

SIM SHALOM

OUR NEWSLETTER

Sh'vat-Adar 5770

February-March 2010

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Happy Purim!!

Celebrate! 10 a.m. Sunday, Feb. 28

Rabbi Joseph will lead morning services and the Megillah reading.

Everybody is expected to be in costume — regardless of age! There will be a potluck lunch at noon followed by costume judging, a tasting contest for the best homemade hamantaschen (is there any other kind in the Rio Grande Valley?) plus games and music.

Please contact Patty Gaytan, who is coordinating the lunch, at 893-5724.



From the Rabbi

Shalom,

This Saturday night and Sunday, Jews all over the world will observe the Festival of Purim. Purim commemorates the deliverance of the Jewish People throughout the Persian Empire from a murderous plot hatched by Haman, the

chief minister of King Achashveros.

Purim is a clear example of *Hashgachah K'lalit* — Divine providence. The events of Purim inspired Rabbi Maimonides and the rabbis of the Mishneh to write. "Even if all the festivals should be annulled in

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CALENDAR

FRI., FEB. 26

Shabbat Service, 7:30 PM

SAT., FEB. 27Shabbat Service, 9 AM
Havdallah/Basic **NEW!**
Judaism Class, 6:30 PM**SUN., FEB. 28**Religion School, 10 AM
PURIM SERVICE**FRI., MAR. 5** **NEW!**

Shabbat Service, 7:30 PM

SUN., MAR. 7

Religion School, 10 AM

MARCH 15-19

Spring Break

FRI., MAR. 26

Shabbat Service, 7:30 PM

SAT., MAR. 27Shabbat Service, 9 AM
Havdallah/Basic **NEW!**
Judaism Class, 6:30 PM**SUN., MAR. 28**

Religion School, 10 AM

MON., MAR. 29

Passover Seder, 6:30 PM

FRI., APR. 2 **NEW!**

Shabbat Service, 7:30 PM

SUN., APR. 4

Religion School, 10 AM

SUN., APRIL 11

Religion School, 10 AM

SUN., APR. 18

Religion School, 10 AM

FRI., APR. 23

Shabbat Service, 7:30 PM

SAT., APR. 24Shabbat Service, 9 AM
Havdallah/Basic **NEW!**
Judaism Class, 6:30 PM**SUN., APR. 25**

Religion School, 10 AM

NEWS AND NOTES

■ TREASURER'S REPORT

Our year begins and ends with the High Holy Days. We currently have \$20,300.00 in our account. Our monthly expenses are \$5,300.00 and we will need an additional \$31,800.00 to pay all expenses for this year. Outstanding dues are \$14,210.00. If everyone pays their dues there will be no need for an emergency fund raiser. Our long term debt for remodeling the Temple is \$6,565.00.

— Bert Wolf

NEW Temple Happenings:

■ Basic Judaism Class, taught by Rabbi Joseph after Havdalah on Saturday evenings when he is in Harlingen. The one hour class begins at 6:30 p.m. and covers the basic principals of Judaism.

■ New Services: The temple is holding an additional **Erev Shabbat** service each month, led by Fernando Russek at 7:30 p.m. on the first Friday of the month. We are trying this new service for a few months; attend now if you're interested in additional services!

Shabbat morning hot breakfast and Torah discussion after services on Saturday mornings when Rabbi Joseph is in Harlingen. Services are now starting at 9 a.m.

■ Passover is around the corner, and the temple is once again planning to hold a Community Seder. It will be at 6:30 p.m. Monday, March 29, in the temple. The cost will be the same as last year: \$30 for adults 13 and older; \$15 for children 6 to 12; and free for those 5 and younger. We will need help from congregants to set up the room and the tables. Also, we will need help arranging the seder plates and donating some ingredients. Anyone up for making matzoh balls or haroset? Please contact Fernando R or Laurel S if you can help. Also, send your check to reserve a place to Laurel Steinberg, 613 W Saint Charles St, Brownsville, TX 78520. Your check is your reservation.

■ It's a huge mitzvah to give charity on Purim! Please consider a donation to the Temple as part of your giving. See the Rabbi's column on Purim customs.

■ Check out this charming website that promotes Shabbat candle lighting: <http://fridaylight.org/page/new-index.php>

■ Congratulations to Amy Koppel for being named Woman of the Year by the American Association of University Women local chapter. Amy will receive the honor at the group's annual banquet on April 17. Amy was selected in recognition of her service to the Girls Scouts, the Junior League, Harlingen schools and, of course, the Jewish community.

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From the Rabbi

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the Messianic Era, Purim will never be nullified." (*Book of Seasons, Laws of Megillah 2:18, Midrash Mishlei 9.*)

Traditional Jews observe several religious requirements associated with Purim. The first is the Fast of Esther — *Ta'anit Esther* — that is normally observed on Adar 13 to commemorate Queen Esther's three-day fast. If the 13th falls on Shabbat when fasting is prohibited, as it does this year, the Fast of Esther is observed the preceding Thursday.

There are seven specific mitzvot for Purim.

