

# TEMPLE BETH SHALOM

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## From the Bimah: Our Rabbi's Message

Rabbi Dennis Jones

### Can We Achieve Peace in the Middle East???

With the troubling tensions in our beloved land of Israel currently reaching a fever pitch between Israelis and Palestinians, it is on my heart to re-run a book review which I posted in the TBS newsletter early last year. I know that like me, many of you long for a true and lasting peace in the Middle East that will *fully* respect the human rights of all God's children.

As a rabbi, I am frequently asked by colleagues from other faiths and by students to explain the complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I guess they assume that as a Jewish spiritual leader, I should be an expert on the founding of the state of Israel and on the competing claims of the Israeli Jews and Palestinians in the Holy Land. Well, I most certainly am not!! But, in an effort to familiarize myself more fully with the claims of each side I have just completed reading two riveting books, one by a scholarly Jewish Israeli citizen living in East Jerusalem and the second by an open-minded and insightful Palestinian, born and raised in Gaza. So this month I give you a review of *both* books. I will start with the Israeli/Jewish perspective.

As is frequently the case, the book I am reviewing in this article was recommended to me by our Temple president, Susan Goldstein. The book is *Letters to my Palestinian Neighbor* by Yossi Klein Halevi (HarperCollins, New York, 2018). Klein Halevi is an American-born Jewish writer who has lived in Jerusalem since 1982. He is a senior

fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute of Jerusalem whose mission, according to their website, is “to strengthen Jewish peoplehood, identity, and pluralism; to enhance the Jewish and democratic character of Israel; and to ensure that Judaism is a compelling force for good in the 21st century.” (<https://www.hartman.org.il/>) Partnering with Imam Abdullah Antelpi of Duke University, Klein Halevi also co-directs the Hartman Institute’s Muslim Leadership Initiative.

In 1990, as a soldier in the Israeli military, Klein Halevi served a stint on patrol in the Gaza refugee camp at Nusseirat. Almost a decade later, in 1998, Klein Halevi returned to Nusseirat, this time as a “pilgrim.” Klein Halevi set out on the pilgrimage into Gaza and the West Bank to explore the faiths of his Muslim and Christian neighbors in the Holy Land. He was not so much interested in understanding their theology as he was in experiencing their personal devotional lives. In Klein Halevi’s words, “My goal was to see whether Jews and Muslims could share something of God’s presence, could be religious people together in this of all places, where God’s Name is so often invoked to justify abomination” (*Letters...*, p. 4).

Klein Halevi is a deeply religious person. He states, “For me, the only notion more ludicrous than the existence of a Divine being that created and sustains us is the notion that this miracle of life, of consciousness is coincidence” (p. 8). In the first several of his “letters” he summarizes his view of Jewish history, faith, and ethos for his imagined “Palestinian neighbor.” These chapters were a very reinforcing read for me, as Klein Halevi’s views so closely parallel my own. Don’t you love it when that happens!?! Klein Halevi, in a very concise and readable way traces the evolution of Judaism from its beginning as a nomadic tribal/family faith into the universal expression of beliefs and ethics that it is today, while still retaining its family and faith elements. According to Klein Halevi, “The synagogue became a substitute for the Temple, prayer a substitute for animal sacrifices—a major step forward in the spiritual evolution of Judaism” (p. 31).

Since Judaism is both a family and a faith, Klein Halevi asserts, “The purpose of Judaism is to sanctify one people with the goal of sanctifying all peoples” (p. 53). I found this part of Klein Halevi’s treatise particularly exciting and uplifting. He goes on to explain that while the three Abrahamic faiths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam are all universalistic in their approach, Judaism is distinct from the other two faiths in one particular way. Both Christianity and Islam envision a future world where all humankind will eventually *convert* to their way. “In the Jewish dream of the future, all of humanity will recognize the unity of existence and ascend on pilgrimage to the ‘house of God’ in Jerusalem. But **Judaism has no expectation that humanity will become Jewish**” (pp. 54-55, Emphasis mine). Klein Halevi goes on to tout that since Judaism is a faith intended for one family to share the vision of the Creator God with the rest of humankind, it has remained far more tolerant of the validity of other faith traditions.

