

Temple Israel Bulletin

From the Rabbi's Desk

[For a complete schedule of Temple events and religious services, please see "January at a Glance." Please note: the access information/LINKS for events and religious services are sent in a separate weekly email. Please consult that message to connect.]

Shalom and greetings!

Calendar Notes

Hanukkah! As I write this, we are deep into the holiday, and will be celebrating the eighth night in two days! Hanukkah is called HaChag Urim, the Festival of Light(s), partly because it is marked by the lighting of the symbolic lamp, the Hanukiah – the specifically eight branched menorah, with a ninth holder for the shamash, the helper flame that lights the others.

Hanukkah falls at the darkest time of the year for most of us – when the days are shortest, the nights longest and darkest, and we have much of the winter still before us. In the face of that bleak, cold, darkness we light our lamps so they can be seen, and we increase the light each night, increasing the number of flames until the eighth night when we kindle a shining blaze of eight flames that glow in the night, and illumine our homes, our souls, and our world, celebrating our existence and survival.

Hanukkah is also the holiday of light(s)

because it recalls the flames of passion and commitment that we talk about in the Macabees, described as defenders of the Jewish beliefs and way of worship against efforts to extinguish them.

This holiday reminds us of the sense of light and lightness that faith and commitment can bring into dark and heavy times. It reminds us of the primordial light of crea-

months and year ahead.

In an odd calendar twist, the day of Dec. 25 is Tzom Asara B'Tevet, the minor fast day of the 10th of Tevet, which commemorates the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylonia, and is followed from sunup to sundown by those who observe it; it anticipates the Three Weeks and Tisha B'Av that will

come in the summer marking the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple, respectively – so this is the lead up to those events.

Rosh Chodesh, the new moon for the month of Shevat is on Jan. 14. Tu B'Shevat, the 15th of Shevat, also known as the New Year – and alternatively the birthday – for Trees, falls on Jan. 28. Tu B'Shevat is the Jewish equivalent of a

smashup of Arbor Day, Earth Day, and an agricultural holiday (Thanksgiving?) that has taken on environmental, mystical, and practical aspects. Because it is commanded to allow a tree to establish a strong root system before harvesting from it for commercial purposes, it is necessary to know how 'old' a tree is, and Tu B'Shevat is used to count the age of a tree for this purpose. The date is selected as the time when the sap begins to rise in the earliest blooming tree (the almond) in Eretz Yisra'el, the land of Israel. A custom has developed to hold a 'seder' – an ordered ritual, at which we consume the fruit of the trees that yield produce in Israel, and ritualistically and symbolically connect those fruits to our foundational tree, the Torah. In other years, we have celebrated with a Seder – sadly, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, we cannot this year, but we look forward to doing so soon! At the deepest time of

(Continued on page 4)



Hanukkah gift bags were distributed in December by Sisterhood's Helen F. Thalheimer Care Committee

tion, and the light representing G-d's presence which is otherwise (we are taught) hidden from us. The Hebrew name also calls to mind the trait of dedication and commitment. On top of that, it is supposed to be a joyous celebration, carrying a sense of fun and excitement, and pleasure in the foods that we choose to help embody and represent the story of the miracle (you are what you eat!). For a very minor holiday, it has a lot of weight to pull! ☺

You will be reading this after Hanukkah has ended; I hope you had a wonderful Hanukkah, and that the light of that holiday has filled you with joy and blessings that will carry forward throughout the days,

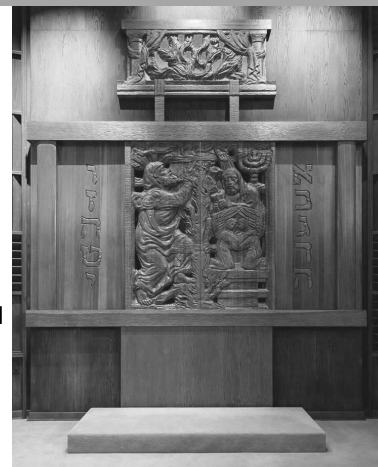
Masthead photos

Tu Bishvat dried fruits. By Gilabrand (talk) - en.wikipedia, CC BY 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=9019725>

Tu Bishvat almond blossoms. Urueña_almendro2_lou CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=272084>

January worship services

Rabbi Blair sends out emails regularly to keep the congregation up to date. Zoom links to online events are emailed to those on the Temple's mailing lists. Shabbat services are scheduled every Friday at 5:30 PM. All religious services are via Zoom unless otherwise noted.



