

# Temple Israel Bulletin

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January 2025  
Cheshvan / Kislev 5785

## FROM THE RABBI'S DESK

Shalom & greetings!

### SEASONAL MUSINGS - 'CHRISMUKKAH'

I hope that you are preparing for the upcoming holiday season. For us, as Jews, it is the time of Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights – a beam of light, hope, and uplift in the midst of the darkness (both physical and spiritual) that surrounds us at this time. For Christians, of course, this is the season of Christmas, which is intended to celebrate the birth of Jesus – a religiously significant event for them.

This year, by chance, once again the two holidays coincide – Hanukkah begins at sundown on the evening of Christmas Day (December 25th). This is not completely unheard of – it last fell exactly the way it does this year in 2005, and in 2022 Hanukkah began the evening of Christmas Eve (December 24th). Given that Hanukkah spans more than a single week (8 days), it is not uncommon that there is some overlap of the two holidays, which has been noted many times before.

There are competing origin stories for this created holiday mashup of the two events, but it is not as simple as some wag coining a new term that is thought to be clever – there is a much longer and more complicated history! In reality, Chrismukkah is a pop-culture portmanteau neologism referring to the merging of the holidays of Christianity's Christmas and Judaism's Hanukkah. But it did not start out as Chrismukkah! Historically, this mashup was first named in the German-speaking countries within middle-class Jews of the 19th century - the history of an informal merger between Hanukkah and Christmas dates back to 19th century Germany and Austria.

Of course, it was not called "Chrismukkah;" in German it is called *Weihnukka*, a combination of the words "Weihnachten" (Christmas) and "Hanukkah." It was not widely adopted, but had a foothold in those nations from the 19th century until the middle of the 20th century.

Sadly, after World War II, and particularly post-Holocaust, as Jewish life in these

German-speaking countries had been decimated or eliminated, the observance of the combined holiday moved to other nations, and over time it became popular in the United States, but is also celebrated in other countries.

"Chrismukkah" was so named for the first time publicly, it is claimed, and prominently featured in the FOX television program *The O.C.* (2003–2007). Show creator Josh Schwartz used the holiday (which the writers almost named "Hanimas") as a plot point on *The O.C.* - as a way to merge the character's parents' two faiths. The character, Seth Cohen, claims to have "created the greatest super-holiday known to mankind," which he called "Chrismukkah," when he was six years old. *The O.C.* series included annual Chrismukkah episodes for every season of its run.

Particulars of when exactly the holiday was celebrated were not given; Seth simply said in the first season's Chrismukkah episode that it was "eight days of presents, followed by one day of many presents," with a stress on the word "many." (This was repeated in the second season's Chrismukkah episode by Seth's new brother, Ryan, with an added "many.") The only reference to how it was celebrated, other than the family displaying both a Christmas tree and a Hanukkah menorah, was that the Cohens spent Christmas Day itself at home eating Chinese takeout and watching movies like *It's a Wonderful Life* and *Fiddler on the Roof* on TV (as opposed to going out for Chinese food and seeing a movie, as many American Jews have done for years). Chrismukkah later also received mention in the television series *Grey's Anatomy*. It wound up being heavily featured in media in 2022, when the two holidays essentially coincided, as they do this year.

This merger of holidays is both beloved by some as a way to have more in common with our non-Jewish neighbors, and reviled by others as a step on the road to assimilation, and an insult to both religions. (Both the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Rabbinate in the U.S.

denounced it – perhaps another way it has helped find common ground for Jews and non-Jews?)

In any case, I wish my non-Jewish friends who celebrate or observe Christmas a joyous and blessed season, and I extend to my Jewish friends and community the warmest of wishes for a Chag Urim Sameach (a happy holiday of light).

### CALENDAR

As I write this, we have come to mid-December, I am looking forward to Hanukkah, and to celebrating it with our Jewish community. That holiday will take us into January. (It falls the evening of Dec 25<sup>th</sup> and continues until sundown on January 2<sup>nd</sup> this year.)

January looks to be more "normal," with no special religious events noted. On the secular calendar, the evening of December 31<sup>st</sup> is New Year's Eve, and January 1<sup>st</sup> is New Year's Day. The 20<sup>th</sup> of January is both Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and the day on which the inauguration of the President-elect will take place.