Klein Halevi passionately lays out the yearning in the Jewish soul for the return to the Holy Land while in exile. He shares with his Palestinian neighbor how deeply rooted that longing is in our scriptures, rabbinical writings, and prayers. Klein Halevi attempts to convey to his Palestinian neighbor that for nearly two thousand years, most of which were years of trouble and persecution for the Jewish people, the return to a land of their own was only a dream. Like me, Klein Halevi considers the rebirth of the state of Israel in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the resurrection of the Hebrew language as a national language to be the fulfillment of prophecy and a miracle. Yet, Klein Halevi’s sincerity is palpable when he expresses his grief and anguish over the difficulties that the Jews return to the land has caused to the Palestinians who called it home for so many years, particularly those who were displaced in 1948 and 1967. That grief and anguish was the basis of Klein Halevi’s pilgrimage into Gaza and the West Bank in 1998 and is the basis of his reaching out to his Palestinian neighbors in this book. As a part of that appeal, Klein Halevi points to Abraham. He states, “Both our traditions note that Abraham/Ibrahim was buried by Isaac and Ishmael, who overcame their rivalry to

honor their father. ... Perhaps the memory of [Isaac's] hospitality can help us find a way to accommodate each other's presence in the land" (p. 153).

I was thrilled to find, that like myself, Klein Halevi proposes a two-state solution based on the 1967 borders as the best path toward peace. He sees that as the fair sharing of the land to which **both Jews and Palestinians have valid but competing claims**. Klein Halevi admits that this solution is a tough sell to both sides, since many Israelis envision a "greater Israel" based on boundaries described in the Bible and ancient history, and many Palestinians cling to the hope of a Jewish-free Palestine that is all under their own control. That is why Klein Halevi is so committed to both sides entering into **honest dialogue about their needs, hopes, and dreams**. The one thing Klein Halevi requests from his Palestinian neighbors is that they do not deny his right to exist in the land. As he puts it, "Criticism of Israeli policies, of course, isn't anti-Semitic. ... But denying Israel's right to exist, turning the Jewish state into the world's criminal, and trying to isolate it from the community of nations—that fits the classic anti-Semitic pattern" (p. 185).

Here is where it gets really interesting. Klein Halevi closes his book with a chapter containing a dozen or so letters from Palestinians back to him in response to his request for dialogue—giving his Palestinian neighbors the last word. Many of those letters brought tears to my eyes. I thanked Adonai for the faith, kindness, and grace they expressed, even when disagreeing with Klein Halevi on some of his facts. The closing chapter, actually the entire book, renewed my belief that in time the **moderates on both sides** might prevail and facilitate a transition into a time of peace, yes, even in the Middle East. *Ken yehi ratzon*—May this be God's will!!

## The President's Message

Susan G Goldstein, President

### We want to hear from you!!

Aaron Tosky, Ritual Chair, and I have begun the work of looking for someone to assume TBS rabbinical duties after Rabbi Dennis retires at the end of August. (Please note that I did not say we're looking for a REPLACEMENT for Rabbi Dennis!) Aaron and I, with the help of the Board of Trustees, the Ritual Committee, and the Howard Zerden Foundation, will begin looking at potential candidates with a view to congenants' needs and our financial ability.

As most of you know, Howard Zerden, z"l, left funds for us to pay a rabbi or rabbinical student through the creation of the Howard Zerden Foundation ("Foundation"). Under the superb guidance of the Foundation -- particularly Sandy Guttler and Robert Zerden -- the Foundation has performed extremely well. We have been able to pay Rabbi Dennis solely through the Foundation. As we all know from our own investments,

the best managed portfolios have suffered in the past year or so. Because we expect to use the Foundation money for many years to come, we need to take care to be good stewards of those funds. Therefore, we will seek advice for the Foundation.

