

# TEMPLE BETH SHALOM

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## From the Bimah: Our Rabbi's Message

Rabbi Dennis Jones

### Unity and Diversity in Judaism and America

For people of faith, perhaps the greatest miracle of all is that the One God brought into existence a creation that abounds with amazing diversity. Indeed, the more complex systems or species become, the more diverse they become. My Rabbi, Morton Kaplan, would often use the creation story in Genesis 1 & 2 as a springboard to extol the beauty and necessity of diversity not only in nature, but among humankind as well. The Jewish faith-tradition may just be the most diverse of all the world's religions. Just think of all the changes our religion has gone through in the 4000 years when from what began as a covenant with one nomadic family expanded into the diverse, world-wide system of laws, traditions, and beliefs, that Judaism embodies today. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks points out that Judaism's holy texts are "anthologies of arguments: arguments between God and humans, humans and God, humans and one another." Rabbi Sacks maintains, and I completely agree, that diversity can be a source of strength, not a weakness. Where you find disagreement and argument you will also find *passion* (<https://rabbisacks.org/jewish-unity-published-in-jewish-action/>).

Perhaps one of the most famous "clashes" in our people's history is the rivalry between the Schools of Rabbi Hillel and Rabbi Shammai. Hillel has been called, "Judaism's model human being." This is because his life encapsulated so many of the

values of Judaism in the time period in which he lived. Hillel was a scholar of the Mishnaic Period. He is known for having overcome a background of poverty and ascending to a life of devotion to serving humankind and studying Torah. Hillel is credited with originating the Jewish version of the Golden Rule. According to tradition, a non-Jew approached Hillel and asked him to define the essence of Judaism while standing on one foot. Hillel responded, “What is hateful unto you do not do unto your neighbor. The rest is commentary—now go and study” (*Shabbat* 31a). As a result of Hillel’s diligent studies he developed a forceful intellect. Many scholars credit him with the introduction of the concept of *tikkun olam*, the performing acts of Torah for the ethical bettering of the world. Hillel developed this idea in the context of his concern that the rote implementation of Torah law was actually degrading his peers’ motivation and efforts to help the poor and the oppressed. Hillel is credited with a large number of the words of wisdom which are found in the tractate *Pirkei Avot* (Ethics of the Elders). Hillel is remembered in history as being the perennial opponent of Shammai (Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, *Jewish Literacy*, New York: William Morrow and Co., Inc., 1991, pp. 120-122).

The Talmud records numerous disputes between Rabbi Hillel and Rabbi Shammai, then later of disputes between Hillel’s disciples and those of Shammai. It is generally agreed that Hillel’s motivations in the implementation of Torah were less strict and according to the “letter of the law,” and more motivated by compassion for all human beings. Shammai, on the other hand, was known for the strictness of his Torah interpretation, and his disregard for the effect it would have on human beings. Rabbinical rulings of the time period almost always went in favor of the school of Hillel. But there is a very interesting story recorded in the Talmud: “A heavenly voice declared: the words of both schools [Hillel and Shammai] are the words of the living God, but the law follows the rulings of the school of Hillel because the Hillelites were gentle and modest, and study both their own opinions and the opinions of the other school, and humbly mentioned the words of the other school before their own” (*Eruvin* 13b). It is interesting to note that rulings went in the favor of the school of Hillel on grounds of morality and compassion even when ritual matters of the Torah were being decided. This shift toward ethics over ritual not only reinforces the message of the prophets but may have also been the savior of Judaism after the Roman destruction.

In our own day here in America, we find our politicians and pundits lamenting the fact that our country seems more divided and polarized than it has been in recent history. I would ask whether we might turn this current diversity and disagreement into a strength today, just as Judaism has managed to do for its 4000 year history. Our nation was founded on the ideals of negotiation and compromise. I believe it is just our ability to compromise that has made our nation as free and prosperous as it has been. I truly believe that when ideas clash and are worked through, the most even path forward can be struck.