There is one special event – a class – in January: *A Study Session Honoring the Memory of Dr. Steve Jubelirer*, on January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at 4:30 PM. This class, led by Rabbi Urecki, will discuss a chapter of the book "The Medical

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**The covered dish dinner originally advertised for January 3 is rescheduled for January 10.**

# At a Glance: January & February

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 Israel website and in the Reminder Links emails. **If you aren't receiving emails from Rabbi Blair about online sessions, please let him know.**

JANUARY	
Wednesday, Jan. 1	Eighth candle of Hanukkah is lit in the evening New Year's Day. Office closed.
Friday, Jan. 3 5:30 PM	Shabbat Service
Friday, Jan. 10 5:30 PM	Shabbat Service, Asarah B'Tevet (10 <sup>th</sup> of Tevet) observed. Covered dish dinner to follow.
Sunday, Jan. 12 10:30 AM	Torah Study, Shemot [Exodus 1:1-6:1], online
Sunday, Jan. 12 7:00 PM	Death Chatter, online
Monday, Jan. 13 11:30 AM	Sisterhood Schmooze
Tuesday, Jan. 14 5:30 PM	Board of Trustees Meeting
Friday, Jan. 17 5:30 PM	Shabbat Service with Torah, Parashah Shemot
Friday, Jan. 24 5:30 PM	Shabbat Service
Friday, Jan. 31 5:30 PM	Shabbat Service

FEBRUARY	
Friday, Feb. 7 5:30 PM	Shabbat Service
Sunday, Feb. 9 10:30 AM	Torah Study, Yitro [Exodus 18:1-20:23], online
Sunday, Feb. 9 7:00 PM	Death Chatter, online
Monday, Feb. 10 11:30 AM	Sisterhood Schmooze
Tuesday, Feb. 11 5:30 PM	Board of Trustees Meeting
Friday, Feb. 14 5:30 PM	Shabbat Service with Tu B'Shevat Observance, Torah Parashah Yitro, Social Action Issues Shabbat with covered dish dinner to follow
Sunday, Feb. 16 11:00 AM	Sisterhood Board meeting
Wednesday, Feb. 19	Leora May Book Group
Friday, Feb. 21 5:30 PM	Shabbat Service, Sisterhood's NCJW Reproductive Rights Shabbat
Friday, Feb. 28 5:30 PM	Shabbat Service, Shabbat Shekalim, HIAS Refugee Shabbat

## 150th Anniversary Reunion Celebration Slide Show & Photos are Available Online

The 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion Celebration slide show, congregation portraits, and banquet photos are now available on the Temple Israel website at <https://templeisraelwv.org/temple-150th-anniversary/>

When you click a link to view the photos, you will be directed to the Switzer Design & Photography website. Photos are available for purchase from that site.

If you require assistance navigating the website, please contact the Temple Israel office.

Enjoy reliving the event through these photos!



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Legacy of Moses Maimonides” by Rabbi Dr. Fred Rosner. The chapter on hemophilia was selected for this class because it brings together one of Steve’s areas of medical practice (hematology) with his interest in history and Judaism. If you would like a copy of the chapter of the book to read for the class, please email Rabbi Urecki at charlestonrabbi@yahoo.com.

### LOOKING AHEAD

Looking beyond January, we have several upcoming events in February and March.

- First, in the Shabbat on February 14<sup>th</sup> we will read Torah from Parashah Yitro, observe Tu B’Shevat (the New Year for the Trees), and include observance of Social Action’s Issues in our service. That evening is also a covered dish dinner.
- In the Shabbat on February 21<sup>st</sup> we will be observing Sisterhood’s NCJW Reproductive Rights Shabbat.
- Then, in the Shabbat on February 28<sup>th</sup>, we will observe Shabbat Shekalim, and incorporate acknowledgement of HIAS Refugee Shabbat.
- The Shabbat on March 7<sup>th</sup> is Shabbat Zachor, reminding us of Amalek, and signaling that Purim is coming shortly.
- We will observe Purim in the Shabbat on March 14<sup>th</sup>, and read from Torah Parashah Ki Tisa.
- March 21<sup>st</sup> we will include observance of Shabbat Parah in the service. This is often known as the Sabbath of the Red Heifer.
- Finally, March 28<sup>th</sup> our Shabbat service will include observance of Shabbat HaChodesh, indicating that we are entering the month in which Passover falls. Passover begins on Saturday evening, April 12<sup>th</sup> – when we will hold the Congregational Seder; the holiday runs until sundown on Saturday, April 19<sup>th</sup> (according to the Reform and Israeli reckoning, but one more day to sundown on Sunday, April 20<sup>th</sup> for those who observe the holiday for eight days).
- Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) is from sundown April 23<sup>rd</sup> to sundown