I've heard lots through the grapevine about thoughts that our members have had about their wishes for a rabbinical presence; however, I've heard very little from TBS members directly. Aaron and I would very much appreciate hearing your thoughts first-hand. We will send out a questionnaire in the near future. In the meantime, please share your thoughts directly with either or both of us. You can reach me at [susanejgoldstein@gmail.com](mailto:susanejgoldstein@gmail.com) or 214.263.8464. You can reach Aaron at [aarontosky@gmail.com](mailto:aarontosky@gmail.com) or 828.381.7666.

Don't be shy! Every opinion counts and every voice will be heard.

*Chag Purim Sameach,*

Susan



## **TBS Sisterhood**

Sheri Stock, Sisterhood President

Hello TBS!

As I write this, Purim is fast approaching, and I have been busy baking Hamantaschen for services! I hope to see you at the temple Monday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, at 7pm!

Remember we have a potluck dinner Friday, March 10th. We will be playing trivia and there are some awesome prizes! Bring a Parve, vegan, or dairy dish to share.

Pesach is also fast approaching, and I need to know your Seder preferences. I am very excited about our small group Seders!

Love to everyone!

Sheri



## TBS Sunday School Program

Kathy Jones, Sunday School Principal

Sunday School students learned about Purim this month and topped it off with a carnival on Sunday, February 26th! Everyone had fun playing games, winning prizes, eating delicious pizza, and hamantaschen, and making lots of noise with graggers when evil Haman's name was read!

Thank you to Sheri Stock for her Academy Award performance playing Haman! Thank you also to the parents and older students who helped make this a memorable day! If you would like to know more about the TBS Sunday School, please contact Kathy Jones, Principal at [krsjones2002@yahoo.com](mailto:krsjones2002@yahoo.com)



## Harriet Sederholm Scholarship Fund

The Harriet Sederholm Scholarship Fund (HSSF) was established by a long-time Temple member and past President, Burt Sederholm (may his memory be a blessing), to honor his late wife Harriet, who died shortly after her retirement from 25 years with the Catawba County Department of Social Services. The scholarship committee is a sub-committee of the Temple Beth Shalom Board. The committee manages funds invested for the purpose of rewarding one-time scholarships with the earnings from the invested

funds. These awards honor the memory of Harriet Sederholm and her efforts to improve the lives of so many impoverished adults and children in Catawba County.

The HSSF scholarship is available to students. Candidates will submit an essay to any one of the committee members. The essay will explain who the candidate is, what they are doing currently, their plans for the future, how the scholarship funds will be used, and, if applicable, what the connection may be to Jewish life.

The committee will make decisions based on the following preferences but not absolutes:

- ✦ Is the applicant a temple member or related to a temple member?
- ✦ Is the applicant Jewish?
- ✦ Will the funds be used for educational needs?
- ✦ Will the funds make a difference regarding the applicant's ability to benefit from the activity?
- ✦ Is the activity something deemed to be of value by the committee?

Interested students should submit their essays by April 30th. The scholarship season runs from May 1-April 30. All applicants will be notified in writing if their application has been approved or declined by May 15<sup>th</sup>. Awards should be mailed to recipients by May 31st.

The essay should be emailed to any of the committee members: Lin Gentry, Karen Ferguson, or Sandy Guttler. Naturally, the committee encourages everyone to make a tax-deductible donation to the Scholarship Fund at any time.



