

# Temple Israel Bulletin

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January 2026  
Tevet / Shevat 5786



## FROM THE RABBI'S DESK

Shalom & greetings! Happy Secular New Year!

This is the Bulletin for January 2026. Our congregational year is in full swing; many things are happening, both ongoing and one-time. I hope you are taking advantage and enjoying many of them.

It comes as a surprise to me that we are already entering the secular new year – it seems to me it was just days ago that we gathered for the High Holy days! Where does the time go?

### **! FRAUD WARNING !**

There has been an huge uptick in Scam and Fraud efforts again lately. Both Rabbi Berman and I have been used as the bait to seek having others (mostly in our congregations as far as I have heard) send funds to the scammers.

The most recent effort was a text scam. Someone (*not me*) texted a generic message asking that you “help me with something.” If you were to reply, they texted back with a story and a request to buy gift cards, then send pictures of the information on the gift cards to them. If anyone did so, the scammers would then use the gift card information and either get cash or merchandise; you would be out the funds, and I would know nothing about it.

As a reminder, neither I, nor anyone from the Temple Israel (nor anyone from the B'nai Jacob Synagogue, for that matter), will send you a cryptic message asking for help, or something of the sort. I would never reach out randomly to people to ask for help – and I am definitely not stuck in a foreign country having lost my wallet and passport, nor do I want you to buy gift cards or wire money!

If you get a fraudulent message by TEXT report it to <http://Reportfraud.ftc.gov>, block the sender, and delete the text. Only the actual recipient of the fraudulent text can report it, and the number associated with the text.

Please remember - **the fraudulent text is NOT SENT FROM MY NUMBER.** It is suggested that you **DO NOT REPLY** – that just confirms that you are a live, prospective victim.

*(Continued on page 3)*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we began our celebration of Hanukkah, it must be acknowledged that this celebration had become clouded by the horrible events that occurred on Bondi Beach in Sydney, Australia.

Anytime, anywhere there is a mass shooting of Jews for simply practicing our religion should give us all pause as to the meaning of being Jewish in this world. Particularly because the Sydney shooting was not an isolated aberration but a reflection of a growing trend of antisemitic violence from different political viewpoints in this country and around the world.

As your President, I have no profound answers as to how this Congregation should deal with this trauma. I will simply observe that I am very happy to have had the Joint Congregational Hanukkah dinner in which we all celebrated our beautiful religion and its emphasis on a festival of “light” against the darkness.

Speaking of both Temple Isreal and B'nai Jacob Synagogue, I am pleased to report that the Boards of both Congregations have approved the language of the Covenant which would govern the combination of both into a Charleston Jewish Community. There is still a lot of work to be done on this consolidation before we submit our progress to the entire congregation for its consideration. However, I hereby renew my pledge to maintain our momentum on these issues.

With that, I want to wish a Happy and Healthy New Year to the Congregation.

Very truly yours,  
*Richard Gottlieb*  
Temple Israel President

## SISTERHOOD PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I want to thank everyone for participating in the Food Drive. The food was distributed to Piedmont Elementary School, Capitol High School, St. Marks United Methodist Church, and Sojourner's Shelter. Each group was very appreciative of the donations!

We have funds to allocate and will decide on distribution at our next meeting on January 25, 2026. Updates to follow.

As we look ahead, let's remember that our collective efforts make a meaningful difference in our community. Your generosity and compassion serve as an inspiration, and together we can continue to support those in need. Thank you again for your commitment to ensuring that no one faces hunger alone.

Last, but not least, we are excited to have a new Sisterhood member – Janet Victorson. We look forward to her participation!

*Ina Angel*  
Temple Israel Sisterhood President

Find More  
Sisterhood Activities On  
Page 6



Read Social Action Corner  
On Page 6

SOCIAL ACTION  
SHABBAT &  
TU B'SHEVAT  
OBSERVANCE

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30  
SEE PAGE 6 FOR  
MORE DETAILS  
JOIN US!