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

April 24<sup>th</sup>. There will be a communal observance of Yom HaShoah with a short service led by Rabbis Urecki and Blair, tentatively 6:00 PM on April 24<sup>th</sup> - more information and details will be forthcoming.

As you can see, there is a lot that is coming up on the calendar!

In addition to all the services and special events, we continue our regular activities. These include weekly Shabbat services, Board of meetings, Sisterhood meetings, Oneg Shabbatot, and scheduled classes and programs.

Please consider joining us for some or all of these:

- A monthly Torah Study on Sunday morning at 10:30 AM
- Death Chatter monthly on Sunday evening at 7:00 PM
- Monthly Jewish Literature on Sunday afternoon
- A WVU OLLI Course on January 23<sup>rd</sup>
- Weekly A Bisell Torah on Thursday afternoons
- Weekly Torah at 10:00 AM with Rabbi Urecki on Tuesdays
- Weekly Talmud at 10:00 AM with Rabbi Urecki on Thursdays

Don’t forget Sisterhood Schmooze the second Monday of each month at 11:30 AM; Sisterhood Board meetings; Sisterhood General Membership meetings; and Leora May Book Group gatherings.

Listing events of note through the end of the Congregational year in June:

- Hanukkah at the end of December into the start of January
- Tu B’Shevat and Social Action Issues Shabbat in mid-February
- The Sisterhood NCJW Reproductive Rights Shabbat in late February
- HIAS Refugee Shabbat at the end of February
- Purim in mid-March
- Passover in mid-April, followed by Yom HaShoah
- Yom Hazikaron and Yom HaAtzma’ut at the end of April-beginning of May.
- Sisterhood Shabbat and officer installation in early-May
- Pesach Sheni in mid-May

- Shavuot falling at the end of May into the start of June
- The annual Congregational meeting is scheduled for June 4<sup>th</sup>
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Indoor Picnic Oneg Shabbat is June 13<sup>th</sup>
- With that, we arrive at the end of the Congregational calendar year

I always enjoy sharing these events with others, so I hope to see you at some or all of them, or at any special or additional events we hold beyond these. Whether you are here in person or attending online, I value your presence and participation as a member of the Congregation and community. Please know that you are invited to participate however, and however often, you are able and wish to do so.

For more details on events and activities, see the At-a-Glance and Religious Events listings in this bulletin – and because things can change after the bulletin is published, the most up to date information is to be found in the Reminder Links emails sent on Sundays and Thursdays, and on the Temple Website – templeisraelwv.org.

### NOTEWORTHY

We have a few members who are willing to read Torah or Haftarah for our services occasionally, and we welcome their participation; if you are interested in giving this a try, be in touch with me and we can work on it.

Ronni Spudich is looking to invite members to bless and light candles for our services each week. If you are willing, please contact her.

A few members are willing to lead an entire service, but if this is too much for you, we invite you to participate in services by leading a prayer; doing a (some) reading(s) in the service; being called up for an Aliyah to the Torah; serving as Gabbai for the Torah Service; or giving a devar Torah (sermon). If you are interested in doing any of these, please be in touch with me, and we can select a date that works for you, as well as the role that you would like to take on. If you prefer,

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### TEMPLE ISRAEL

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Gayle Twigger-Shaw, *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 beside the name.