Friday, Jan. 1 at 5:30 PM LIVE Virtual Shabbat service

Friday, Jan. 8 at 5:30 PM LIVE Virtual Shabbat service

Saturday, Jan. 9 at 10:30 AM Torah study

Friday, Jan. 15 at 5:30 PM LIVE Virtual Shabbat service—Pulpit Exchange from Temple Israel

Saturday, Jan. 16 at 10 AM LIVE Virtual Shabbat service—Pulpit Exchange from B'nai Jacob

Friday, Jan. 22 at 5:30 PM LIVE Virtual Shabbat service

Friday, Jan. 29 at 5:30 PM LIVE Virtual Shabbat service

In the Congregation

[This includes only those who have approved having their name included.]

Refuah Shelemah/Mi Sheberach (Healing & Wholeness/Blessings) to those who have been included in recent Mi Sheberach lists at services, and wishes for continued good health for those who are on the mend or have returned to full health:

Tom Becker
Peggy Burkhardt
Lois Coleman
Patricia Cohen Coniglio
Jonathan Freedman
Betsy Gooding
The Hutt Family
Ken Kleeman
David Kushner
Gary Markham
Rabbi Victor Urecki

All who are impacted by the Pandemic

All affected by natural disasters, including Fire, Hurricanes, and Typhoons

All suffering due to violence, civil unrest, war, or other causes.

Mazal Tov (Congratulations):

[Please tell us about these events so we can acknowledge them as appropriate.]

To those who reached or will reach milestones in the past month or this one, and to all who had any birthday or anniversary or other life event worth celebrating! Among those we know who are/were to be acknowledged we include:

December: Ellie Schaul, Steve Jubelirer, Barbara Braun and Allan Tweddle, Cookie Glasser, David Feibelman, Melissa

Cadle, Jackie Artz, Marion Baer

January: Caroline Ostand, Ken Silverstein, Elizabeth Kantor-Bright, David Kushner, Richard Holicker, Terrie Rosenfeld, Tiana Hall, Hedy Poppelsdorf (milestone), Richard Gottlieb, David Shapiro, Beth Winter

February: Barrie and Tod Kaufman, Ronni Cohen Spudich, Carole Louis Bloom, David Stern, Bob Aaron, Hal Selinger, Margot Jogwick

If you have a milestone event of any kind, or any birthday, anniversary, or life event that is worthy of celebration, please let us acknowledge and celebrate it with you! Tell the Rabbi about it.

Please contact Rabbi Blair

If you are having any difficulties getting groceries or medicine, feel a need to talk with someone, have a pastoral concern, or just want to chat, please feel free to call me (the rabbi) at 304-989-4014 or email me at

RabbiJoeB@gmail.com

I am in the building for at least part of most days (Saturdays excepted), and can always find time to talk to you. I read email regularly (except on Shabbat or holidays).

You can call me on Shabbat, and if it is an emergency, leave me a message telling me that it is urgent – I will call back as soon as I can.

At this time, though I would love to see you, in light of the Covid-19 case load numbers and the recommendations of many health professionals, I am erring on the side of caution and avoiding in-person meetings. I want to keep all of us safe and healthy. Soon, G-d willing, we will begin to move past this situation.

TEMPLE ISRAEL

2312 Kanawha Blvd. E.
Charleston, W.Va. 25311
(304) 342-5852

www.templeisraelwv.org
templeisraelwv@gmail.com

Joshua I. Barrett, *President*
Joseph M. Blair, *Rabbi*

Rabbis Emeriti
Rabbi James D. Cohn, Z"l
Israel B. Koller, Z"l

January yahrzeits

Names are read the Friday evening prior to the yahrzeit date, which is in parentheses.

January 1st

Irma Lowenthal Swarts (2)
Coleman Jacobs (4)
Sidney Marks (4)
Dorothy Loeb (5)
Mildred Fleischmann (6)
Jean T. Goldman (6)
Anna Sloman (6)
Harriet W. Margolis (7)
Doris Margolis (8)
Berle Radow (8)
Brooks Smith (8)
Ann Gilbert Toovy (8)

January 8th

Dovenor Eugene Jarrell (9)
Anita Frankenberger (10)
Regina Kimmel (10)
Dr. Richard Jubelirer (11)
Janice Louise Amburgey (12)
Samuel E. Galperin (12)
Evelyn Mendelsohn Badner (13)
Elsie Forb (13)
Dr. A. Stanley Webster (14)

