

Temple Israel Bulletin

Volume LXXXIII
Bulletin No. 5

January 2024
Tevet / Shevat 5784

*There will be a covered dish dinner on Jan. 5th following the Shabbat service
At the Jan. 26th Shabbat service we will observe Tu B'Shevat*

Rabbi's Message

Shalom & greetings!

I am writing this article in mid-December, during the holiday of Hanukkah. In fact, we had the community dinner last night, with over 100 people from our community present. As with any large undertaking, there were a few glitches, and we can do better in future, but overall, I felt that it was a wonderful event.

The meal was very tasty, I thought, and people were quite pleased, from all that I could gather. The catering staff, and the people working in the kitchen were amazing: they were on top of everything, so even the clean-up was smooth and quite fast – they broke prior year records on almost every count. Thanks to all of them, and kudos to everyone who helped to plan and prepare for, set up, and pull it together, both from the Temple and the Synagogue; and a special thanks to Jill Epstein, Temple Israel House Chair, for coordinating all the various pieces throughout. Overall, this felt like a very successful dinner celebration, both of the holiday of Hanukkah, and of our Jewish

Early spring is the time of year when the almond blossom is in full flower. The countryside is awash with the white and pink flowers. This is one of the valleys in Las Alpujarras, Andalucia, Spain.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Almond_Landscape.jpg

Mark Chinnick, CC BY 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>>, via Wikimedia Commons

community.

As much as I loved the meal, for me the real highlight of the evening was the sight of all the Hanukiot (Hanukkah candelabras) on the table in the corner of the room, lit and shining after we recited the blessings. That was amazing and an absolutely beautiful sight! The light they radiated was a beacon of joy and love, illuminating and filling the room and the hearts of all those present. Seeing it, I felt a deep sense of community, connection, love, and sharing – all the things that I needed so much – and I hope that everyone else did as well. It was a pleasure and a joy to be there with so many of you from both congregations, the wonderful people in our Jewish community who make this such a special place. Thank you for celebrating the holiday together, and with me, especially now, this year, with so much that is dark and difficult in the world.

From around the community

We continue to receive positive, kind, and loving messages of support and expressions of concern for us here and for Jews everywhere, a truly overwhelming showing from many in our larger community. This outpouring of care and concern is truly a blessing. I hope others beyond me in our community are also feeling this.

Calendar News

Recent Highlights: Torah Study; the first meeting of the Death While Dining series (which had an interesting conversation – thanks to those who participated); lighting the Hanukiah at the Joyful Night celebration at the Capitol; our Shabbat service with Hanukkah observed; the community Hanukkah dinner; the fast of the 10th of Tevet; and all the other things usually on

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Shabbat worship services & Torah study

Religious services are both in-person and online (Zoom and Facebook).
Torah study sessions on Jan. 7 & Feb. 4 are online only.

JANUARY & EARLY FEBRUARY

Friday, Jan. 05	Shabbat service at 5:30 PM
Sunday, Jan. 07	Torah Study at 10:30 AM, Parashah Vaera [Ex. 6:2-9:35] – online only
Friday, Jan. 12	Shabbat service at 5:30 PM Parashah Vaera
Friday, Jan. 19	Shabbat service at 5:30 PM
Friday, Jan. 26	Shabbat service at 5:30 PM with Tu B'Shevat
Friday, Feb. 02	Shabbat service at 5:30 PM, HIAS Refugee Shabbat, covered dish dinner to follow
Sunday, Feb. 4	Torah study at 10:30 AM Parashah Mishpatim [Ex. 21:1-24:18] – online only

From <https://hias.org>

HIAS' Sixth Annual Refugee Shabbat

HIAS' Sixth Annual Refugee Shabbat — which will take place at Temple Israel on Feb. 2 — is an invitation for congregations, organizations, and individuals to express their solidarity with the global Jewish movement for refugee protection and welcome. People seeking asylum are being turned away at borders around the world. The number of forcibly displaced people has grown to over 110 million.

Refugee Shabbat is a critical moment to reaffirm and redouble our support for refugees, asylum seekers, and the forcibly displaced.

To participate, please contact Fran Thalheimer.

Please let the Temple office know if you're moving, or if you have new contact info such as new email address or phone number, or if you've dropped your landline.