## December 27

Edward Doernberg	12/28
Paul Joseph Kaufman	12/28
Rose Jean Kaufman	12/28
Steven Miles Kaufman	12/28
Eva Waisburd	12/28
Fanny Wertheim	12/28
Nathan Forb	12/29
Dorothy Allen	12/30
George Badner	12/30
Suzie Greenwald Chaskin	12/30
Max Greenstein	12/31
Mollie Jordan	12/31
Sydney Joseph Kaufman	12/31
David Sanger	12/31
Otto Spiegler	12/31
Charles H. Levine	1/1
Sarah Rebecca Orelowitz	1/1
Albert Reinfeld	1/1
Irma Lowenthal Swarts	1/2
Edwin Yunker	1/2

## January 3

Samuel Beren	1/4
David Goldenberg	1/4
Coleman Jacobs	1/4
Sidney Marks	1/4
Goldie Remer	1/4
Dorothy Loeb	1/5
Fedor Poppelsdorf	1/5
Joseph Franklin "Joe" Amburgey	1/6

David Cremer	1/6
Helene Esler	1/6
Jean T. Goldman	1/6
Rudolph Grinberg	1/6
Hamilton Harwood	1/6
Anna Sloman	1/6
Mildred Fleischmann	1/7
Harriet W. Margolis	1/7
Doris Margolis	1/8
Berle Radow	1/8
Brooks Smith	1/8
Ann Gilbert Toovy	1/8
Lynn Gottlieb Aaron	1/9
Joseph Franklin Amburgey, Sr.	1/9
Dovenor Eugene Jarrell	1/9
Anita Frankenberger	1/10
Regina Kimmel	1/10

## January 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
Evelyn Mendelsohn Badner	1/13
Elsie Forb	1/13
Dr. A. Stanley Webster	1/14
David Goldfine	1/15
Pearl Fenster	1/16
Jane Frankenberger Greenwald	1/16
John Burkhardt	1/17

## January 17

Esther Stabins	1/18
Michael Tice	1/18
Jinx Engel Harris	1/19
Frank Hudnall	1/19
Moses Meyer Lipton	1/19
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

## January 24

Terrie Rosenfeld	1/26
Frank Schwartz	1/26
Joyce Maldow Selinger	1/26
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
Rose Edelman	1/31
Philip Barnett Hall	1/31

Condolences are on p. 5



## SUPPORT & CONTACT WITH THE RABBI

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

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

I read email and texts quite regularly (**Shabbat and Jewish holidays excepted**). In an emergency on one of these days, please phone me on my cell, and leave a message expressing the urgency of the call and the nature of the need in the message. I will get back to you as soon as I am able. *Rabbi Joe Blair* • rabbjoeb@gmail.com • 304-989-4014

## NOTICE: CORRESPONDENCE/EMAIL

I heard that members of the congregation/community were not receiving the Reminder Links Emails sent out on Sundays and Thursdays using the Google email list. That email list is set to send a copy to everyone at one time.

If you are not seeing those emails in your inbox regularly, and you don't find them by looking in your Spam, Junk, or Trash folders, please be in touch with me (the rabbi) to try to remedy the situation. Some email providers automatically mark messages from an email list as spam unless they are marked otherwise in advance. We want everyone who is interested to be able to receive those emails with the events and zoom links for the upcoming time. *Rabbi Joe Blair* • rabbjoeb@gmail.com • 304-989-4014

## In the Congregation & Community

### **Refuah Shelemah/Mi Sheberach (Healing & Wholeness & Blessings)**

Prayers and wishes 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 or wellness. 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, even though your name is not listed here.

- The Applebaum Family
- Nadia Bastron and Family
- Jim Dean
- Nancy Dodson and Family
- Arthur Epstein
- Jonathan Freedman
- Karl Gattlieb
- Jack Goldfarb
- Bill Greene and Family
- Rabbi Earl Jordan
- Dan Kurland
- Roberta Lee Levine
- Laura Malloy and Family
- Gary Markham
- David McAfee
- Mary Odin
- The Ostand Family
- Penny Sappington
- Phyllis Randall
- Mark Schaul
- David Spudich
- N. David Stern
- Fran Thalheimer
- Barbara Braun Tweddle
- Rachel Leah bat Shayna Chaya veShmuel
- All who are impacted by illness or disease
- All afflicted by natural or man-made disasters, war, or violence
- All hostages and victims of terrorism and evil acts
- All others in need of prayers for healing and wholeness

### **Mazal Tov (Congratulations)**

[Please tell us about these events so we may 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/were to be acknowledged we include:

