

Sim Shalom

Nisan 5774
APRIL 2014

THE NEWSLETTER OF TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL, HARLINGEN TEXAS

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COMMUNITY SEDER Monday, April 14, 6:30 pm

Reserve your seat by April 10. More information on Page 2.

FROM THE RABBI

Shalom,

The seder service on Passover is the oldest surviving ritual in the Western World, dating back some 3,300 years to the night, possibly in the reign of Ramses II, when the Israelites ate their last meal in Egypt in preparation for their journey to freedom.

Certain features still remain from Biblical times: the matzo and maror, the reminder of the Paschal offering, the questions asked by a child, and the explanations given by an adult. In some communities, especially non-Ashke-

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

I never imagined that I would be writing a Sim Shalom submission as Temple Beth Israel's newly elected President. It was never a position I sought, but my love for our Temple has landed me here. I hope, however, with everyone's support, we can have a fruitful year. Our little Temple is always a bit like the Little Engine That Could, or even our ancestors who after every tragedy or set back just kept going. This past year has been so very productive that I would like to keep going. We celebrated four b'nai mitzvahs, and we are looking forward

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Calendar

APRIL

- 11-14 *Rabbi in town*
 11 Shabbat service, 7:30 p.m.
 12 Shabbat service, 9 a.m.,
 with Torah discussion and
 breakfast to follow
 12 Havdalah and talk by Rabbi
 Joseph, 6:30 pm
 14 Temple Community Seder,
 Erev Passover; 6:30 p.m.
 15-22 Passover
 20 Religion School
 27 Religion School
 Yom HaShoah

MAY

- 2 Shabbat service, 7:30 p.m.
 4 Religion School
 5 Yom HaZikaron
 6 Yom HaAtzma'ut, Israel
 Independence Day
 18 Religion School, Lag B'Omer
 23-25 *Rabbi in town*

Celebrations

BIRTHDAYS

- 4/5 Alma Russek
 4/5 Jamie Wolf
 4/6 Dagan Wise-Herring
 4/11 Andre Suissa
 4/15 Jonathan Berg
 4/16 Brittni Elise Greenfeld
 4/17 Sophia Simha
 4/20 Harry Holzman
 5/2 Susan Ander
 5/4 Patty Gaytan
 5/14 Marisa L. Kahn
 5/15 Benjamin Gonzalez
 5/30 Andrew Newman

ANNIVERSARIES

- 5/14 Danny & Marisa Wise-Herring
 Khan
 5/29 Bill & Monica Stewart
 5/30 Bill Berg & Laurel Steinberg

Did we miss you?

*Please send birthdays & anniversaries
 to laurie.b.joseph@gmail.com.*

NEWS

■ CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NEW TEMPLE OFFICERS:

Abby Warshowsky _ President; Rich Newman - Vice President; Anne Weiss - Secretary; Bert Wolf - Treasurer; Joel Smith - Trustee; Susan Ander - Trustee; Alma Russek - Trustee; Rollie Koppel - Trustee Emeritus

■ **COMMUNITY SEDER:** Monday, April 14, 6:30 pm, led by Rabbi Joseph. Choice of kosher chicken or fish). Cost: \$35 per member adult and guests 13 and over, \$15 for children 6 to 12, free for children under 6 years old; \$45 for non-member adults. Send your check made to Temple Beth Israel to: Laurel Steinberg, 613 W Saint Charles St, Brownsville, TX 78520, and indicate your preference of chicken or fish. **Please make your paid reservations by Thursday, April 10.**

■ **SCRIP FUNDRAISER:** Temple Beth Israel has started a new fundraiser that is painless, fun, and easy for all to participate in. We are selling "gift" cards and certificates for many of the businesses we all use regularly, through the Great Lakes Scrip company. The temple gets a percentage of each purchase, from 2 to 10 percent, and sometimes more. Here's a tiny sample of the available businesses: Amazon.com, Starbucks, Target, Best Buy, Home Depot, Marshall's, Gap, Neiman Marcus, Bed Bath & Beyond, HEB, and Subway. Some congregants have ordered already and it works!!!

Go to the Great Lakes website to see a list of businesses for which you can buy cards: <http://www.glscrip.com/> The denominations available are listed. If you decide to order, send a check for your total amount to Temple Beth Israel, PO Box 3398, Harlingen, TX 78551, and write "scrip" on your check. List out the cards you want to buy, how many, and what denominations.

Read more about the scrip company and see the list of gift cards available at <http://www.glscrip.com/>

Help the temple to raise some funds at no extra cost to you. Contact Liz Holzman at 459-5433 for more information. Thanks to Liz for coordinating this project.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

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to another in May. Our Temple underwent some maintenance and upkeep, thanks to a joint effort between our Sunday School community and the Boy Scouts. We had a very successful fundraiser dinner in honor of Stan and Nivia Fisch. As such, we had activities almost monthly. Between the Passover Seder, Relay for Life, a Bar Mitzvah and Confirmation, we have several more to look forward to in the next two months.