January 15th

Jane Frankenberger Greenwald (16)
Sarah Goldstein (18)
Esther Stabins (18)
Michael Tice (18)
Jinx Engel Harris (19)
Frank Hudnall (19)
Moses Meyer Lipton (19)
Lottie Cohen Goshorn (20)
Mark H. Schaul Sr. (20)
Evelyn Brown Silverman (20)
Judith Pollack (21)
Marjorie Spigel Sockol (22)
Stanley Szczepaniak (22)

January 22nd

Frances S. Schaffner (23)
Harry L. Wills (23)
Rose Marks Stern (24)
Joyce Maldow Selinger (26)
Louis Hartstein (27)
Iris Pincus (27)
William Osvath (28)
Bertram Schaffner (29)



January 29th

Meyer Kwass (30)
Rose Edelman (31)
Philip Barnett Hall (31)
Bessie Polan Brown (Feb. 1)
Samuel Opper (Feb. 1)
Florence Jordan Silverstein (Feb. 1)
Louise Parker (Feb. 2)
Mary Selinger (Feb. 2)
Herbert Frankenberger (Feb. 3)
Ben Marks (Feb. 3)
John A. Pianfetti (Feb. 2)
Esther Sloman ((Feb. 3)
Leora Osgood May (Feb. 4)
Ruth Teichman (Feb. 5)
John Warren (Feb. 5)

January at a Glance

All services, meetings, classes and events are virtual with one exception, via Zoom, until further notice. If you aren't receiving emails from Rabbi Blair about these sessions, please let him know.*

Friday, Jan. 1 – Temple office closed in observance of New Year's Day

*Friday, Jan. 1 at *St. Marks UMC in downtown Charleston
*outdoors: 12-12:15 PM:
Interfaith Service of Unity and Reconciliation (masks and social distancing required)

Friday, Jan. 1 at 5:30 PM – LIVE and Virtual Shabbat service

Monday, Jan. 4 at 10 AM – Zoom Check-in

Thursday, Jan. 7 at 3 PM – A Bissel Torah

Friday, Jan. 8 at 5:30 PM – LIVE and Virtual Shabbat service

Saturday, Jan. 9 at 10:30 AM – Torah study. Parashah Shemot, Ex. 1:1-6:1. Triennial Year 2 Ex. 3:1-4:17.

Sunday, Jan. 10 at 2 PM – Jewish Literature in Translation (Yiddish/Hebrew).

Monday, Jan. 11 at 10 AM – Zoom Check-in

Tuesday, Jan. 12 at 5:30 PM – Temple board meeting

Thursday, Jan. 14 at 3 PM – A Bissel Torah

Friday, Jan. 15 and Saturday, Jan. 16: Pulpit Exchange. Rabbi Blair and Rabbi Urecki will deliver a Devar Torah to each other's congregation during Shabbat services. Temple Israel Friday evening LIVE and Virtual Shabbat service begins at 5:30 PM. B'nai Jacob Saturday morning LIVE and Virtual

(Continued on page 4)



January at a Glance—continued from p. 3

(Continued from page 3)

Shabbat service begins at 10 AM.

Sunday, Jan. 17 at 10:30 AM – Sisterhood board and general membership meeting

Sunday, Jan. 17 at 7:30 PM – Charleston Death Café

Monday, Jan. 18—Temple office closed in observance of MLK Day

Monday, Jan. 18 at 10 AM – Zoom Check-in

Wednesday, Jan. 20 at 7 PM – Leora May Book Club

Thursday, Jan. 21 at 3 PM – A Bissel Torah

Friday, Jan. 22 at 5:30 PM – LIVE and Virtual Shabbat service

Sunday, Jan. 24 at 2 PM – Jewish Literature in Translation (Yiddish/Hebrew)

Monday, Jan. 25 at 10 AM – Zoom Check-in

Monday, Jan. 25 at 6:30 PM – Social Action Committee meeting

Wednesday, Jan. 27 at 6:30 PM – Two Rabbis Discussion: “Roots in Heaven”

Thursday, Jan. 28 at 3 PM – A Bissel Torah

Friday, Jan. 29 at 5:30 PM – LIVE and Virtual Shabbat service

Next Month

Friday, Feb. 5 at 5:30 PM – LIVE and Virtual Shabbat service

Saturday, Feb. 6 at 10:30 AM – Torah study

From the Rabbi's Desk, continued from p. 1

(Continued from page 1)

the winter, when the landscape shows so little growing, this is a holiday that celebrates by looking forward to and expressing appreciation and gratitude for the miracle of renewal and re-growth that will soon be seen as trees begin to awaken and greenery is once more abundant around us.