**December:** Ellie Schaul, Beth Emrick, Cookie Glasser, Robert Hess, David Feibelmann, Melissa Cadle, **Jackie Artz (MILESTONE)**, Ellen Kay & Vic Bastron, David McAfee, **Elynn & Ed Goldberg (MILESTONE)**, Laura & Jace Goins, Angela Cannon, **Dan Kurland (MILESTONE)**, Marion Baer, Arla Ralston & Roger Forman, Phyllis & Harvey Sherman, Joy Klee-man, Fred Pollock

**January:** Russ Emrick, **Carolyn Ostand (MILESTONE)**, Ken Silverstein, Elizabeth Kantor-Bright, David Kushner, **Joan Randall (MILESTONE)**, Elynn Goldberg, Richard Holicker, Tiana Hall, David Winowich, Raya Redmond, Christine Peraino, Johnny Ferrara, Laura Goins, Richard Gottlieb, David Shapiro, Beth Winter

**February:** Barrie & Tod Kaufman; Ronni Spudich, Kate & Isaac Forman; Carole Bloom; Carol & Fred Pollock; Julie Adams & Josh Barrett; N. David Stern; Frank Baer III; Bob Aaron; Barrie Baer Kauffman; Margot Jogwick

A few other events of note that I heard about. (I hope I captured all of them, but if I missed any, please forgive me, and let me know so I can acknowledge it in the next Bulletin.) In no particular order:

Mazal tov to Cookie Glasser (great-grandmother), and to Lena and Brian Glasser (grandparents), and Hannah Glasser and Reagan Lynch (parents) of Mira Glasser-Lynch, born October 30<sup>th</sup>. May they all take great pleasure and shep nachas!

Mazal tov to Lynn and Karl Gattlieb on the engagement of their daughter, Dr. Shelly Gattlieb, to Bro Kritt on October 26<sup>th</sup>. The Gattliebs are delighted that Bro will be a member of their family. As said in Hebrew on receiving good news of this type, *sha'ah tovah* – a propitious and happy hour! We wish the family and the happy couple all the best, and look forward to hearing about their simchah (joyful event).

Janie and Moe Rubenstein continue to offer access to Wondering Jews – a website sharing Jewish events and resources from around the state of West Virginia. Wondering Jews is the One Stop for All Things Jewish in West Virginia. Visit Wondering Jews at <https://wonderingjewsinc.com/>.

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.

### **Baruch Dayan Haemet (Condolences & Prayers)**

Condolences to Nancy Dodson and family on the recent passing of Ray (Raymond G. Dodson) on December 4<sup>th</sup> in Charleston. May the mourners be comforted from Heaven, and may his memory be for a blessing.

Condolences to Laura Malloy and family on the recent passing of her husband, Mark, on December 6<sup>th</sup> in Charleston. May the mourners be comforted from Heaven, and may his memory be for a blessing.

Condolences to the Ostands and their extended family on the recent passing of Roberta Applebaum, a cousin of Paul. She became niftar on December 12<sup>th</sup> in Chicago. The funeral was held on Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>. May the mourners be comforted from Heaven, and may her memory be for a blessing.

Condolences to Bill Greene and family on the recent passing of "Cari" Carol Sagan Greene on November 29<sup>th</sup> in Houston, TX. The funeral took place in Ithaca, NY, on December 5<sup>th</sup>. May the mourners be comforted from Heaven, and may her memory be for a blessing.

We hold in our prayers Rose Christian, mother of Dona Hall, who has been admitted to Hospice.

Prayers for healing and speedy recovery to Fran Thalheimer following knee replacement surgery. May she have a refuah shelemah.

We continue to hold Harriet Deutsch and family in our thoughts regarding her home in Sarasota, FL, which was affected by Hurricane Helene.

Additionally, our prayers go out to all who were affected by fires or severe weather events throughout the U.S. and the world. Many have been devastated recently. Please consider donating to one of the organizations that are seeking to help them. *Rabbi Joe Blair*



# Our Thoughtful Contributors

Sisterhood sees to it that there are flowers on the Bimah every Shabbat. If you would like to sponsor them in memory of a loved one or to celebrate a special occasion, please contact Betty Stern.

The House Committee coordinates our Oneg Shabbat receptions and covered dish dinners.  
If you would like to sponsor an Oneg Shabbat, please contact Jill Epstein.

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you can speak to Ronni Spudich, chair of the Ritual Committee – both of us would be happy to have you participate in a way that you wish.

