

THE TEMPLE ISRAEL NEWS

ATHOL, MASSACHUSETTS VOL. 14 SHEVAT/ADAR 5764 FEBRUARY-MARCH, 2004

RABBI'S MESSAGE

What is going on at Temple Israel? We are in the midst of a revival of Jewish traditions, Jewish culture, and Jewish education. If you haven't been to visit us recently at the Temple, here is what you are missing: sumptuous pot-luck meals on Friday night with 25-30 people in attendance, spiritually uplifting services with lots of congregational singing, learning about the significance of the prayer service –its structure and meaning, weekly Hebrew classes, early Shabbat morning meditation as taught by modern mystics, lively Torah discussions with “food for thought,” Beth's tasty meat cholent at Shabbat lunch, Suri's delicious vegetarian cholent, Anne's scrumptious salads, current events discussions with the rabbi, engaging family programs with Oren (sponsored by the Grinspoon Foundation), activities for children, a game room, sledding with Rabbi Jon, Abulafian chanting with Myron on Shabbat afternoon, study of modern Hebrew poetry, and a warm, feel-good havdalah service to start the week!

Most importantly, what makes our Temple really special are the people inside it. “Build Me a sanctuary and I will dwell among you!” says the Torah. A building is an empty shell unless it has the voices of children and songs and chatter of people filling it. Please tell your friends about Temple Israel and about the benefit they will have in connecting to our Jewish community. This is a revival and we want you to be part of it!!

Rabbi Jon Perlman.

Shabbaton Tu B'shvat

February 6-7

We celebrate Jewish Arbor Day and everyone is invited. Though our weather is cold, in Israel the first glimmers of Spring begin to appear. The almond tree begins to tap into the water table and

brings nourishing water to its branches. The Almond Tree buds at the end of February and white flowers populate the hillsides of Israel. On this special Shabbat, we will learn about Judaism and the Environment and hold a special Tu B'shvat Seder Shabbat afternoon.



More on “Shabbat Shira” Shabbaton “Tu B'shevat”

The Shabbat of February 6-7 is Shabbat Shira, the Shabbat of Song, referring to the famous song of Moses and Miriam that is read in the Torah on this date (see Exodus 15 or movie classic “The Prince of Egypt”). It is also the holiday of Tu B'shevat.

Tu B'Shevat is the arbor day of ancient Palestine, the Jewish new year of the trees. In ancient times, the tithing year that was associated with the fruit of trees began on the 15th of Shevat (“Tu” means fifteen). A tenth of the sum of fruit produce grown in farms in eretz yisrael was given to the Temple as a tax. After Temple times, it was marked by the eating of fruit associated with the land of Israel. In modern times, Tu B'shevat has taken on new meaning with the return of our people to Israel. Trees are planting and if you look closely, you can see the almond tree begin to bud around this time, the first sign of Spring (actually the rabbis say that this is the time that the sap begins to rise in almond tree, a good two weeks before the buds come out). In Athol, we can appreciate Tu B'shevat because the sugar maple season is not far away and this is reason to celebrate especially in cold of winter!

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At Temple Israel, we will examine Jewish views of the environment on Friday and Saturday morning in our adult study. Deb Habib and Ricky Baruc will speak on my sermon topic, "most important environment problem facing us today." Concerns about the environment have added another layer of meaning onto Tu B'shevat associated with caring about nature. The children will be treated to a special "junior congregation"

with stories and an introduction to Tu B'shevat. We will also hold a Tu B'shevat seder for families at noon on Shabbat. Loosely modeled on the Pesach seder, the Tu B'shevat seder also has four glasses of wine and the ritualized eating of specific foods. It is based on custom created in Sefat by Jewish kabbalists in the 16th century.

Friday, February 6

6:00 PM Pot Luck Dinner

7:00 PM Kabbalat Shabbat Services

Sermon Topic: "The Most Important Environmental Problem Facing us Today" with Deb Habib and Ricky Baruc

Saturday, February 7

9:15 AM Meditation with Myron

10:00 Morning Services in the Chapel

10:30 Junior Congregation with Oren

Discussion: "How is Tu B'shevat celebrated in Israel?"

11:30 Adult Study in the Chapel: "Nature: Friend or Foe?"

12:00 Tu B'shevat Seder and Lunch

12:45 PM **Family Craft activity: Paper flower arrangements for Tu B'shevat**

1:20 Families will decorate a small pot and will be given packets of seeds for future planting. At the end of the program, families will be given brochures with information about the trees and sing holiday songs.

4:30 Chanting with Myron

5:00 Poetry study / Havdalah

Upcoming for March 4-5 Purim Shabbaton

In March, join us, laugh with us, study with us, and celebrate the Festival of Purim. Purim commemorates the reversal of the decree of the wicked Haman of Persia against the Jewish community (6th century B.C.E). Purim is a time of revelry and mixed-up comedy as congregants come dressed up in outrageous costumes, listen to the Megillah (the story of Esther), and drown out the name of Haman when each time it is uttered with noisemakers of every kind. The holiday begins Saturday night at 6:30 PM with the reading of the Megillah, a festive meal, and noshin' on Hamantaschen, but come on Shabbat (officially known as "Shabbat Zachor"- the Sabbath of Remembrance) for fellowship and study.



Friday, March 5

6:00 PM Pot Luck Dinner

7:00 PM Kabbalat Shabbat

Featuring "A Purim Shpiel with the Not-Ready-For-Shushan Players"

Saturday, March 6

9:15 AM Meditation with Myron

10:00 AM Morning Services

Torah Study: "What makes Esther a Heroine?"

12:00 PM Lunch

Discussion: "Purim: Fact or Fiction?"

6:30 Chanting with Myron

7:00 Havdalah and Megillah Reading
(Come in Costume)

7:45 Purim Party

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A hearty mazel-tov and warmest congratulations to Emily and David Koester and the entire Koester family on the birth of their daughter Lucy StellaRose Koester. Her Hebrew name will be Chava, and we are hoping to welcome her to our congregation on Shabbat, February 7.

THE NEXT 2 MONTHS IN BRIEF

February 6-7 Shabbaton Tu B'shvat –
Family Program with Oren Ovadia
March 5-6 Shabbaton Adar / Purim Party
and Megillah Reading at 6:30 PM

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Please mark your calendars!

April 2-3 Shabbaton Nissan –
Family program with Oren 7:00 PM
April 5 First Passover Seder at home
April 6 2nd Passover Seder at home
April 18 Yom Hashoah
Commemoration 6:30 PM at Temple
May 7-8 Shabbaton Iyyar
June 4-5 Shabbaton Sivan



REMINDER:

Dues notices were sent out several weeks ago. Please dig down deep and send in your dues promptly. One more point, if you can afford an additional separate donation for our \$100,000 Capital Campaign, we would greatly appreciate it! Thanks so much! Please send your checks to

**Temple Israel c/o David Koester
245 Gale Road Warwick, MA 01378**

For more information, please call Temple Israel in Athol at 978-249-9481 or contact Co-presidents Dr. Myron Maron at 978-724-0238 or Mitchell R. Grosky at 978-249-9090.