

Special mailing from Rabbi Blair

August—September 2018

Elul 5778—Tishrei 5779

From the rabbi's desk



Dear Congregants, Community members, and Friends,
Greetings and Thanks!

I am very excited and happy to be writing to you in the first of what I hope will be many bulletin articles. There is LOTS to talk about and share this month, as we are entering right into the High Holiday celebrations. In no time at all, just days now, the High Holy Days will be upon us, and the year will be in full forward motion!

With the high holidays so close, there is little time to waste, so let me immediately offer a prayer that this coming year will be a good, sweet, healthy, prosperous year, full of love and blessings for you and your loved ones, for the congregation and the Jewish community of Charleston, and for the wider world, and a year of healing and peace for all. In the traditional formula, may you be inscribed and sealed for a good, sweet, blessed and joy filled year.

Thank you so much for the wonderful warm welcome you have offered me. Karen and I look forward to getting to know you and becoming part of this lovely community.

Please read this bulletin fully, and note all that we are planning – mark your calendars and be sure to come to many events!

Joe
Rabbi Joe Blair

Contacting the rabbi

Rabbi Joe Blair is available by appointment.

Rabbi's all-hours cell phone number is
304-989-4014.

PLEASE call this number in case of an emergency.

This cell phone number is the best way to reach the Rabbi at all times.

He may be reached by email at

RabbiJoeB@gmail.com

Rabbi reads email regularly through the day, except on Jewish holidays or Shabbat, when he does not use the computer or electronics that require typing. Please note that both email and Facebook are not seen during these periods.

Messages on the Temple office voicemail will be checked periodically, but not nearly as frequently or regularly as the listed cell phone number.

Please let the Rabbi know if you or anyone you know is ill or would want a call or visit for any reason.

You are also invited to contact the Rabbi to arrange an appointment to meet. The rabbi will be happy to set a mutually convenient time to meet or speak with you, so that he can offer you his full, undivided attention.



Thank you and a request

A huge thank you for the warm welcome and open-hearted acceptance you have offered to me since my arrival. I could not ask for more, nor could I be happier or feel any more that this is a homecoming, rather than a new start. You have all been amazing and wonderful! I can honestly say that I already love this community and those who are part of it.

I have an important request. I am new to the community and don't yet know the customs and practices that have been in use. That means that I will make mistakes, and that I may do things a bit differently without intending to do so.

In the first case, PLEASE know that I would greatly appreciate your help – come, talk to me, tell me what you expected and let me know what I have done, said, or missed that did not meet your expectations. I will not see this as criticism; instead it is helpful, constructive support, and I will take it in that light to help improve and do better.

I don't plan to make any significant changes to the current practices, and certainly not before I have had much more time to observe - enough time to see how things are working, and to learn why the current practices were implemented. At the same time, I don't want things to feel static and frozen, so if something truly needs to change, I will consult with the appropriate committee(s) and the Board, and determine the best approach. Any changes will be done in a deliberate and thoughtful manner, trying to take into account the variety of views, tastes, and preferences of as many people as possible.

For those very few things that I feel quite strongly about and believe a change is needed, I will always listen and consider all comments and suggestions you have before anything is done, but after consideration, I may still decide to do them as I have in past, or in a new way - which may be a change from what you are used to seeing. In that case, please know that I value and want your comments and feedback about what I do, and how it is working for you – now, and for the future, and that I am and will continue to listen carefully and consider what you have to say. Almost nothing is set in stone!

Mi Sheberach names – a change in practice

I want to take this opportunity to announce that one change is being implemented immediately, at the request of the Ritual Committee. From now on, during services I will announce the names of those for whom prayers for healing and wholeness are requested beforehand, just prior to the Mi Sheberach prayer - but a name will only be read at this time if the person named agrees that their name is to be included in the announcement in advance of a given service.

Names for the Mi Sheberach list can be sent to me up until 9 pm on Thursday (to allow time to check with the person - if it is not you - and secure their permission to be included in the announcement list). You may send the name(s) to me by email (rabbijoe@gmail.com), or by text or phone (304-989-4014). Please don't trust my memory and simply tell me a name!

Unless you tell me to do so, names will not carry over from week to week.

When you do request inclusion for multiple weeks, please give me a sense of how long that might be (the default for multiple weeks absent a specific length of time will be four weeks). Beyond that, if it is still appropriate, you can always ask that a name be included again; please do so whenever it is desired to include it in the list.