### THOUGHTS, BLESSINGS & SALUTATIONS

As we enter into the holiday of Hanukkah, the festival of lights, I am reminded of the words of the gifted poet/songwriter Leonard Cohen, Z”L, who told us what seems to be a truth in the chorus of the song “Anthem,” written in 1992, and included on the album *The Future*:

**Ring the bells that still can ring.  
Forget your perfect offering.  
There is a crack, a crack, in everything.  
That's how the light gets in.**

This is an acknowledgement that the world is far from perfect, but that very imperfection is both where we live and how we encounter and engage with the Divine.

In that spirit, I pray that the divine light of the holiday will enter the world, and

join with the lights that we kindle with our Hanukkiot, as well as the light we share through our deeds and mitzvot, and that this sacred combined light will spread far and wide throughout the darkness which surrounds us.

May that combined light brighten our world, and all the souls in it, so that as the light shines forth, it will serve to call for more divine light to enter this broken world, and renew all of creation.

In this way, may we each be blessed with a sense of enlightenment and closeness to the divine, as well as health, love, prosperity, and a life filled with deeds of lovingkindness, which can all serve to bring us to be a blessing to each other and to the world, and to cause G-d's light to illuminate all of creation.

I look forward to seeing you soon.

Chag Urim Sameach  
(Happy Holiday of Light)!

B'virkat Shalom (with blessings of peace), and prayers for good health, joy, and peace,  
*Rabbi Joe Blair*  
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304-989-4014



## SISTERHOOD MESSAGE

We offer thanks to Neal Barkus for giving the letter below to Gayle Twigger-Shaw at the 150th Anniversary Reunion.

*Ina Angel* President

Members of the Sisterhood and Dr. Bettan:

As your new president, I extend greetings to all of you for the year 1921 - 1922.

I wish to thank you for the honor you have conferred upon me in making me your president and to say that I realize the responsibility this entails.

I hope, with the help of each one of you, to make the coming year a success in every way.

Following the many able presidents you have had and, particularly, my predecessor, I feel that I have no small task before me. However, I know that I am taking hold of an organization that is well established and in good running order.

In addition to the various committees which we now have, I have added three more – membership, hospitality, and uniongrams. The duties of the membership committee are, besides getting new members, to try to get those already members to attend meetings and take a more active interest. The hospitality committee should see that members become acquainted and that an atmosphere of cordiality prevails at meetings. The committee on uniongrams should serve to bring the uniongrams idea to the fore and to try to get members and non-members to make use of this method of sending messages of happiness and cheer to relatives and friends.

To all committees, I would recommend having a secretary to keep records of the meetings so that the annual reports may be complete. Also, a treasurer for each money-handling committee. The Sisterhood should introduce the budget system into its management. By means of this method, each committee will have an allotment of money for its definite expenditures. The officers and chairman of committees who need money for their work should meet and decide approximately how much money is needed for the year.

I would recommend that all books be balanced and audited and handed over at the final meeting of the year. Each officer to turn over the books personally or have them put into the hands of the new officers.

I am ready to meet with committees at any time and to help them in any way that I can, and I also am ready and happy to receive criticisms and suggestions from members. As the Sisterhood is an adjunct of a religious body, the Temple, I feel that we should open each meeting with a reading from the Bible.

I wish to say a word to the Temple committee – a clean temple is a beautiful temple – and I am afraid that in the past, our house of worship has been anything but clean, so there is quite a field for the Temple committee.

Although the Sisterhood has done splendid work, I feel that in one particular we have failed, and that is in accentuating the Sisterhood spirit. Let us try to make this a Sisterhood in reality, instead of merely in name. The word “sisterhood” implies a certain relation of one woman to another. Let each one ask herself the question, “Have I, in the past, lived up to the name sisterhood?” If the answer is negative, let each one of us make a resolution to remedy this defect.

It will be my earnest endeavor to promote a cordial feeling of fellowship among the members of this organization, and the keynote of my message to you is – let us try to intensify the community spirit and to make this a real sisterhood. The whole world is looking forward to the time when the brotherhood of man shall be an established fact, so let us hasten the day by our attitude toward one another. ~ Rita Barkus (Sisterhood President, 1921 - 1923)

## TZEDAKAH (CHARITY)

Repeating myself again because I know that it is so important - please be generous with your tzedakah. You may not realize how many have been helped, or how much it means to those I have been privileged to support, but trust me, they rely on the generosity and kindness of those who donate to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund. It makes a world of difference to them. So, once more, I am asking for your consideration of donations to the Rabbi Discretionary Fund. I deeply appreciate everyone who has donated recently - sincere thanks from the bottom of my heart to all who have made contributions.