# 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. 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		February	
Thursday, January 1	OFFICE CLOSED   NO A Bisell Torah	Sunday, February 1 10:30 a.m.	Torah Study   <i>Parashah Yitro</i> (Exodus 18:1-20:23)   Online
Friday, January 2 5:30 p.m.	Shabbat Service	Sunday, February 1 4:00 p.m.	Jewish Literature   Online
Sunday, January 4 10:30 a.m.	Torah Study, <i>Parashah Shemot</i> (Exodus 1:1-6:1)   Online	Sunday, February 1 7:00 p.m.	Death Chatter   Online
Sunday, January 4 4:00 p.m.	Jewish Literature   Online	Monday, February 2	<b>Tu B'Shevat</b>
Sunday, January 4 7:00 p.m.	Death Chatter   Online	Wednesday, February 4 10:00 a.m.	How to Get More Out of Being Jewish, Even If...   In Person 
Wednesday, January 7 10:00 a.m.	How to Get More Out of Being Jewish, Even If...   In Person 	Thursday, February 5 12:45 p.m.	WVU OLLI Course Jewish Poetry of Yehudah Amichai 1   Online Register through OLLI
Thursday, January 8 4:30 p.m.	A Bisell Torah   Online	Thursday, February 5 4:30 p.m.	A Bisell Torah   Online
Friday, January 9 5:30 p.m.	Shabbat Service   <i>Torah Parashah Shemot</i> (Exodus 1:1-6:1) Covered Dish Dinner Oneg Shabbat 	Friday, February 6 5:30 p.m.	Shabbat Service   <i>Torah Parashah Yitro</i> (Exodus 18:1-20:23) Covered Dish Dinner Oneg Shabbat 
Monday, January 12 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	Sisterhood Schmooze in the Sisterhood Lounge   Brown Bag Lunch	Monday, February 9 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	Sisterhood Schmooze in the Sisterhood Lounge   Brown Bag Lunch
Tuesday, January 13 5:30 p.m.	Board of Trustees Meeting	Tuesday, February 10 5:30 p.m.	Board of Trustees Meeting
Thursday, January 15 4:30 p.m.	A Bisell Torah   Online	Thursday, February 12 12:45 p.m.	WVU OLLI Course Jewish Poetry of Yehudah Amichai 2   Online Register through OLLI
Friday, January 16 5:30 p.m.	Shabbat Service	Thursday, February 12 4:30 p.m.	A Bisell Torah   Online
Monday, January 19	OFFICE CLOSED   MLK Jr Holiday	Friday, February 13 5:30 p.m.	Shabbat Service NCJW Reproductive Rights Sabbath
Tuesday, January 20 7:00 p.m.	Sacred Study - Close Reading In Person 	Tuesday, February 17 7:00 p.m.	Sacred Study - Close Reading In Person 
Wednesday, January 21 10:00 a.m.	Ask the Rabbis   In Person Jewish Denominations Cont... 	Wednesday, February 18 10:00 a.m.	Ask the Rabbis   In Person Interfaith Marriages & the Jewish Community 
Thursday, January 22 4:30 p.m.	A Bisell Torah   Online	Thursday, February 19 12:45 p.m.	WVU OLLI Course Jewish Poetry of Yehudah Amichai 3   Online Register through OLLI
Friday, January 23 5:30 p.m.	Shabbat Service	Thursday, February 19 4:30 p.m.	A Bisell Torah   Online
Sunday, January 25 1:00 p.m.	Sisterhood Program: Tea   Invite Your Friends & Neighbors! See Page 6 	Friday, February 20 5:30 p.m.	Shabbat Service Religion & Science - Truth Matters
Thursday, January 29 4:30 p.m.	A Bisell Torah   Online	Sunday, February 22 11:00 a.m.	Sisterhood Board of Directors Meeting
Friday, January 30 5:30 p.m.	Shabbat Service   <i>Shabbat Shirah</i> Social Action Shabbat   <b>Tu B'Shevat</b> Observance   See Social Action Corner Page 6 		

**Covered dish dinner following Shabbat service on January 9 & February 6**

**February Continued** 



# FROM THE RABBI'S DESK CONTINUED

*(Continued from page 1)*

If you receive a fraudulent message by EMAIL report it to the domain of the email sender (i.e. Gmail, Yahoo, MSN, AOL, etc.), often at an address like abuse@gmail.com, or something similar, then block and delete the sender.

Don't worry - you will not be blocking me. If you look carefully at the details of the sender, while my name may be shown as the sender, you can see that the actual email address it comes from is NOT mine. It will look something like "Rabbi Joe Blair <asdfjkl;scammer@bulkmailaddress.com>

Just as for a fraudulent text, **DO NOT REPLY to a fraudulent email.**

It is unfortunate that there are so many instances of people trying to trick us out of money, but because that is true, please be extra cautious and avoid getting scammed.