Request for participation – Torah readers, confirmands, and B'nai Mitzvah

The summer is said to be the 'slow' time of the calendar year, but this is when plans are being made for the coming year. One of the things I would like to ask is that anyone interested in reading Torah (or Haftarah) during the year, and anyone interested in adult confirmation or celebrating a B'nai Mitzvah, please be in touch with me so we can begin to plan for that to happen!

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IN THE EVENT OF SEVERE
WEATHER:

Call the Temple at 304-342-5852 and follow the prompts to hear about any cancellations.

TEMPLE ISRAEL
2312 Kanawha Blvd., E.
Charleston, W.Va. 25311
304-342-5852
www.templeisraelwv.org
templeisraelwv@gmail.com

David Shapiro
President

Joseph M. Blair
Rabbi

James D. Cohn
Israel B. Koller
Rabbis Emeriti

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Request for programming suggestions

I have been working on planning a very active calendar of events for the coming year, as you will see in this bulletin. Nonetheless, if you have specific requests for events, programs, or classes I might offer, I would love to hear from you. The best way for me to meet your needs is to start by knowing them, and I would be appreciative of hearing from you. I can't promise to meet all requests, but I certainly want to know what you would like to see so I can do my best.

Request for information

One thing I can assure you is that I have never met a rabbi who was a mind reader – and that goes for me, as well! If there is something you think I need to know, PLEASE tell me! This is especially true for information related to anyone who is in the hospital (hospitals no longer give out information to clergy), anyone who is ill or who might appreciate a call, visit, or a time to talk for any reason, and any significant changes or major events in someone's life. If you think the Sisterhood Care Committee should know, please include me as well!

High Holiday service honors

Roles participating in the service are included in High Holy Day plans. These roles vary from sitting on the Bimah, to English readings, to being asked to read/recite a blessing. The roles are generally assigned by the Temple President. If/when you are contacted about having an honor at our High Holiday services, I hope that you will agree to accept that honor, and commit to being there for it. This is one of the ways the congregation has of acknowledging those who are so important in making things work for all of us. I believe that everyone should be honored for their contributions and gifts to the community, and would not wish to exclude anyone, but that would make services far too long, so there is a process for assigning honors that the rabbi, the ritual committee, the board, and the president follow.

recite the blessings. Instead of calling one person by name, I will be calling groups of individuals. For example, some of the groups to be invited to come up to the Torah might be 'all those who are grateful to have reached a significant milestone or life event this year', 'all those who faced significant challenges during the course of the past year', 'all those who encountered a heightened or new spiritual experience in the course of the past year', or 'all those who have not received a Torah honor recently or ever'. With three Torah readings (one on Rosh Hashanah morning, one on Yom Kippur morning, and one on Yom Kippur afternoon, we will have nine opportunities for anyone who wishes to identify the group Aliyah that they feel most describes their circumstances, and to come up as a part of a group to recite the blessings together. In this way I hope that everyone who wishes to be called up to the Torah will feel invited, and have that opportunity during the High Holy Days.

One way that we will be offering honors to more people this year is by having group Aliyot for those called to the Torah to

knowledge is required, you only need to have interest, curiosity, and a sense of humor (and be able to read English), and bring an open mind to try to tease out new understandings. This will start October 6th.

Rabbi's Programs

5779 / 2018—2019

"First Shabbat"

In addition to the scheduled weekly Shabbat services, I will be continuing the "First Shabbat" tradition established in past. On the first Saturday of each month, I will lead a Shabbat service, followed by a Torah or Text study. It will begin at 10:30 am, with a focused service, sometimes including reading from the sefer Torah, other times leaving more time for discussion. In general, the Torah/Text study will look at the Parashat Hashavuah (the weekly portion from the Torah), but we may veer aside into other texts as I learn your interests. No prior

OLLI (WVU Osher Lifelong Learning Institute)

Join other students for a short course (five one hour sessions) taught by Rabbi Blair starting October 16th at 10:30 am to be held at the Temple. The title of the course is "Bible Babes: Women of Interest and Their Stories in the Hebrew Scriptures." Come tease out these hidden gems in the text – you are likely to be surprised at how much we can glean!

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*(Continued from page 3)***“Introduction to Judaism”**

A series of ten one and a half hour stand-alone sessions on topics in Judaism. Rabbi Urecki and I will be offering this series starting October 31st, roughly twice a month, alternating the location from the Synagogue to the Temple by session. We will also divide up some topics so that one of us will present on that topic entirely, and for other topics we will both present our views. These are scheduled on Wednesday afternoons/evenings. The series is open to anyone interested, and it is ‘drop-in’; you do not need to attend all sessions. We hope that the material will be of interest to everyone, no matter the level of knowledge with which they start. For anyone who is new to, or considering Judaism, this should be an excellent starting place; it will serve as the first part of a Jewish studies curricula, which will be required for anyone wishing to convert to Judaism.