Reminders

A few things to highlight in January (See “January at a Glance” for times of these and other events):

Saturday, Jan. 9, Torah Study. Parashah Shemot, Ex. 1:1-6:1. Triennial Year 2 Ex. 3:1-4:17.

Sunday, Jan. 10, Jewish Literature in Translation (Yiddish/Hebrew).

Friday, Jan. 15 and Saturday, Jan. 16, Pulpit Exchange. Rabbi Urecki and Rabbi Blair will deliver a Devar Torah to each other's congregation during Shabbat services.

Sunday, Jan. 17, Sisterhood board and general meeting.

Wednesday, Jan. 20, Leora May Book Club.

Sunday, Jan. 24, Jewish Literature in Translation (Yiddish/Hebrew).

Monday, Jan. 25, Social Action Committee meeting.

Status

Covid-19 Concerns — The vaccines have been approved, and are being distributed in priority order, so there is some light on the horizon. Meantime, we continue to urge that we all remain cautious and careful. The situation is unchanged from last month. The building is closed, there are no in-person meetings or events. Please stay safe and healthy — use masks, handwashing, and social distancing. The Covid-19 Coronavirus has the potential for serious consequences, and it would be tragic to succumb through impatience at a time when we can see progress towards returning to our accustomed activities safely.

Online Activities— The new equipment to allow us to continue our online presence is set up and operational, and is being tested and adjusted. In the coming weeks congregants will begin to be trained in its use by Rich Katz. This will provide us with flexibility and the means to continue our virtual events, and then when it is deemed safe and appropriate, to phase in some in-person aspects as well. We are planning ahead and preparing to support as many options as possible, including permanent installation of the equipment with flexibility for use in areas of the building in addition to the main sanctuary.

Meantime, our online Zoom services and meetings continue. This seems to be working well, allowing attendance by our usual

crowd plus others who join us from near and far — a lovely additional benefit to doing things online.

Services — We will continue weekly Shabbat services as we have been, opening the Zoom session at 5 PM, with services starting at 5:30. Other events will also be offered — see the weekly LINKS email for how to connect.

Prayer Books — If members wish to borrow a Siddur for Shabbat please be in touch with the Rabbi or the Office to arrange to pick one up. Let us know when you plan to come by to pick it up. We'll leave it for you on the bench on the front porch.

As always, we want to serve you in as many ways and as well as it is possible. Please be in touch with me (the rabbi), the office (Greg), or members of the board if you have any needs, suggestions, concerns, or questions.

The weather has been cold and less than ideal, lately, but I offer the warmest wishes for you and your loved ones at this time of year. As we pass the longest night and the darkest season of the year, may we know that days will be lengthening, light will be increasing, the growth and renewal of Spring are not far away, and blessings and good things are in store. Please stay safe and healthy.

B'virkat Shalom (with blessings of peace),

Joe

Rabbi Joe Blair

Sisterhood Message**Feeling grateful and looking forward to better days ahead**

Dear Members of Temple Israel Sisterhood,

Without any real “contact” over these many months since becoming President I am wondering what you are experiencing in terms of being a Sisterhood member? Some of you we see on Zoom, but the majority are just out there.

With the soon to become available vaccine for this dreaded scourge called Covid-19, in due time we may be able to congregate again with that time zone to be determined.

I know deep down you are happy that science has led us through this sad and devastating time. Will you get the vaccine? That question can only be answered by you and any loved ones in consultation with your health care professional.

While 2020 has been a year we would like to write off it has taught us a lot about following rules and taking care of ourselves. The masks do not come off yet, but hope is on the horizon. I hope Chanukah was a pleasant time and some of us celebrated with loved ones and friends by way of Zoom and here possible in a small group only knowing those people where “clean” having followed the guidelines for Covid and were tested.

Personally, I am grateful for Services being available on Zoom plus several activities. I hope you are happy with what Temple is doing and making available.

As we look to 2021 – our first month will include our general membership plus board meeting for all of Sisterhood. Our Vice President and Program Director Marsha Albert has an excellent offering for this meeting. Please tune in - literally on Zoom and lend your support to Sisterhood, our program, and what you will be learning and hopefully enjoying.