### LOOKING BACK

We entered into the holiday of Hanukkah on December 14<sup>th</sup>. I hope that your *Chag Urim* (holiday of lights) has been beautiful, meaningful, and a source of joy for you and your loved ones.

The Joint Congregational Communal Hanukkah dinner was postponed due to the weather forecast, moved to Wednesday, December 17th, at Temple Israel this year. It was lovely – good food, good friends, and a chance to socialize and celebrate together.

It was wonderful seeing those who were there; those who could not join us should know that we missed you, and hope you can join us for other events this year, and (I hope) at the Hanukkah celebration next year (which will probably be at B'nai Jacob, if we follow the same rotation).

It would be ungracious and wrong not to extend thanks to those who planned, prepared, and made this wonderful event possible, as well as a success. Many thanks to the Temple Israel House Committee, chaired by Jill Epstein, along with her volunteer crew of David McAfee and Beth Winter; the House staff consisting of Tasha Medley and her family

members, Na'Jah Shaffer-Tatum, Tatum Martin, and Emily Clark for preparing all the decorations, doing the set up, and cleaning up afterwards as needed; to Melissa Bart for ably honchoing the reservation list; to Chasity Thomas and her staff at Tastefully Dun Catering for delicious food and flexibility to reschedule at the last minute due to the weather forecast; to Beth and Gary Winter for handling check-ins at the door, and to David McAfee for making the gluten-free vegetarian sweet potato latkes.

I was delighted and pleased to have Rabbi Berman join us for this event; it is a pleasure for me to be able to share Jewish celebrations and events with him and his family – I hope to continue to do so at many events!

I pray that we may continue to enjoy such lovely celebrations as a combined *kehillah kadoshah* (a holy community), throughout this year, and in years to come.

We had another Hanukkah-related event on December 21<sup>st</sup>, the eighth night of Hanukkah. It took place at the GoMart Ballpark (Dirty Birds), during the "Light the Night" festivities. Rabbi Berman and I were joined by others at this brief event where we publicly lit the Hanukkiah (Hanukkah Menorah) with the blessings, offered a few thoughts, and then we were joined by Mike Pushkin in leading some Hanukkah songs. Thanks to Rabbi Berman for spearheading this event. It was fun for those present.

### LAY-LED SERVICES

We had two lay-led services recently: one was on the Friday of Thanksgiving weekend, November 28<sup>th</sup>, ably led again this year by Alan Fleischmann, and the other was the Shabbat falling on December 19<sup>th</sup>, led beautifully by Josh Barrett. My thanks and appreciation to them for stepping up to cover when I was unable to be present.

### LOOKING AHEAD

There is a lot that is going on in the community from this point forward.

For more details on scheduled events and activities, see the At-a-Glance and Religious Events listings in this Bulletin – and because things can and often do 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 Israel website calendar – templeisraelwv.org.

### THOUGHTS, BLESSINGS & SALUTATIONS

As we enter fully into this secular new year, and continue in the Jewish calendar year of 5786, I offer you this prayer.

*In this year, and beyond, may we draw closer to the divine, and be guided towards our best selves.*

*May we be a vehicle to bring G-d's presence to every living thing we encounter, and thereby to all of creation.*

*May we be moved to take every opportunity to be kind to those around us; this will make a difference, bring the divine into focus, and repair the world.*

*We know that there are many reasons to feel down, dispirited, or despairing; may we each raise our own spirits and those of everyone we encounter by sharing kindness and love. In this way, may we each make the world a better place than we found it.*

I hope to see you at some of the events that are upcoming in our community.

Warm wishes for you now, and throughout the year of 5786 – and the new secular year of 2026!

*B'virvat Shalom* (with blessings of peace), and prayers for health, joy, healing, and peace,  
 Rabbi Joe Blair  
 rabbijoeb@gmail.com  
 304-989-4014

## February Continued

Wednesday, February 25 ~ 12:00 p.m. Noon	Public Presentation by Rabbi Elon Gilad @ University of Charleston See Page 8 & Bulletin Board
Thursday, February 26 4:30 p.m.	A Bisell Torah   Online
Friday, February 27 5:30 p.m.	Shabbat Service   <i>Shabbat Zachor</i>   <b>Purim</b> Observance



**JANUARY YAHRZEITS** Names are read the Friday evening prior to the Yahrzeit date, which is beside names.

**December 26**

Frances Roseblatt	12/27
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
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 2**

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
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