My hope and desire for my year as President is that we get together as a community for fun and support. We will begin looking at putting together next year's calendar soon, and I am asking for suggestions. Some ideas so far include a Movie Premier for "one of our own" Harold Fisch, who is working on a short film. We are also discussing a Temple Game Night so we can get together for some community fun. We are so small in numbers that I ask that along with suggestions there will be a willingness to pitch in and help. It is always easy to say "the Board" or "the Temple" doesn't do.... But "the Temple" is you. We welcome ideas and volunteers.

I need all the help and support you can give. I look forward to the upcoming calendar year with everyone's participation. If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out.

— Abby Warshowsky

Thank You

DONATIONS

TORAH FUND

Dyan Banks, *to thank Rabbi
for Hebrew lessons and to
remember my parents*

GENERAL FUND

Jesus & Angela

Silguero

Anonymous

Stan & Nivia Fisch, *in Memory
of Eva Rofner Fisch Jahrzeit
March 28 2008*

Tamarah S. Spink

SHABBAT BREAKFAST FUND

Alma Russek, *in honor Bert
Wolf's Birthday and in honor
of Nivia Fisch Refua Sh'lema*

Oneg Shabbat Hosts

Each member household is asked to host one Shabbat oneg during the year. Remember hosting now involves setting up, cleaning up, and providing challah, Kosher wine, grape juice, paper/plastic goods, coffee and drinks. You can bring other treats you like, but the congregation will share the responsibility of bringing snacks and desserts. If you cannot be a host on the date assigned, please call Laurel Steinberg at 550-9530.

ONEG HOSTS

April: Ander, Rojas, Quintero

May: Warshowsky-Gonzalez, Gaytan,
Newman

June: Banks, Suissa, Sondock

July: Moskal, Minck, Weiss

FROM THE RABBI

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nazi ones, it is still the custom to dress as the Israelites did then: "Your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, your staff in your hand." (Exodus 12:11)

Of course, the seder is much more than a ritual. It is an act of remembering, the telling of a story — the Haggadah — and none has been more lovingly sustained. Each age has added something of its own. In the course of a single night, we encounter Hillel in the days of the Second Temple, the second century Sages at their seder in B'nai Brak, the teachings of the Amoraim of the third and later centuries, poems from the post-Talmudic period and children's songs from Medieval Germany. Every word we say has a history. Even the Mah Nishtana, the questions asked by a child, go back some 2,000 years. It is the collective voice of the Jewish people through centuries and continents as it has encountered and responded to the word of G-d.

Through the Haggadah, more than 100 generations of Jews have handed on their story to their children. The word *haggadah* means relate, tell, and expound. But it comes from a Hebrew root that also means bind, join and connect. By reciting the Haggadah, Jews give their children a sense of connectedness to Jews throughout the world and to the Jewish people through time. It joins them to a past and future, a history and destiny, and makes them characters in its story. Every other nation known to mankind has been united because its members lived in the same place, spoke the same language, and were part of the same culture. Jews alone, dispersed across continents, speaking different languages and participating in different cultures, have been bound together by a narrative, the Passover narrative, which they told in the same way on the same night.

During Israel's early history — that is, the Biblical era — the Exodus narrative embodied its collective memory as a nation, forged in slavery and led miraculously to freedom. Not only was it the record of their past, it also related their ideals for the future, their aspiration to create a society dedicated to liberty under the sovereignty of G-d. But its influence did not end with the collapse of Jewish sovereignty in Israel. If anything, during the long centuries when Jews were scattered throughout the world, its effect was more remarkable still. It sustained Jewish identity, linking one generation to the next through the bonds of shared memory. In times of suffering, and there were many, it kept hope alive — the hope expressed at the very beginning of the Haggadah that though "now we are slaves, next year we shall be free; now we are here, next year in the land of Israel."

Nor was its influence confined to Jews. The story of the Exodus eventually came to influence Western civilization as a whole. In the 17th and 18th centuries, through such figures as John Locke and Thomas Jefferson, it gave rise to a new definition of freedom. It told how a people might liberate themselves from oppressive governments and construct a society in which all men are created equal, possessing inalienable dignity and collective freedom. It set forth a narrative never surpassed of the human drama as the long journey to redemption not in heaven but on earth, in the structures of our common lives. No story has had a greater influence on inspiring revolution or evolution toward a just and humane society. It is the West's great narrative of liberty.

We invite the entire congregation and community to join us Monday, April 14, to celebrate our community Passover seder together. As we stress in the Haggadah, "let all who are hungry, come and eat." We wish everyone a happy and kosher Passover. Chag Sameach!

Shalom U'vrachah,
Rabbi Frank Joseph

PURIM

