

Temple Beth El^{ectronic} News

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Sivan 5769

June 2009

Thank You

- ✧ To Alan Garfield for representing Temple Beth El at the DACU Spring Worship Service. Alan spoke on "The Voice of the Other."
- ✧ To Lou Landau, who spoke to several World History classes at Hempstead High School about his experiences as a child during World War II.
- ✧ To Rabbi Stephanie, for staying with us for another year! Read more about this in the "From Rabbi Stephanie" column later in this newsletter.

End-of-Year Temple Beth El Adult Social on Saturday, June 6, 2009

Barb and Dick Alexander are once again hosting this festive evening. (Thank you!) The meal is a potluck. 5:30 for appetizers; dinner at 6:30. (If you are bringing appetizers, come at 5:30.)

Directions to the Alexander's home (6 Horizon Lane) in the Galena Territory:

Hwy 20 to Eagle Ridge Inn/Galena Territory (@8 miles east of Galena on North side). Proceed on Eagle Ridge Dr. to Vista Ridge (about 1 mile in. If you go down a great big hill you have gone too far).

Turn left on Vista Ridge and go @1/3 mile.

Turn right on Horizon Lane. They are 2nd house on the left.

phone: 815-777-2263; email alexgalena@aol.com

Mitzvah Moments

- ✧ Mazel Tov to Randy and Rina Sirk on the graduation of their son Brad from the University of Wisconsin at Madison.
- ✧ And mazel tovs (is there such a word?) to the Garfield family: Carly graduated from Edgewood College. She was a commencement speaker, an award winner, and will be going to Israel this summer on a Birthright trip. Alan received the Faculty of the Year award from the University of Dubuque. This award is given by the student government.

Ruthie Silverberg

Ruthie has moved to Florida, and we wish her the very best! She was born and raised here in Dubuque, married Jerry at Temple Beth-El, and has four children who also grew up in Dubuque. Ruthie and Jerry's children are Leiba, Michael, Lori and Charlie, and Ruthie now has seven beautiful grandchildren, four of them girls and three of them boys. Ruthie will be living near her daughter Lori, son-in-law Maurice, and baby Isabella. We will miss you!!

Rotman Tribute Fund

For many years, Ruthie Silverberg chaired the Rotman Tribute Fund. The fund goes to help temple kids who go to camp (OSRUI) and to beautify the temple. Money is raised by selling tribute note cards which can be used in honor of someone, a mazel tov, in memory, as a get well card, and so on. Fern Reinstein has “inherited” this chair, and writes the following:

Upon Ruthie Silverberg's departure from Dubuque, I have inherited the Rotman Tribute Fund. If there is anyone who would like to take this over I would be happy to get everything to them. On the off chance that this will now be my responsibility, there will be rule changes. I will not be sending out tributes for individuals and they will be sold in packages of 5 for \$20 and paid for upon receipt. We are all very busy and I don't have time to stop and do this for everyone. This is a fund raiser for the temple so let's all remember that these are wonderful to send for both happy and sad occasions.

From Rabbi Stephanie

As I write these words, we are preparing to welcome in the Festival of Shavuot, the third and last pilgrimage holiday in the Jewish calendar (following Sukkot and Passover). On each pilgrimage holiday, a different *megillah*, or scroll, is read from the section of the Bible known as Writings. On Shavuot, we read the Scroll of Ruth, a Moabite who married an Israelite. Suffering the sorrows of childlessness and widowhood, Ruth was determined to stay with her mother-in-law, Naomi, and go back with her to the Land of Israel. Although Naomi urged her to return to her family and people, Ruth remained faithful, declaring, “Wherever you will go, I will go. Wherever you lodge, there I will lodge. Your people shall be my people and your God, my God. Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried.”

The Scroll of Ruth, like all five of the *megillot*, is a powerful and unique biblical read (and at four chapters, a short one as well). Many of us are most familiar with the Scroll of Esther, as we read it playfully each Purim. The Scroll of Lamentations, read on Tisha b'Av in commemoration of the destruction of the ancient temples in Jerusalem, is as woeful in its tone as Esther is jubilant (at least by the end of the story). The Scroll of Song of Songs, an evocative love poem read on Passover, is said to be a metaphor for the love between God and Israel – yet it might have more in common with romance literature than it does the rest of the Bible.

And then there's Sukkot's *megillah*, Ecclesiastes, whose third chapter is recognizable to most of us both for its language and the truth that underlies it:

A season is set for everything, a time for every experience under heaven:
A time for being born and a time for dying,
A time for planting and a time for uprooting the planted;
A time for slaying and a time for healing,
A time for tearing down and a time for building up;
A time for weeping and a time for laughing,
A time for wailing and a time for dancing;
A time for throwing stones and a time for gathering stones,
A time for embracing and a time for shunning embraces;
A time for seeking and a time for losing,
A time for keeping and a time for discarding;
A time for ripping and a time for sewing,
A time for silence and a time for speaking;
A time for loving and a time for hating;
A time for war and a time for peace.

As my family and I have been navigating a time of personal transition, I have been thinking about these famous words quite a bit. I have usually read them as I suppose most of us have, (thanks in no small part to Pete Seeger): “There is a time to every purpose under heaven,” and everything thus happens distinctly and purposefully in its own time. However, lately I have been wondering if we are not meant to read Ecclesiastes quite differently. To use a couple of lines as examples, perhaps *even* in a time of weeping, there is a time for laughing; *even* in a time of war, there is time for peace.

So it is that *even* in this time of transition, there is an opportunity for continuation. Though Aaron, Eli and I will be relocating to St. Louis this July as we continue to search for full time work to begin the following year, the temple has decided to enable me to continue serving as Temple Beth El’s rabbi for the coming year by flying me in for monthly visits. Please know how deeply honored I am by the congregation’s commitment to our relationship. It gives me tremendous satisfaction to know we will spend an additional year together celebrating holidays and simchas, learning and exploring the riches of our tradition, and sharing in community the challenges, struggles and sorrows of our journeys.

And, in the short term, it makes it so much easier to say but a brief goodbye for the summer.

With all best wishes and much gratitude –
L’shalom,

Rabbi Stephanie M. Alexander

Upcoming Activities

- **Saturday, June 6th, 3:00 pm @ the temple – Looking to next year...**

Now that we know we have one more year together, let’s make the most of it! The goals for our afternoon discussion will be twofold:

- (1) **Structure:** What has been working well? What might benefit from some revising? We’ll discuss timing of programs, format, locations – the whole nine yards. To my knowledge, though we have certainly engaged in informal ad hoc evaluations throughout the past three years, we have never sat down together for a formal review. It’s time, and everything will be on the table.
- (2) **Content:** I am a “list” person. I have lists of ideas I’d like to explore, films I’d like to see, books I’d like to read – even books I’d like to write. But *my* lists are not what matter. Please, please, please share with me what *you* would like to explore, see, read and do in the formats we brainstorm together. I will bring a few “seeds” to get us started, but think of me as your personal shopper – let me know what you’d like to try on, and I’ll work to get my hands on it for you. And I don’t even charge extra for the service! ☺



Service and Mitzvah Schedule for 5769

Revised 5/31/09

NOTE: Rabbi Stephanie offers a slew of activities on the weekends she is here. The schedule below does NOT include those specific activities. Refer to each newsletter for the specifics of an upcoming weekend.

Friday, June 5...7:00pm Shabbat service
Saturday, June 6... time 5:30

dinner: Randy Sirk, oneg: Alexander
End-of-Year Adult Social hosted by the Alexanders