

THE TEMPLE ISRAEL NEWS

ATHOL, MASSACHUSETTS VOL. 21 HESHVAN 5765 NOVEMBER, 2004

RABBI'S THOUGHTS

Recently, Temple Israel received two books about the Bible in the mail along with a letter from a Christian family in Orange who thought they might be of interest to us. Ordinarily, I would be grateful for such a thoughtful gift; I would have written a thank you note to the family and added it to our library. Unfortunately, the books are Christian missionary tracts disguised as popular re-tellings of the Bible (from the period of the Prophets to the period of the Kings in Ancient Israel). The books have one major theme. The "Old Testament" foretells the coming of Jesus as the messiah. Now these books showing up in the mail are a minor irritant and can be cast away as junk mail. What really bothered me was that Jeff Plotkin also told me he received the same package at his home. I wonder how many other of our members received these books from the same Orange family.

Jews living in rural areas are an easy target for missionary groups. A lot of us admire the church-going culture of our neighbors. It provides solace for the soul and helps to keep family together. Rural people are by and large not familiar with Jews and Judaism. When I lived in North Carolina, most Southerners thought that the synagogue was a different kind of church. They could not understand that we did not celebrate Christmas. I had a lot of opportunities to educate well-meaning Christians about Judaism and how it differs from Christianity, but many of them could not get past our rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. The missionaries say that they are doing us a favor in introducing Jesus into our lives. How could non-believers exist side by side with believers in Christian America? We are a smudge on the great canvas of Christendom.

We need to take pride in Jewish heritage and make more people understand why the world needs Jews and Judaism. The miracle of our survival alone should give them pause. Where would they be

today if Judaism had been assimilated into Christian culture? What would happen to the life-affirming holy practices and customs that spring from a rich Jewish peoplehood, not to mention the wisdom of the Torah and its teachings? We would certainly be poorer for it. Judaism has withstood many attack on it before and please do not feel intimidated if you did receive these books in the mail. The only response is to say "no thank you" and, if they persist, engage them in a conversation in the joy you feel being a believing Jew.

Shalom,

Jon Perlman

WELCOME TO TEMPLE ISRAEL!

A warm and hearty Temple Israel welcome to Lara Temkin-Pisani from Belchertown who is our new educator and will be telling stories and doing children's programs on Shabbat at Temple Israel. We also are delighted to welcome Janice Colbert who will serve as our Family educator (note family program on November 21st).



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Shabbaton Heshvan November 5-6

Friday night, November 5th

6:00 PM Dairy Pot Luck Dinner
7:00 PM Kabbalat Shabbat Services
Sermon: "Post-Election Blues: Is the Separation of Church and State an Anachronism?"

Saturday morning, November 6th

9:15 AM Meditation
10:00 AM Schacharit Service
11:00 AM Children's Program
11:30 AM Torah Discussion: "The Story of Rebecca"

Question: Does the Bible present women as equal with men? Is being equal enough for Jewish spirituality or do men and women offer us different dimensions of spirituality?

12:00 PM Hot Cholent Lunch
Lunch Discussion: "Analysis of the 2004 Election"

5:00 PM Sunset Torah Discussion with Children

5:30 PM Poetry Study and Havdalah



EXCITING PROGRAMS FOR BOTH CHILDREN AND ADULTS HIGHLIGHT TEMPLE ISRAEL ACTIVITIES IN NOVEMBER

Another Shabbaton—and yet another opportunity to enjoy Shabbat as a community—comes on the evening of Friday, November 5 and on Saturday, November 6. On Friday evening, we will have a "dairy-vegetarian" potluck dinner (Main dishes wanted!) at 6:00, followed by a Shabbat service at 7:00 and a delicious Oneg after the service at 8:00.

Then, on Saturday morning at 9:15, we have meditation with Dr. Maron. The Shabbat service itself will be from 10:00 to 12:00 with a CHILDREN'S PROGRAM at 11:00 and a special lunch at noon.

NOTE: Child care for the little ones will be available from 9:15 until lunchtime.

The afternoon will be filled with learning, discussion, songs, and fellowship. After a break, we return to conclude Shabbat. At 5:00 p.m. we will have a special Sunset Torah Discussion for the Children. We will conclude with some lovely poetry reading and discussion and then a beautiful Ma'ariv/Havdalah service, all beginning at approximately 5:30 P.M.

COMMUNITY INTERFAITH THANKSGIVING SERVICE COMING UP ON NOVEMBER 23

Please join us at 7:30 P.M. on Sunday evening, November 21 for a really meaningful and enjoyable Thanksgiving service. The Jewish community participated in last year's service, but not in the numbers that we would have liked. *We really need your participation in supporting the efforts of those who have worked so hard to bring our community together.*

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READ HEBREW AMERICA

A Beginning Hebrew Reading Class, consisting has just begun. All those who are interested in joining the class are asked to contact Dr. Myron Maron at 978-337-0071.

Our deepest condolences to Nate Hymanson on the loss of his wife Helen shortly after they left Athol and moved to Las Vegas. Nate, our thoughts and prayers are with you!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

THIS MONTH'S BOARD MEETING WILL BE ON WEDNESDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 17 FROM 6:30-8:30 P.M. AT DR. MYRON MARON'S HOME IN PETERSHAM. PLEASE CALL 978-724-0238 IF YOU NEED DIRECTIONS. SEE YOU THEN!



PLEASE LEND US A HAND!

PLEASE JOIN TEMPLE ISRAEL'S

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN--AN AMBITIOUS AND IMPORTANT PLAN TO RAISE \$100,000 FOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURES FOR OUR TEMPLE!

To make a separate Capital Campaign donation for the building, please send a check to

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

Thank you, in advance, for your generosity!

COMING EVENTS REMINDERS...THIS MONTH

November 5 and 6--Shabbaton

November 17---Board of Directors' Meeting

November 21---Family Program: Make Your Own Menorah 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM

November 21---7:30 P.M.---Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

AND COMING UP...

December 3 and 4---Shabbaton We are also really looking forward to the Bar Mitzvah of Israel Kositsky (SP???) this same weekend!

December 12---Community Chanukah Party for all members and children (Volunteers needed)

Join a local artist in designing your own family menorah for Hanukkah and learn about the rituals and symbols. Please reply to Janice Colbert at the synagogue.

There's so much happening these days at Temple Israel! Please visit with us, and see what all the excitement is about! We'd love to see you!

For more information, please call Temple Israel in Athol at 978-249-9481. Our new voice mailboxes are now in operation. You may also directly contact President Dr. Myron Maron at 978-724-0238 or Rabbi Jonathan Perlman at 414-736-1033 (home) or 413-739-4715 (work) Ask for Rabbi Perlman.