Happy and Healthy New Year!

Smiling from behind my face mask,

Millie Snyder,

President



Photo by Michael Teel

Sisterhood supports Sojourner's Shelter for Homeless Women and Families

Our Sisterhood has given specific support to Sojourner's services and also asked for donations from you for additional needs. The following is a story of what they do – which is why the facility is so much more than “just a homeless shelter.”

The Journey of Finding Home

Reprinted from YWCA Charleston's Annual Report 2019-2020. Used by permission.

Laura, her boyfriend Jeremy, and their three children, ages 4, 6, and 11 entered the YWCA Sojourner's Shelter for Homeless Women and Families in March. For the past five years, the family had been homeless off and on since Jeremy had lost his job. Jeremy had been working odd jobs just to keep gas in the car as they moved from place to place staying with family and friends, always struggling to find work and a place to call home. When the family came to Sojourner's, they had lost all of their identification documents including birth certificates, social security cards, and driver's licenses. After their Case Manager completed their assessment, the staff began working on replacing the family's missing documents and transferring their child support, food stamps, and medical records from another state. Sojourner's Residential Nurse also referred the family to Health Right to get checkups and COVID-19 testing.

Due to the family moving from place to place, the children had not been enrolled in school for a while. The staff in the Children's program contacted the Kanawha County Schools Homeless Facilitators to discuss options and get the children connected to the local school system. With the assistance of the Homeless Facilitators, the Children's Program staff were able to get the two school aged children enrolled.

Laura and Jeremy attended the YWCA Sojourner's Job Readiness Center, where they received skills needed such as life skills, education, resume building, job skills, and employment searching /placement opportunities. Jeremy worked diligently on obtaining employment and, within a short time, he obtained a full-time position, despite the pandemic. Laura also attended classes to improve her basic skills so that she could better assist the kids with their schoolwork.

(Continued on page 7)

**Please let us know when you move,
change your email address or your phone
number, so we can update the yearbook.**



Our Thoughtful Contributors

Donations received after the Bulletin deadline will be acknowledged in the next issue.



If you would like to make a donation to a Temple or Sisterhood fund, please mail your check to Temple Israel and tell us to whom you would like a card to be sent.

Donations to a Sisterhood fund (Care Committee, Floral Fund or Y.E.S. Fund): checks should be made payable to Temple Israel Sisterhood, noting which fund on the memo line.

Donations to the Temple Israel Social Action Fund should be made payable to that fund.

Donations to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund are used to help Temple members in financial distress. Donations should be made payable to that fund.

Donations to the Unrestricted Fund or those to the Library should be made payable to Temple Israel.



Tu B'Shevat, the 15th of Shevat, also known as the New Year – and alternatively the birthday – for Trees, falls on Jan. 28. Because it is commanded to allow a tree to establish a strong root system before harvesting from it for commercial purposes, it is necessary to know how 'old' a tree is, and Tu B'Shevat is used to count the age of a tree for this purpose.

Looking ahead to February



Purim will be here the evening of Feb. 25th. We'll update you on plans for the holiday as soon as we know how we'll be celebrating.

Homemade hamantaschen
By Yoninah - http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Homemade_hamantaschen.jpg, CC BY 2.5, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=19357284>

The need for Tzedaka is great—please give to the charity of your choice

Please be generous – at this time there are many who are struggling, and needs continue to run unusually high in light of the Corona Virus Pandemic impact in limitations on businesses, resulting job losses, housing costs, and rampant health care costs that are hitting those who can least afford them, to name only a few of the causes.

In addition, there are many suffering from natural disasters, including flooding in South America and elsewhere, fires in the western states and overseas, violence caused by civil unrest and war in many locales, and supply chain failures for food in many areas. This is hitting not only locally, but globally. The result is that needs are greater now than at almost any other time. Please think generously and donate as you are able. Federated Jewish Charities, AJWS, HIAS, and so many other organizations are faced with requests from an overwhelming number of those in dire need.

The Social Action committee and Sisterhood are each asking for donations for specific efforts: hunger relief and warm cloth-

ing, respectively; look for more information elsewhere in the bulletin.

At the December Temple board meeting, the idea was raised to donate in memory of Charleston Police Department Officer Cassie Johnson.

Please remember the many Tzedakah opportunities locally: Manna Meal, Covenant House, Sojourner's/YWCA, RCCR, Mazon, and all the other worthy causes in our community, and those beyond. Please make your donations directly to the worthy organization(s) of your choice, and be as generous as you are able.