**January 9**

Anita Frankengerger	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
Evelyn Mendelsohn Badner	1/13
Elsie Forb	1/13
Ida Polan Meyer	1/14
Dr. A. Stanley Webster	1/14
David Goldfine	1/15
Pearl Fenster	1/16
Jane Frankengerger Greenwald	1/16

**January 16**

John Burkhardt	1/17
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
Sarah Goldstein	1/23
Israel Rabinowitz	1/23
Frances S. Schaffner	1/23
Harry L. Wills	1/23

**January 23**

Rose Marks Stern	1/24
Daniel Kurland	1/26
Judith Pollack	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

**January 30**

Rose Edelman	1/31
Philip Barnett Hall	1/31
Terrie Rosenfeld	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
Hedwig "Hedy" Poppelsdorf	2/2
Eva Sanders	2/2
Mary Selinger	2/2
Herbert Frankengerger	2/3
Ben Marks	2/3
John A. Pianfetti	2/3
Esther Sloman	2/3
Leora Osgood May	2/4
Ruth Teichman	2/5
John Warren	2/5
Myron "Mike" Greenwald	2/6
Leonard Ingraham	2/6
Dorothy Stack	2/6
Mary Weisberg	2/6

# 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, though your name is not listed here.

- Marsha Albert
- David Bailey
- Maria Gaona Bellamy
- Arthur Epstein
- Sybil Epstein
- Jonathan Freedman
- Karl Gattlieb
- Jack Goldfarb
- Mirabella Grizer and Family
- Lisa and George Hess
- Rabbi Earl Jordan
- Ruth Jordan
- Paula Kushner
- Zel Lewis
- Judy Lundy
- Ditty Markham
- Gary Markham
- Daniel Meehan
- Deborah Meehan
- Laura Patterson
- Kay Pickus
- Mark Schaul
- Paul Skaggs
- Bob Steinberg
- Barbara Braun Tweddle
- Nancy Tyler
- Wesley Walker

We also recall in our prayers:

- All who are impacted by illness or disease
- Everyone afflicted by natural or man-made disasters, war, violence, terrorism, or oppression
- All hostages, captives, prisoners, and their families
- Each person in need of prayers for healing and wholeness, specifically including those who are in your heart or mind at this time

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

Our condolences to Ron Eisinger and family on the recent passing of Sue Eisinger (Susan Rae Eisinger), 78, on

November 30<sup>th</sup> in the early morning hours, in Charleston. Sue was a vital member of Temple Israel for many years, serving as President of the Temple Sisterhood for three terms, and as chair of the House Committee for 19 years. Her funeral took place on December 5<sup>th</sup> at Temple Israel, with interment immediately following at the Hebrew Section of Spring Hill Cemetery, both officiated by Rabbi Joe Blair. A shiva minyan was held on Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at Temple Israel, with refreshments and an opportunity to share stories with the family. May the mourners be comforted from heaven, and may Sue's memory be an enduring blessing.

Our condolences to the family of Stephen Jay Small, who died on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025, in Haverford, Pennsylvania. Steve was a long-time active member of Temple Israel, and served as President of the Congregation from 1999-2001. The funeral took place in Pennsylvania, with interment in the cemetery at Bala Cynwyd. May the mourners be comforted from heaven, and may Steve's memory be an enduring blessing.

Our prayers for the wellbeing and support of those who are food insecure, without stable housing or homeless, lacking access to healthcare or medications, impacted or suffering from events out of their own control, or otherwise in dire straits. May the public safety net catch and support them, and where it fails, may people, religious and faith communities, and other institutions and organizations be moved to step in to offer what is needed to alleviate suffering, privation, and lack. May the spirit of the Divine Holy One cause us each and all to be aware of and sensitive to those in need, and move us to do all we are able.

Just as I was putting the final touches on this Bulletin article, I learned about the terrible and tragic antisemitic attack on Bondi Beach in Sydney, Australia. The loss of so many lives is devastating, and my heart goes out to the survivors and their families. It feels even worse as this scourge of darkness rose to swallow the light of families gathered to acknowledge Hanukkah together, a time meant for joy and celebration and bringing light into the world. Blessings for Ahmed al Ahmed of Sydney, Australia, who heroically disarmed and drove off one of the attackers; may he recover fully and soon.

## *Mazal Tov* (Congratulations)

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

Mazal tov to Lee and Tudi Forb, grandparents, and Kelly and Nathan Forb, parents, on the bat mitzvah of Farrah Forb on December 19-20, 2025.