Mikrah Megillah: The Biblical Book of Esther is read on Purim. The *ba'al koreri* (megillah reader) folds it back like a letter because the decree to celebrate Purim was sent as a letter in scroll form to all the Jews after the victory.

Machzit Hashekel: In the evening, just before reading the Megillah, it is customary to donate three half-dollars to charity. This recalls the Biblical commandment to donate *Machzit Hashekel* — a half shekel during the month of Adar, in order to pay for the twice daily sacrifices offered by the Kohanim in the Temple on behalf of all Jews. The three half dollars are symbolic of the three times *Machzit Hashekel* is mentioned in the Torah.

Mishloach Manot: Sending gifts to friends is also derived from the Book of Esther.

Se'udat Purim: It is a mitzvah to have an especially festive meal on Purim Day in keeping with the words of the Megillah. "Celebrate the fourteenth day of the month of Adar in happiness and feasting."

Matanot L'Evyonim: Giving gifts to the poor is a significant Purim mitzvah. Ready-to-eat food or money must be given to at least two poor people. Maimonides teaches in the Mishneh Torah that this mitzvah is more

important than feasting or sending gifts to friends, because "there is nothing more joyful than gladdening the poor, the orphaned, the widowed and the stranger among us."

Kriat Torah: The Torah is read just before the Megillah. The Torah portion is from Parshat Beshallach (*Exodus 17:8-16*), which describes the attack of Amalek upon the Israelites in the wilderness.

Al Hanisim: The beautiful prayer *Al Hanisim* (Concerning the Miracles) is recited during the services on Purim and in the *Birkat HaMazon* (Grace after Meals). This beautiful prayer is a brief account of the miracles of the events of Purim.

It is traditional to eat Hamantachen, the three-cornered pastry filled with poppy seeds or jelly. The shape is said to represent the hat worn by the infamous Haman. It is also traditional to dress up in masquerade, often as characters in the Purim story. Masquerading also reminds us that although we cannot see or hear G-d directly, G-d's presence is always with us.

We begin the *Al Hanisim* prayer by reciting the words, "We thank You for the miraculous deliverance..." A wonderful way to express our gratitude to G-d in keeping with the spirit of Purim is to use this opportunity to give charity to those individuals in need and to give on behalf of our beloved community Congregation Temple Beth Israel. Then like the Jews in the Book of Esther, we too will experience true joy and happiness.

We invite the entire community to join us at 10 a.m. Sunday, Feb. 28, as we celebrate the wonderful holiday of Purim. Come in costume and have a wonderful time!

Laurie and I look forward to seeing everyone this weekend!

Shalom U'V'Racha,
Rabbi Frank and Laurie Joseph

DONATIONS

- From Dr. Bliss and Robin Clark, toward our school building loan
- From Janet and Barry Wilder, in honor of Purim, and in honor of their son Barry Hirschman, who will speak at the Rutgers University School of Labor Relations Convocation where he will receive his Master's degree this May.
- From Alma Russek for the Building Fund, wishing Amy Koppel a Refuah Shlema (a complete recovery)
- From Abby Warshowsky, a second donation for the Gabai Fund.
- Thanks to David and Elizabeth Goldstein who have donated a tablecloth for Shabbat onegs.

ONEGS

Checklist:

- Decaf coffee
- Cream & sugar
- Decaf cold drinks or juice and ice
- Cups for coffee and drinks
- Plastic ware, napkins, plates
- Kosher wine
- Small wine cups
- Unsliced challah
- Table cloth (if one is used from the Temple, please launder it and return it to the Temple as soon as possible)
- Table decoration
- Desserts for about 40-50 people (choices of cookies, cakes, nuts, fruit, coffee cakes, or flan)



FEBRUARY

* Janet Wilder
Jamie and Bert Wolf
Lori and David
Suissa

** Oneg coordinator is responsible for organizing the group and its duties (who brings and does what, when and where).*

NEWS AND NOTES

Continued from Page 2

- Alma Russek is selling **Shabbat challah** for \$5. Contact her at 956-970-7722.
- Thank you to all who attended the **January Shabbat pot luck dinner** and brought such delicious food! It was a warm and relaxing social evening. We had over 50 people attending with 18 temple families represented.
- The Religion School and a few other congregants enjoyed a great **Tu B'Shevat outing at the new Resaca de las Palmas State Park** in Olmito on Sunday, Jan. 31. We hiked near the visitor center and rode the "tram," a guided 3-mile trip through the park seeking birds and other interesting wildlife and plants. We then had a delicious picnic lunch with many types of fruits to honor the holiday. Teams were formed and competed in puzzling out a Tu B'Shevat quiz. The winning team of Emma Huff, Braulio Gaytan, Rachel Russek, Madeline Huff, Patty Gaytan, Veronica Huff, and Natalie Wood was rewarded with a tree planted in their honor in Israel.

■ This year's **Relay for Life for the American Cancer Society** will be held in Harlingen on the night of April 30. Once again Adriana Gonzalez is chairing the Stars of David with the help of her mother, Abby Warshowsky. This year, the temple hopes for a really big turnout of participants

— Contributors: Laurel Steinberg,
Janet Wilder, Alma Russek