“Pulpit Exchanges”

Rabbi Urecki and I have agreed to share (or swap) our pulpits one weekend every other month. Starting in October, Rabbi Urecki will deliver the Devar Torah at our Erev Shabbat services at the Temple, and I will deliver the Devar Torah at the service at the Synagogue on Saturday morning that week.

“Global Day of Jewish Learning”

Rabbi Urecki and I will be participating in an international celebration of Jewish learning in November. Communities around the world will all be focusing on the same theme – Extraordinary Passages: Texts & Travels. We will each offer a teaching on this theme. Be sure to watch for the details in an upcoming bulletin.

Tu Bishvat ‘Four Worlds’ Adult Seder

To celebrate Tu Bishvat (the 15th of Shevat), also known as the birthday of the trees, we will hold a Seder that looks at the Torah as our Tree of Life, and examines it in light of the mystical understanding that the experience of living can be approached as existing on multiple levels, or worlds. Rabbi Urecki will conduct a children’s Seder simultaneously at the Synagogue. Details are still to be finalized, but it’s possible we’ll be able to coordinate so the two Seders will end at the same time, and all participants can join together for a repast to conclude the Seder.

“7th of Adar Event”

The 7th of Adar is noted because it is said to be the *yahrzeit* (death anniversary) of Moses. This is a particularly auspicious time to study the one Torah portion that is never read on a Shabbat, and to consider issues that are often pushed aside. We will offer an event that takes advantage of all of this, and that also allows us to acknowledge the work of the Bikkur Cholim (Care Committee), Chevrah Kadisha (Holy Society), and others who offer honor, support, and comfort before, during, and after the time of a death in the Jewish community.

Erev Purim

We will read the Megillah (the whole megillah!), then celebrate Purim with refreshments and conversation. This will take place at the Synagogue.

Yom HaSho’ah

We will observe Holocaust Remembrance Day with a program on May 1st at the Temple. Watch for more details.

Yom Ha’Atzma’ut

We will celebrate Israeli Independence Day with a study session following the service. The text we will study is the Israeli Declaration of Independence, the founding document that sets forth the vision for the modern state. This will take place at the Synagogue.

“Pesach Sheni”

Join the two rabbis and both congregations for “Second Passover” on Sunday morning May 19th at 10:30 to 12:30 at the Temple for a social event. The menu will consist of Matzah Brei and various toppings! And no, we are not making this up; it is an actual holiday on the Hebrew calendar. Come learn more! All are welcome.

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Tikkun Leil Shavuot

Come join us as the two rabbis lead teaching sessions at the Synagogue to celebrate Shavuot, the Feast of Weeks. More details to be forthcoming.

Introduction to the Hebrew Alefbet and Vowels

Rabbi Blair plans to offer a 'crash course' in Hebrew for anyone who would like to learn, and anyone who wants to 'brush up' on what they know. This will begin from scratch. No knowledge is required. In five weeks (with HOMEWORK!), we will cover the alphabet, vowels, some grammar, and a bit of liturgical vocabulary. This course is free, and open to anyone who wants to participate. Watch for the announcement of the times and days this course will be held. We are shooting for November – December.

Rabbi's Adult Education Offerings

Rabbi Blair plans to offer several stand-alone, self-contained classes on a variety of topics throughout the year. These will be open to anyone who is interested. Some of these topics might include 'choreography and etiquette of the Bimah', text studies, Hebrew study, 'Havdalah & ?' evenings, documentaries or other films, Two Rabbis discussions, and possibly more – depending on the calendar as we move forward!

Tzedakah!

I am sure you already know about the various funds that exist in the Congregation for helping others: to supply food, shelter, toiletries, advocate for civil rights and health care, and in many other ways. The fund that I want to highlight at this time is the rabbi's discretionary fund (RDF).

It is permissible that this fund can underwrite certain expenses for the rabbi, or be used to support other charitable organizations, as well as support those who have needs. I want to assure you that my practice in respect to this type of fund is much more restricted than what may be permitted.



I have never accepted any funds or reimbursements from a rabbi's discretionary fund that I controlled, nor have I ever underwritten any expenses for myself. I view this fund as highly restricted; in my view it is to be used ONLY for support of individuals and organizations who encounter needs that are not otherwise being met, with the dual goal of assisting them in times of distress, and protecting their privacy and dignity in the process.

