah Malin

05-18

Tom Jensen

05-19

JinJing Jacobson

05-20

Noah Huneycutt

05-07

Suzie Shapiro

sister of Rabbi Barbara Thiede

05-13

Lester Barna

father of Cheryl Greenwald

Yahrzeits

05-17

Mary Dare Roettger

mother of Ginger Jensen

05-23

Ralph Dorzback

brother of the late Ruth Kingberg

05-30

Caroline Haut

great-aunt of Arlene Filkoff

Sabbatical Time

UNCC's spring semester is ending, which means that the Thiede grading frenzy is just beginning. As for the last few semesters, both Ralf and Rabbi Barbara will be going incommunicado: from Saturday, May 3, through Friday, May 9. Please keep all phone calls and emails to a minimum, if at all, and don't expect a return answer until after the 10th. For a genuine emergency, please send an email with EMERGENCY in the subject line. They will contact directly anyone who is needed for the services on the 2nd and 9th.

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