**Two Food Drives:** The B'nai Jacob Ladies Auxiliary and the Temple Israel Sisterhood have both been engaged in successful Tzedakah projects - food drives to collect food and/or funds to help those in our community who have been affected by the cutbacks in food assistance programs. Mazal Tov to both organizations on this effort. Please consider donating shelf-stable food or funds to either, or both of these projects. We extend our thanks and a hearty *mazal tov* to both organizations for this important effort.

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 Bloom Emrick; Cookie Glasser; Robert Hess; David Feibelmann; Harry Peck; Jackie Artz; Ellen Kay & Victor Bastron; David McAfee; Ellyn & Ed Goldberg; Laura & Jace Goins; Angela Cannon; Arla Ralston & Roger Forman; **Joy Kleeman (MILESTONE)**

**January:** Russ Emrick; Caroline Ostand; Ken Silverstein; Elizabeth Kantor-Bright; David Kushner; Joan Randall; David Winowich; Ellyn Goldberg; Christina Peraino; **Raya Redmond (MILESTONE)**; Richard Holicker; Johnny Ferrara; Tiana Hall; Richard Gottlieb; David B. Shapiro; Laura Goins; Beth Steinberg Winter

Mazal tov to Ann Kushner on her upcoming move to Heritage in Huntington. She will have the same cell phone; please use that to contact her. She still does not know when this move will take place; for the time being she remains at Harmony at South Ridge. We will let you know when she has moved, as soon as we hear.

Rose Christian, Dona Hall's mother, after recovering from an infection and an unrelated fall, has returned to Harmony at South Ridge. She would appreciate visitors and contact.

I hope I included all who should be here (I tried!), but if I missed anyone or anything, please forgive me, and let me know so I can acknowledge it in the next Bulletin.

Rabbi Joe Blair

# SOCIAL ACTION CORNER

## Social Action Shabbat & Tu B'Shevat Observance Friday, January 30th, 2026

**What a great way to bring in 2026 with our traditional Tu B'Shevat service!!**

Stay tuned as we anticipate another outstanding evening, terrific place settings of flowers, fruits & nuts, food galore & homemade fruit pies with ice cream.

More information to follow, but please save the date for now!

In the meantime, please let us know ASAP if you'd like to participate in the service readings and or even volunteer for other duties!



**Tu B'Shevat Table Arrangement**  
Photo Courtesy of Cookie Glasser

Fondly, Rachel Dash & Cookie Glasser  
Co-chairs, Temple Israel Social Action Committee

# U P C O M I N G

## INTERFAITH IMMIGRATION SUMMIT

The Union of Reform Judaism “strongly supports undocumented immigrants, advocating for comprehensive immigration reform with pathways to citizenship and against harsh detention/deportation rooted in the Jewish value of welcoming the stranger. The URJ encourages congregations to, among other actions, advocate for policies that protect the human and civil rights of immigrants, protect immigrants from deportation, support asylum seekers, and end child detention.”

An interfaith immigration summit will take place at Saint John XX111 on January 25<sup>th</sup> beginning at 3:00 p.m. and January 26<sup>th</sup>, ending after a catered lunch.

There will be workshops on advocacy and other practices for congregations and people of faith who are interested in becoming involved in the effort to ensure the protection of the civil and human rights of undocumented immigrants in WV and to stop the harsh mass arrests and detentions by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE.)

Please contact Social Action Committee Co-chair Rachel Dash if you are interested in attending the summit.

# SISTERHOOD

*Sisterhood Tea*  
Sunday, January 25, 2026  
1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Temple Israel

Invite your friends and neighbors for tea, crumpets, fun entertainment, and an overview of our congregational mission and historical & current cherished community connections.

**Please RSVP** at the Temple Israel Office no later than Wednesday, January 21st, with the number and names of your confirmed guests

304-342-5852 or templeisraelwv@gmail.com

See you there!  
Cookie Glasser, Program Chair & Ina Angel, President

The Sisterhood Care Committee delivered 12 Hanukkah bags to congregants.

Thanks to Lynn Gattlieb & Betty Stern for helping with delivery!



# BE ON THE LOOKOUT

A statement and itemized record of your contributions to Temple Israel for calendar year 2025 will be in your postal mail in January.

If you pay dues quarterly or annually in January, your dues statement will be included in the same mailing.