I am mentioning this now, around the High Holy Days, because already in my short time in the community, I have been privileged to assist several people on behalf of the congregation, and I am grateful to and proud of the congregation for making this possible.

At the same time, these requests have depleted the fund, and these needs right here in the community were not fully met – and there are, no doubt, others that will come to light in the days and months ahead.

For that reason, I ask that you consider a generous donation to this fund, and grant me the honor of trusting me to distribute your funds wisely and correctly, to good purpose.

Recall that the High Holy Day liturgy teaches us that three things turn aside the severity of the judgement decree: Teshuvah (repentance), Tefillah (prayer), and Tzedakah (charity). May your teshuvah be complete, your prayers be answered, and your heart opened through charity.



In the Congregation

Refuah Shelemah/Mi Sheberach (Healing & Wholeness/Blessings):

To those included in the recent or upcoming Mi Sheberach lists at services:

Lois Coleman

Jane Silverstein (no visitors, please)

Gary Markham (please call after 5:00 p.m., EST. 304-382-3644)

Gary Winter

Kim Aaron

Margie Hutt

Baruch Habah (Welcome):

We are always happy to welcome guests and new members.

Mazal Tov (Congratulations)

Let Rabbi know of good news that you would like to share with the congregation.

Baruch Dayan Ha'emet (Bless the Judge of Truth)

Traditional phrase said when we hear bad news, such as a serious illness or a death.

Moving?

Please let the Temple office know if you are moving or changing your email address or telephone number.

We need current addresses to mail the Bulletin and want to make sure we have members' correct contact info for the Sisterhood yearbook.

The deadline for updates to the 2019-2020 Sisterhood yearbook is August 1, 2019.

Schedule of September worship services



Shabbat

Friday, Sept. 7	5:30 p.m.	Shabbat service
Friday, Sept. 14	5:30 p.m.	Service for Shabbat Shuvah
Friday, Sept. 21	5:30 p.m.	Shabbat service
Friday, Sept. 28	5:30 p.m.	Service for Sukkot/Simchat Torah and Shabbat

High Holy Days and Sukkot

Sunday, Sept. 9	7:30 p.m.	Rosh Hashanah Eve service—reception to follow—everyone is invited
Monday, Sept. 10	10:30 a.m.	Rosh Hashanah Morning service
Tuesday, Sept. 18	7:30 p.m.	Yom Kippur Evening service (Kol Nidrei)
Wednesday, Sept. 19	10:30 a.m.	Yom Kippur Morning service
	1:00 p.m.	Torah study
	2:00 p.m.	Afternoon service
	4:00 p.m.	Family holiday event for all ages
	5:00 p.m.	Memorial (Yizkor) service
	5:30 p.m.	Concluding (Ne'ilah) service
	6:00 p.m.	Havdalah
		Break-the-Fast—everyone is invited
Sunday, Sept. 23	5:00	Sukkot observance



Sukkot and Simchat Torah fall in the period from Sunday evening, Sept. 23 through Tuesday, Oct. 2. Please note the events related to each.

TEMPLE ISRAEL Yom Kippur Memorial Service

Please list the names of the person(s) you wish to have remembered during Temple Israel's Yom Kippur Yizkor-Memorial service on Wednesday, Sept. 19, 2018.

Only the names of deceased relatives and friends which you list on this form will be read at the service.

Please return this form to **Temple Israel, 2312 Kanawha Blvd., E., Charleston WV 25311**, no later than Friday, Sept. 07, 2018 Please call the Temple office at 304-342-5852 if you have any questions.

NAMES to be remembered at Yom Kippur Memorial Service:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

Submitted by

NAME	
ADDRESS	
DAYTIME PHONE	





The semi-circular driveway at the Temple's front entrance on Kanawha Boulevard can be used as a passenger drop-off area and as accessible parking for people with disabilities.

If you need to park in front of the building, please pull as close to the edge of the driveway as possible. Other cars need to drop off passengers and get past to park elsewhere.

When parking in the semi-circle, please *don't block the ramp* that leads to the front doors.

Please see p. 6 for complete September worship service schedule, including Shabbat, the High Holy Days, and Sukkot/Simchat Torah.

**PLEASE
NOTE:
This mailing
contains the
2018 Yom
Kippur
Memorial
Service
Yizkor list
form. Please
return your
list no later
than Sept. 7.**