Staying in touch with the Rabbi

Please be in touch with me if you would like a visit or a conversation, have a question, or wish to add (or remove) a name on the Mi Sheberach list.

If you have any pastoral concerns, know of someone who needs pastoral or rabbinic support or assistance, or have a suggestion or a concern about our community, please call me (the rabbi) at (304) 989-4014, or email me at RabbiJoeB@gmail.com

I read email and texts regularly (Shabbat and Jewish holidays excepted - in an emergency on one of these days, please phone me, and if you leave a message, please express the urgency of the call and the nature of the need in the message.). Please be assured that I will respond as soon as I am able, and forgive any delay. .

Rabbi Joe Blair

Tzedakah (Charity)

Like a bad penny, I am turning up again with a reminder about Tzedakah. Tiresome as it may be, I urge you to think of what matters most to you personally, and continue to be generous in supporting those causes. There are many good and worthy causes you can support. I hope that you will remember them as you plan and allocate your Tzedakah for the secular new year.

Again; may your heart be moved to give a little bit more than you otherwise might, and may your generosity be a blessing for those who receive it and reflect back onto you and your loved ones..

Rabbi Joe Blair

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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 beside the name.

January 5th

David Cremer	1/6
Helene Esler	1/6
Jean T. Goldman	1/6
Anna Sloman	1/6
Harriet W. Margolis	1/7
Doris Margolis	1/8
Berle Radow	1/8
Brooks Smith	1/8
Ann Gilbert Toovy	1/8
Dovenor Eugene Jarrell	1/9
Anita Frankenberger	1/10
Regina Kimmel	1/10
William Blume	1/11
Dr. Richard Jubelirer	1/11
Janice Louise Amburgey	1/12
Samuel E. Galperin	1/12
Shirley Kreinik Gaynor	1/12
Kai Pushkin	1/12

Jinx Engel Harris	1/19
Frank Hudnall	1/19
Moses Meyer Lipton	1/19

January 19th

Lottie Cohen Goshorn	1/20
Mark H. Schaul Sr.	1/20
Evelyn Brown Silverman	1/20
Marjorie Spigel Sockol	1/22
Stanley Szczepaniak	1/22
Joseph Aaron Frank	1/23
Israel Rabinowitz	1/23
Frances S. Schaffner	1/23
Harry L. Wills	1/23
Rose Marks Stern	1/24
Terrie Rosenfeld	1/26
Frank Schwartz	1/26
Joyce Maldow Selinger	1/26



Photo by Greg Proctor

January 12th

Evelyn Mendelsohn Badner	1/13
Elsie Forb	1/13
Dr. A. Stanley Webster	1/14
David Goldfine	1/15
Sarah Goldstein	1/15
Pearl Fenster	1/16
Jane Frankenberger Greenwald	1/16
John Burkhardt	1/17
Judith Pollack	1/18
Esther Stabins	1/18
Michael Tice	1/18

January 26th

Louis Hartstein	1/27
Iris Pincus	1/27
William Osvath	1/28
John Beskin	1/29
Leo Levey	1/29
Madelyn Cremer Miller	1/29
Bertram Schaffner	1/29
Meyer Kwass	1/30
Louise Parker	1/30
Rose Edelman	1/31
Philip Barnett Hall	1/31

Bessie Polan Brown	2/1
Harry Esler	2/1
Simon A. Levey	2/1
Samuel Opper	2/1
Florence Jordan Silverstein	2/1
Eva Sanders	2/2
Mary Selinger	2/2

January & early February at a Glance

*This is a projected calendar of events; it may be incomplete or changed. Services are both in-person and online/virtual. All meetings, classes, programs, and events are either in person or virtual, as announced. Updates to this information will be included on the Temple website and in the **Reminder Links** emails. Wearing a mask is suggested if you are exhibiting any symptoms of illness; vaccination with a bi-valent vaccine is required to attend in person. If you aren't receiving emails from Rabbi Blair about online sessions, please let him know.*

January

Monday, Jan. 1 – New Year's Day – Temple office closed
 Thursday, Jan. 4 at 3:30 PM – A Bissell Torah, online only
 Friday, Jan. 5 at 5:30 PM – Shabbat service, Covered Dish Dinner to Follow
 Sunday, Jan. 7 at 10:30 AM – Torah study, Parashah Vaera [Ex. 6:2-9:35], online only
 Sunday, Jan. 7 at 7 PM – Death While Dining, online only
 Monday, Jan. 8 at 11:30 AM – Sisterhood Schmooze