## from Behind the Glass Wall

Dear Temple Israel Family, At the start of the secular new year, I'm certain I'm not alone in reflecting on 2025, which passed entirely too quickly. Much of my reflection is mental inventory of personal accomplishments and challenges. Rest assured that my time spent working at Temple Israel falls into the asset side of the balance sheet!

As I wrote in my Bulletin article published last January, at the risk of appearance of flattery or insincerity, I want you to know I continue to quite enjoy my work and the community of people engaged with Temple Israel. Since you've kept me around for a year, I hope that serves as evidence that you find the relationship workable.

Of course, there have been challenges and mistakes (MANY behind the scenes!) I've made in the past year, but you have all been gracious and patient in forgiving or overlooking mistakes I've made. I'm sure there are plenty I'm not even aware of! I truly hope that any issues brought to my attention were resolved in satisfactory manner.

After a full year of learning the office and lifecycle of Temple Israel, I feel in a position where I may be able to anticipate workload going forward. This opens up the possibility, between the anticipated busy moments, for finding areas to enhance and streamline work to benefit the Congregation and the office.

One recent enhancement was at the request of Sisterhood President, Ina Angel, to introduce postcards as an additional method of communication. The inaugural postcard was sent for a Sisterhood event in October, and you may have received the second postcard, which was an invitation to this year's annual joint Hanukkah dinner. If any committees are interested in sending a postcard as a quick communication, we can work together to make that happen.

Another new feature we implemented was the use of online surveys to collect and organize participation for the High Holy Day services, as well as Rabbi Joe's course offerings. We hope you found the surveys to be convenient and not too difficult to navigate.

Also, be sure to check the bulletin board in the hallway as I'm working to be mindful about refreshing items and posting timely and relevant materials.

There are other ideas percolating in the office that I hope will be well received if introduced. Please let me know if you have ideas, as well!

Please know that I am fond of the (what I think is good) rapport we've developed. There is a distinct weekly rhythm around the office of visitors and vendors, and I look forward to the predictable visitors, as well as occasional impromptu visits. I've had many pleasant email exchanges with members who I have yet to meet in person. I enjoy the good-natured joking and teasing with many folks. I find humor in the antics that members come up with, which ultimately make life in the office "exciting."

I have now witnessed every season of the garden view, and continue to be awed every day when I drive by the Capitol dome during my commute. It has a new, different personality each day, and it's my favorite subject to photograph (but I let Rabbi Joe think he is).

My hope for 2026 is for us to find serenity and grace for ourselves and each other.

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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## TZEDAKAH (CHARITY)

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I want to start by expressing my heartfelt and sincere thanks to everyone who made a donation recently to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund. I am very grateful that I can again meet the requests of those in need, and you are the reason that is possible. *Baruch Hashem!*

I know, I know - I have asked you to give Tzedakah in almost every Bulletin in which I have written anything since I came to Charleston. Honestly, the frequency of my request is an indication of the value I attach to this Mitzvah, and how important I believe it is, both as a mitzvah, and to the health of our community. **THANK YOU SO MUCH.** These funds are used 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 reaching out and assisting people in times of distress. And even though I am grateful that you helped with the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund, it is still true that **there are many worthy causes** that deserve your consideration. Please do whatever you are able. Support those causes that are close to your heart.

Along the lines of other causes: Temple Israel Sisterhood and the B'nai Jacob Ladies Auxiliary have both been conducting food drives to collect food and/or funds to help those in our community that have been affected by the cutbacks in food assistance programs. Sisterhood collected through December 14th, and the Ladies Auxiliary is continuing their collection throughout the year. Please consider donating when and what you can.

Because 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*



Save the date-

**FOR TWO EXCITING VISITS TO OUR COMMUNITY!**

**Wednesday, February 25th, 2026: Elon Gilad**

*Expert in Jewish history and Hebrew language, social media content creator, and author of "The Secret History of Judaism." Hosted by Congregation B'nai Jacob, Temple Israel and the University of Charleston.*



**Thursday to Saturday, May 28th-30th, 2026: Rabbi Deborah Sacks Mintz**

*Director of Tefillah and Music at the Hadar Institute, accomplished singer, Jewish educator, and recording artist. Hosted by Congregation B'nai Jacob and Temple Israel.*



**Stay tuned for more details!**

Graphic credits throughout the Bulletin are available upon request.

**Covered dish**  
**dinner**  
**following**  
**Shabbat service**  
**on January 9 &**  
**February 6**





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