These funds are used only in our own Congregation and Community to help those who have urgent needs. I am deeply grateful and truly honored to be allowed to act on behalf of Temple Israel in this way, and to serve as the hand of Temple Israel in assisting individuals in times of distress.

I can assure you that there have been multiple and significant needs supported by the fund. The fund balance was significantly depleted; I mention this because I hope never to have to turn away one of our own who has a need, but I also want to acknowledge the generous support of several people recently, allowing me to meet current needs.

The only reason I am asking you to consider making a donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund (if you have not already), is to help me to support members of our community. As always, I thank you for your generosity and kindness in helping to fulfill this critical mitzvah.

We are taught that Tzedakah is among the highest of all mitzvot. I pray that your heart be moved to give more than you otherwise might, and that your generosity be a blessing for those who receive it. May the blessing you make possible reflect back onto you and your loved ones. *Rabbi Joe Blair*



**A Note of  
Gratitude**

Dear Temple Israel Family, the start of the new year marks six months since I first stepped inside the beautiful Temple Israel building and into the role of Office Administrator, and, boy, have you all kept me busy!

My time here has been a whirlwind of learning the role and assisting behind the scenes with anything to help the tribe of Temple Israel function smoothly.

We were off to the races as I assisted Fran with the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion, worked with Ronni on the Sisterhood Yearbook, and prepared some significant mailings. All the while, I've been meeting many members of Temple Israel; learning more about Jewish traditions and holidays; learning the history of Temple Israel and the artwork within; and learning practicalities, such as office equipment and security.

I tell people that this is truly a unicorn position because of the patchwork of tasks, knowledge, experience, and challenges. The graphic design, financial administration, database management, variety of software, etc., are utilizing the diverse skills I've gained in my career, so I'm thankful those skills won't become stagnant and lost. You have the tools available, and I'm happy to put them to use. I recognize this as a symbiotic relationship, and only hope Temple Israel benefits as much as I do. Luckily for all of us, I was able to hit the ground running on day one!

I sincerely hope the transition hasn't impacted the congregation significantly. Anything that resembled competence in these first six months is due to the team of people in the congregation who supported and guided me (including Nancy M. and Nancy B. at B'nai Jacob). Any bumps along the way, I'm pinning on my buddy, Job (the statue artwork) who is part of my view from the office into the lush garden.

Speaking of the view, I've thoroughly enjoyed observing the seasons change in the garden and along the Kanawha River, as well as the shift in the sun as it casts light upon Job. I am very much looking forward to the changes coming in spring (and my continuing involvement at Temple Israel, hopefully for many years).

My daily commute is made enjoyable as I look forward to the Capitol dome coming into view from I-64 East when I round the curve ahead of Laidley Field. Again, each season has brought its own changes to the dome - the summer morning sun lit the golden dome ablaze, and other mornings the dome is shrouded in low clouds. It's breathtaking to me no matter the conditions. Overall, I am mindful and appreciative of the beauty surrounding Temple Israel as it's situated near the well-kept Capitol Complex and the Kanawha River. All of this adds to my enjoyment coming in to work at Temple Israel, and I feel fortunate to witness this every day.

You may discern from this writing that I appreciate and notice beauty in the environment around me. This includes beauty in people, too. I want to note how touching it was to me to see the congregation come together to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion. I know it was a very important moment for the congregation and it was certainly fun for me to participate!

At the risk of the appearance of flattery or insincerity, the congregation has been exceptionally gracious in welcoming me and helping me feel comfortable here. For that, I am greatly appreciative. You have endeared yourselves to me.

My hope for the new year is to ensure I live up to (and possibly exceed) the congregation's expectations in the work I do for you.

In the words attributed to Benjamin Franklin per Wikipedia, may we all be "....healthy, wealthy, and wise" in all the years before us.

Melissa J. Bart, Temple Israel Office Administrator 

P.S. If haven't met you yet, I look forward to meeting you. If I have met you, I look forward to seeing you again.

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