Tuesday, Jan. 9 at 5:30 PM – Temple Israel board of trustees meeting
 Thursday, Jan. 11 at 4:30 PM – A Bissell Torah, online only
 Friday, Jan. 12 at 5:30 PM – Shabbat service, Parashah Vaera
 Monday, Jan. 15 – MLK Day – Temple office closed
 Wednesday, Jan. 17 at 5:30 PM – Leora May Book Club
 Thursday, Jan. 18 at 4:30 PM – A Bissell Torah, online only

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Rabbi's Message, continued

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the calendar.

Looking Ahead: The period through January should be relatively quiet – here, at least, though not so much in the world at large, unless events settle down a great deal.

We have regular services each Friday; A Bissell Torah will continue weekly.

On January 5th we have a Shabbat service with a covered dish dinner; Torah study on Jan. 7, looking at Parashah Vaera, Ex. 6:2-9:35; Death While Dining on Jan. 7; a Temple Israel board of trustees meeting on Jan. 9; Shabbat service with Torah on Jan. 12; Jewish Literature on Jan. 21.

There will be a covered dish dinner following services on Feb. 2; Torah study on Feb. 4; Death While Dining on Feb. 4; and our Shabbat service, with Torah Parashah Mishpatim [Exodus 21:1-24:18; Numbers 28:9-15, and Rosh Chodesh Adar

1] on Feb. 9.

Because plans can change after the bulletin is published, the most up to date information is found in the Reminder Links emails sent on Sundays and Thursdays, and on the Temple website.

Thoughts, Blessings, and Salutations

As we listen to devastating news reports, and our hearts are stricken regarding all the ills and evils that abound in our world, we pray with all our hearts for an end to terrorism and hatred, the safe return of all hostages and captives, and a cessation of bloodshed, war, and death, with a lasting peace for all who seek it – in Israel, in Gaza, and everywhere in the world. Ken yehi ratzon (may it be so, soon). I pray and hope that there may be peace and an end to war and bloodshed, may all the hostages return safely home, those who have been injured or become

ill find healing, and those who have lost loved ones be comforted.

As we come to the secular new year, I extend to you, your loved ones, and to all wherever they may be, very warm wishes for blessings of health, family, friends, and wellbeing. May each of you feel blessed, and find many reasons both to feel and to express gratitude for all your blessings. May the light that was recently kindled for Hanukkah radiate and illumine all our lives and the entire world, bringing peace and healing. Ken Yehi Ratzon – may it prove so soon.

B'virkat Shalom (with blessings of peace),

Joe

Rabbi Joe Blair

RabbiJoeB@gmail.com

(304) 989-4014

(my cell phone – please call this number to get in touch directly with me)

In the Congregation & Community

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. This list includes those on our list during the time since the last bulletin article who agreed to have their name listed. If we spoke and you did not want your name announced in the Mi Sheberach list, please know that I have included you in my personal prayers for healing and wholeness, though your name is not listed here.

Kim Aaron
David Bailey
Lois Bailey
Holden Mathew Briant
Patricia Cohen Coniglio
Crocker family
Arthur Epstein
Alan Fleischmann
Jonathan Freedman
Karl Gattlieb
Mel Hutt
Rabbi Earl Jordan
Dorothy Kurland
Roberta Levine
Gary Markham

Jim Muldoon
Hedy Poppelsdorf
Amy Shapiro
David Shapiro
N. David Stern
Matt Tomaszewski
Barbara Braun Tweddle
Elliott Urecki
Rachel Leah bat Shayna Chaya
veShmuel

All who are impacted by illness or poor health

All who have been affected by natural or man-made disasters, war, or violence

All others in need of prayers for healing and wholeness, however that may manifest and whatever it may be for them

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Sisterhood Message

Impressed and encouraged by our small but active community: Sitting down with Sisterhood past-president Marion Baer

Arranging a sit-down chat with Marion Baer is likened to gaining access to a "rock star." Marion's schedule in her nineties is not only admirable but seemingly par for the course during her whole life.