Joe
Rabbi Joe Blair

Except where noted, photos by Greg Proctor

Social Action Corner**Direct donations to Manna Meal and Covenant House encouraged**

Our Nov. 30 business meeting included a discussion of food vouchers and Manna Meal's desperate need for continued contributions.

Also, since the approved families for Adopt A Family Congregations were fewer in number than previous years, the Temple would not be called upon to participate this Christmas Season. In that regard there would not be a solicitation of funds by the Temple for a specifically designated family. Instead, it was suggested that if members and workers who shopped and/or contributed during previous years might wish to continue to do so, then a contribution directly to Manna Meal or Covenant House for food vouchers, or even to the Mountaineer Food Bank, would certainly be appropriate and appreciated.

Also at this meeting, Fran Thalheimer discussed the Women of Reform Judaism virtual Fried Women's Conference 2021 in March <https://wrj.org/fried-womens-conference-2021> and the various Social Action positions they had signed on with numerous other major organizations, both within and outside the U.S. Some of these "signed on" positions included equal pay, economic justice, gender-based violence, racism, planned parenthood and reproductive rights, separation of church and state, etc. Both the WRJ and the URJ Religious Action Center work closely with one other on all these and other social conscience issues.

Discussion also included specific needed individual actions related to the Citizen's Climate Lobby Forum held Dec. 3 and Diversity Issues on Education addressing racism. With regard to the latter, Anne Fishkin's granddaughter has been active at her high school in Denver, Colo. and will be sharing this work with us.

At press time, the next Committee meeting – on Zoom – was scheduled for Monday, Dec. 28 at 6:30 PM, featuring a presentation on Mental Health and Poverty planned by Melissa Cadle. All members of the Congregation continue to be welcomed. There is a meeting also scheduled for Jan. 25.

Respectfully submitted,

Rachel Dash and Cookie Glasser, Co-Chairs

Sojourner's—cont'd from p. 5

(Continued from page 5)

The Housing Coordinator took them to visit several places, and it didn't take long for them to find an apartment that they could call home. We were able to help them with the rental deposit and utilities. When moving day came, their smiles were contagious when the Housing Coordinator and After Care Specialist helped them obtain all of the things that they needed to furnish their apartment like new beds, mattresses, bedding, kitchen essentials, and more.

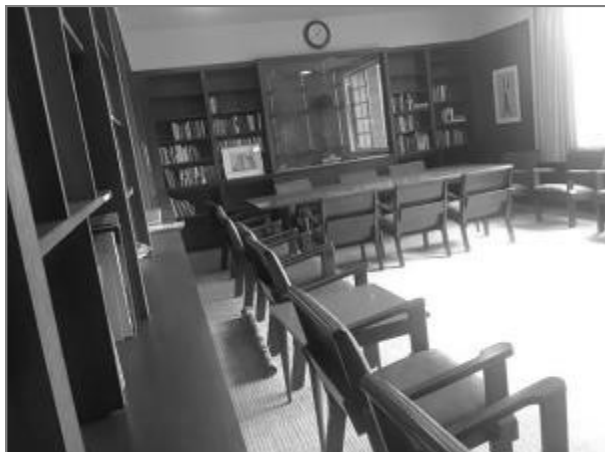
Because of the array of supportive services provided by YWCA Sojourner's and the couple's determination, this family is no longer homeless; they got a fresh start. They are economically stable and the family is in a home together for the first time in five years.

•

Over a 90 day stay of service for 5 clients, our donations to Sojourner's provide:

- 270 meals and 180 snacks; 39 loads of laundry.
- 90 cleaning days for the adults; 150 days of day care.
- 60 days of education or job preparedness; 150 school days
- 4 days housing search; deposits for new home, and support or aftercare.

That is a lot of need that Sojourner's covers. This is where your donations of detergent, black bags, sheets and snacks go for 90 residents. Thank you for your continued support. Contact Caroline Ostand for questions.

**New in our library**

The Mosaic Within: An Alchemy of Healing Self and Soul, by Susan Vorhard. Gaon Books, 2009. Body, Mind & Spirit. A personal journey exploring the connections between ancient alchemy, Jungian psychology, and the Kabbalah.

The Devil's Arithmetic, by Jane Yolen. Viking, 1988. Fiction. Time travel back to 1941 Jewish village in Nazi Germany.

Mary Rich Maloy, Library Committee chair