## Temple Board

Our next meeting is on Wednesday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 pm on Zoom. Board meetings are open to all temple members. Contact Susan Goldstein if you wish to join a scheduled monthly meeting. Board members are:

### Officers:

Susan Goldstein, President  
 Barbara Laufer, Past President  
 Mary Lee Tosky, Acting Vice President  
 Susan Rieder, Treasurer  
 Lin Gentry, Secretary

**The TBS board thanks  
 you for your donations**

**Members at Large:**

- Liz Correll
- Karen Ferguson
- Sheri Stock
- Susan Tiger Huitt
- Derek Cooperberg
- Jodi Lavin-Tompkins



***What are you doing for Passover Seder this year?***

Your Board of Trustees, along with Sisterhood leadership, has given considerable thought as to whether we should proceed with plans to hold a congregational 2<sup>nd</sup> night Pesach seder this year with Covid-19 variations continuing to appear. Given the lack of certainty, we made the decision not to have a community seder at TBS. However, we encourage members who are able, to host other members for smaller, in-home seders. We believe these in-home seders will be a nice alternative to a community seder -- while we continue to hope we can come together again next year. Please access the form for our **TBS 2023 Seder Host/Guest Match** sign-up via the link below or the QR code.

<https://forms.gle/QD3xUfrjEiQ5s38D6>



**If you prefer to sign up by phone, please contact Sherri Stock at 828-999-0942**

TBS monthly donation to a local charity went to the Women's Resource Center for the month of January.

**Do you have a favorite charity you would like us to donate to? Let us know.**



Please consider pairing with a board member(s) to host a Shabbat or Holiday at Temple Beth Shalom. When members contribute to the life of our synagogue in this way, we all feel a part of our Jewish community and an active participant in assuring its well-being. Here's the link to sign up: [TBS Hosting Sign-ups - Google Sheets](#)

1. View the [spreadsheet](#) to see what dates are free
2. Submit your choice using the [Google Form](#).
3. MaryLee will type in any form *submissions*, but **any board member can enter host names** on the spreadsheet for themselves or other members *by request*. Several of you have successfully done so!

## TBS Community Mitzvah Projects

This month the Community Relations and Social Action Committee received a request from the Alexander Christian Crisis Center for household goods to rehouse a family of 5 with 3 young children. We were able to give them cleaning and kitchen supplies as well as bedding for the children. In addition, we were able to help with household supplies and bedding, at the request of Partners Behavioral Health, for an individual being rehoused. It is always a blessing for TBS to be involved in the local community in this way!

Please remember us when you have bedding and household goods that you would like to donate.

If you have any questions about our mitzvah projects or suggestions on where else we can have a positive impact, please contact Kathy Jones, Chairperson, at [krsjones2002@yahoo.com](mailto:krsjones2002@yahoo.com)

### TBS MESSAGE BOARD

*To Jane Mandle – We're so glad you are home! Prayers for your continuing recovery from your TBS family*

This space is reserved for members to send kind notes and acknowledgments to one another. If you wish to have your message printed here, please send it to Karen Ferguson, [karen.sederholm@gmail.com](mailto:karen.sederholm@gmail.com)



### TBS Member Business Directory

*Let us know if you would like to list your business here in the Bulletin. It is a free benefit of TBS membership*

Dr. Laura Faruque  
A Woman's View  
915 Tate Blvd SE  
Suite170  
Hickory, NC 28602  
828-345-0800

Dr. Mark Faruque  
Bethlehem Family Practice  
174 Bolick Lane Suite 202  
Taylorsville, NC 28681  
828-495-8226

Jack and Hannah Levy  
Druzy Dreams Crystals  
<http://www.etsy.com/shop/druzydreamscrystals>

Dr. David Peltzer  
Newton Family Physicians  
767 West First Street  
Newton, NC 28658  
828 465-3928  
[www.newtonfamilyphysicians.com](http://www.newtonfamilyphysicians.com)

## Temple Beth Shalom Life Cycle March Events



### Birthdays

Susie Jones 3/2  
Sarah Jones 3/3  
Jesse Jones 3/5  
Bud Tosky 3/22  
Matthew Bonfield 3/24  
Mark Faruque 3/26  
Sue Cohn 3/28