Marion recounted back to her time as Sisterhood President in 1971-73. She mentioned that she was "scared to death" to take on that responsibility until she was made aware that "Frank's grandmother, Ruth Baer, was the very first Sisterhood President in its founding year, 1914."

Frank Baer II being Marion's husband and soul mate for sixty-one years. They met when she was only fifteen years old at a dinner party arranged for Jewish youth in the community to meet. A love match indeed.

Marion was born in 1930 in Germany. Her parents immigrated to the United States when she was three years old, first to North Carolina and eventually to West Virginia. Beckley was first stop, then to Charleston when Marion started eighth grade.

Marion's mentors in Sisterhood were Jane P. Silverstein and Elizabeth Loeb. They encouraged her to accept the leadership position. During Marion's presidency a highlight was a visit from Rabbi Sally Jane Priesand, the first woman rabbi ordained at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati. Marion said the women were concerned as to the protocol of her visit until the rabbi herself showed up in a mini skirt. So, let's hear it for women's lib in the early '70s!

Marion also mentioned how impressed she is with Sisterhood's care committee and how we have always been about caring for our congregants' welfare.

When asked about her eagerness to show up at services, meetings, and other Temple activities, Marion emphasized her love of people. She feels encouraged by what she sees in our



small but active Jewish community, and she feels blessed for the life she has lived.

To that I must add that we Sisterhood gals are very blessed to have Marion in our midst.

Thank you, Marion.

*Marsha Albert,
Sisterhood
President*

*At left: Marion Baer, left,
and Marsha Albert.*

*Photo courtesy Marsha
Albert*

*Below: Rabbi Sally Jane
Priesand, who visited
Temple Israel while
Marion Baer was
Sisterhood president.*



Sally Jane Priesand (born June 27, 1946) is America's first female rabbi ordained by a rabbinical seminary, and the second formally ordained female rabbi in Jewish history, after Regina Jonas. Priesand was ordained by the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion on June 3, 1972, at the Plum Street Temple in Cincinnati. After her ordination she served first as assistant and then as associate rabbi at Stephen Wise Free Synagogue in New York City, and later led Monmouth Reform Temple in Tinton Falls, N.J. from 1981 until her retirement in 2006. She is featured in numerous books including *Rabbis: The Many Faces of Judaism* and *Fifty Jewish Women Who Changed the World*.

[Text and graphic from Wikipedia](#)



Our Thoughtful Contributors



Photo by Greg Proctor

Dec. 8th Oneg Shabbat & Flowers on the bimah

Given by the Gianos, Schulman, and Glasser families, in honor of Cookie Glasser's milestone birthday

When making donations to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund, Unrestricted Fund, or the Social Action Fund, please make your check payable to Temple Israel.

Please make Sisterhood donations payable to Temple Israel Sisterhood.



There will be a Covered Dish Dinner following the Shabbat service on Jan. 5th. Please join us and bring a dish to share—the Temple will supply roast chicken—or just bring yourself. Join us for a wonderful Friday night with friends and family.

Photo by Wendie Freedman

Please write separate checks when making contributions to more than one fund or when paying membership dues.

In the Congregation and Community, cont'd

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Mazal Tov (Congratulations)

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

To those who reached or will reach milestones, and to all who had any birthday or anniversary or other life event worth celebrating! Among those we know who are to be acknowledged we include:

December: Ellie Schaul, Steve Jubelirer, **Cookie Glasser (MILESTONE)**, Robert Hess, David Feibelman, Melissa Cadle, Jackie

Artz, Ellyn & Ed Goldberg (**MILESTONE**), Laura & Jace Goins (**MILESTONE**), Marion Baer, Arla Ralston & Roger Forman, Joy Kleeman

January: **Caroline Ostand (MILESTONE)**, Ken Silverstein, **Elizabeth Kantor-Bright (MILESTONE)**, David Kushner, David Winowich, Ellyn Goldberg, **Richard Holick-er (MILESTONE)**, **Johnny Ferrara (MILESTONE)**, Tiana Hall, Hedy Popelsdorf, **Richard Gottlieb (MILESTONE)**, **David Shapiro (MILESTONE)**, Laura Goins, Beth Winter

February: **Barrie & Tod Kaufman (MILESTONE)**, **Ronni Spudich (MILESTONE)**, Kate & Isaac Forman, Carol Lewis Bloom, Julie Adams & Josh Barrett, N David Stern, Frank Baer III, Bob Aaron, Barrie Baer Kaufman, Elliott Urecki, **Margot Jogwick (MILESTONE)**

If you have a milestone 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.