### Anniversaries

Barbara Freiman 3/18

### Yahrzeits

Helen Witek Maciejewski 3/3  
Morris Sederholm 3/5  
Dennis Cangemi 3/9  
Burton Sederholm 3/14  
William Miller 3/16  
Mildred Asch 3/16  
Else Simons 3/20  
Albert Ifergan 3/28  
Helen Schonberg 3/27

## Local and Regional Events



### **Roundtable Conversation on Antisemitism**

**Facilitators:** [Dr. Chris Patti](#) and [Amy Hudnall](#)

**Wednesday, March 8, 2023, from 6-8 p.m.  
Room 421, Belk Library and Information Commons**

**Zoom link available upon registration [here](#).**

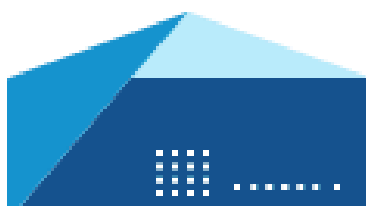
BOONE, N.C. — Join the Center for Judaic, Holocaust, and Peace Studies (CJHPS); Hillel; AEPi; and Diversity and Inclusion for a roundtable discussion on the impact of antisemitism and how to respond. The evening will start with a brief introduction followed by a discussion among members about antisemitism today.

**This event is free and open to the public. For a disability accommodation, visit [odr.appstate.edu](http://odr.appstate.edu).**

Many ASU events are open to the public (in-person and virtually). For more information, go to: <https://holocaust.appstate.edu/events>, or contact the Center at 828.262.2311 or [holocaust@appstate.edu](mailto:holocaust@appstate.edu).



**Temple Beth Shalom has an active membership in the Catawba Valley Interfaith Council, where Rabbi Dennis served as president for 5 years and now serves as secretary. You can find out more about this organization and its activities at: <https://www.facebook.com/CVICNC/>.**



**SHALOM  
HARMON  
INSTITUTE**

Follow this link for information about upcoming online events at SHI: <https://www.hartman.org.il/programs/>

## Schedule for Rabbi Services and Sunday School Jan-July 2023

For event updates, email: [info@hickoryjewishcenter.com](mailto:info@hickoryjewishcenter.com)

DATE	EVENT	BULLETIN DEADLINE
March	6 <b>Erev Purim Service/Megillah Reading</b> 7:00 PM (Monday)	February 19
	11/12 <b>Saturday Morning Service</b> 10:00 AM/Sunday School 10:00AM	
	24 <b>Friday Night Service</b> 7:00 PM	
	26 <b>Sunday School</b> 10:00 AM	
April	6 <b>Passover Community Seder</b> 6:00 PM (Thursday)	March 19
	15/16 <b>Saturday Morning Service</b> 10:00AM/SundaySchool10:00 AM	
	28 <b>Friday Night Service</b> 7:00 PM	
	30 <b>Sunday School</b> 10:00 AM	
May	6/7 <b>Saturday Morning Service</b> 10:00 AM/ <b>Sunday School</b> 10:00 AM	April 23
	19 <b>Friday Night Service</b> 7:00 PM	
	21 <b>TBS Annual Membership Meeting</b> 10:00 AM (Sunday)	
	25 <b>Erev Shavuot Service</b> 7:00 PM (Thursday)	
	28 <b>Sunday School</b> 10:00 AM	
June	3/4 <b>Saturday Morning Service</b> 10:00 AM/ <b>Sunday School Final Session/Party</b>	May 21
	23 <b>Friday Night Service</b> 7:00 PM	
July	8 <b>Saturday Morning Service</b> 10:00 AM	N/A
	21 <b>Friday Night Service</b> 7:00 PM	
	26 <b>Sunday School</b> 10:00 AM	



Want to contribute to the TBS Bulletin? Send entries to Karen Ferguson at [karen.sederholm@gmail.com](mailto:karen.sederholm@gmail.com). All entries are reviewed by the TBS Board before publication.