Rabb Joe Blair

Tu BiShvat: the New Year for trees

Reprinted in part from

<https://reformjudaism.org>

Although the celebration of Tu BiShvat has a long and varied history, the theme most ascribed to the holiday today is the environment. It is considered a festival of nature, full of wonder, joy, and thankfulness for creation in anticipation of the renewal of the natural world. During this festival, Jews recall the sacred obligation to care for the world, and the responsibility to share the fruits of the earth with all.

Tu BiShvat falls at the beginning of spring in Israel, when the winter rains subside and the pink and white blossoms of the almond trees begin to bud. It is for this reason that almonds and other fruits and nuts native to the Land of Israel – barley, dates, figs, grapes, pomegranates, olives, and wheat – are commonly eaten during a Tu BiShvat seder (a special ritual meal for the holiday).

Tu BiShvat is sometimes also called Chamishah-Asar BiShvat (the “15th of Sh’vat”), because the holiday is observed on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Sh’vat, roughly corresponding to February in the secular calendar.

When Was Tu BiShvat Started?

Tu BiShvat is first mentioned in the Mishnah. There, in Rosh HaShanah 1:1, the text speaks of four different new years, all of which are connected to an ancient cycle of tithes. Each year, the Israelites were expected to bring one-tenth (a “tithe”) of

their fruits to the Temple in Jerusalem, where they were offered to God and also helped sustain the priestly class and the poor. Since fruit from one year could not be used to tithe for another, the Rabbis had to determine when a crop year would begin and end. They chose the month of Sh’vat as the cut-off date, for this is when, in Israel, the sap begins to run and the trees start to awaken from their winter slumber, before beginning to bear fruit.

Some scholars hold that this was also a day for planting trees, especially “marriage trees.” It was customary for parents who had been blessed with children during the preceding year to plant special seedlings on the 15th of Sh’vat.

Has Judaism Always Valued Trees?

Like Hanukkah, Tu BiShvat is a post-biblical festival, instituted by the Rabbis. However, the holiday has biblical roots. The tithing system upon which it is based dates back to the Torah and its deep concern with trees, harvests, and the natural world, all of which are at the heart of Tu BiShvat. Beginning with the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden all the way through to Deuteronomy’s injunction against destroying fruit trees in times of war, our biblical text is replete with trees, both literal and metaphorical. Indeed, the Torah itself often is referred to as an Etz Chaim (Tree of Life), based on a passage in the Book of Proverbs.



Friday, Jan. 26th

at 5:30 PM —

Shabbat service

with Tu B'Shevat

observance

Wikicommons

Trees are part of the natural wonder of our world and have always been a special symbol for Jews. Trees were protected in times of war (Deuteronomy 20:19). A Midrashic Sage said: “Trees were created for man’s companionship.” And Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav proclaimed, “If a man kills a tree before its time, it is as though he had murdered a soul.”

Above all, the Torah itself is seen as a “Tree of Life,” a growing and abundant source of spiritual sustenance to a great people. Perhaps this is the best indication of the reverence and respect that Judaism holds for God’s world. The tree has been a symbol of life and continues to be a source of life for Israel today. On Tu BiShvat, we celebrate that life in joy and gladness.

At a Glance, continued

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Friday, Jan. 19 at 5:30 PM – Shabbat service.

Sunday, Jan. 21 at 4 PM – Jewish Literature, online only

Thursday, Jan. 25 at 4:30 PM – A Bissell Torah, online only

Friday, Jan. 26 at 5:30 PM – Shabbat service with Tu B'Shevat

February

Thursday, Feb. 1 at 4:30 PM – A Bissell Torah, online only

Friday, Feb. 2 at 5:30 PM – Shabbat service, HIAS Refugee Shabbat, Covered Dish Dinner to follow

Sunday, Feb. 4 at 10:30 AM – Torah study, Parashah Mishpatim, online only

Sunday, Feb. 4 at 7 PM – Death While Dining, online only