We do, however, need to acquire or reacquire the ability to disagree without demonizing or “otherizing” our opponents. In his article, “Jewish Diversity & Unity,” Rabbi Sacks proposes three what I would call

“rules for fair argument or disagreement.” First, do not see an opposing point of view as being an attack on you personally. In other words, try to keep disagreements or differences within the realm of opposing ideas or principles, *not* as moral judgments. I know, sometimes that is hard to do. Second, try to defend your own ideas without attacking others on a personal level. Most human beings are sensitive to criticism and tend to take things personally. Can we each state our own case in such a way as to avoid that human tendency? Remember, the *Mishnah* says, “The one who passes judgment on his/her fellow is judged first” (*Bava Kama* 93a:3). Third, it is crucial to consider that Adonai loves, cares for, and sustains all of Hasheem’s creatures despite our many differences, disagreements, weaknesses, and failings. It has never been acceptable in Judaism to expect Adonai’s love and forgiveness for ourselves without extending that same love and forgiveness to our fellow humans (Rabbi Sacks, *ibid.*).

You know I talk often about how the Prophet Isaiah, in line with most of the Prophets of the Hebrew Bible, gives us some breathtakingly positive glimpses of humankind’s future. A particularly powerful and oft-quoted prediction is Isa. 2:4: “...and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; **nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.**” As I think of the incredible strides humankind has made in the areas of science, technology, medicine, and human rights in just the past 100 years, I am optimistic enough to hope that the vision of the Hebrew Prophets *is*, in fact, possible. I tell my students frequently that the American constitutional experiment, in particular, has yielded amazingly beneficial results. Never before in history have so many individuals been afforded such equal rights under the law or such broad access to food, shelter, medical care, and wealth. I believe that our country’s movement in such a positive direction is principally *because* it was founded and has continued to operate on the deeply embedded Judeo-Christian values of honesty, hard work, and acts of generosity and kindness.

I close with one of my favorite quotes from the *Gates of Repentance* High Holiday prayer book:

**When will redemption come?**

**When we master the violence that fills our world.**

**When we look upon others as we would have them look upon us.**

**When we grant to every person the rights we claim for ourselves** (p. 103).

*Ken yehi ratzon*—May this be God’s will!!

## President's Message

Susan Goldstein, President

Dear TBS Family and Friends,

What a joy it has been to see some of your faces in person, albeit those wonderful faces were masked! We will continue to hold limited in-person services in the month of May, and the Reopening Committee will reassess our limitations for the month of June. For now, while we hope to open in-person services to the entire membership and guests in the near future, we will continue to invite a maximum of 30 members to join us in the sanctuary. Reservations will be on a first-come, first-served basis. We will arrange family seating with six feet between each family. Masks are a must. If you don't have one, we'll provide one. Hand sanitizer also will be available. We will not serve food -- even challah. (I know. We're breaking the "no eatin'/no meetin'" rule! ).To summarize:

- During the month of May, will welcome up to 30 members to the sanctuary for services. We hope to welcome guests soon.
- Reservations will be required so that we can space out family groups and, if necessary, for contact tracing. To request a reservation, please contact me at [susanejgoldstein@gmail.com](mailto:susanejgoldstein@gmail.com) (preferred method) or 214.263.8464 (call or text, but less reliable than email).
- Reservations will be accepted on a first-come/first-served basis; the window to make reservations will close when we have 30 members confirmed.
- We will arrange seating so that family groups are spaced six feet apart.
- Masks are a must.
- No singing/chanting (except for those leading the service).
- No food or drink will be served.

For those who aren't ready for in-person meetings, we will continue to Zoom services. All members and friends will be provided invitations well in advance of the services.

**Reminder:** Our **Annual Meeting** will be held, via Zoom, on **Sunday morning, May 23, at 10:00**. An agenda will be provided very soon. Highlights will include voting on the Board-recommended slate of Board officers and members, hearing from our committee chairs and auxiliary organizations, and considering Board-recommended revisions to the Constitution and Bylaws. Voting members in will receive all items for consideration well in advance of the Annual Meeting. This meeting will be open to all Voting Members of TBS. Voting Members are Family and Individual Members in good standing.

***Online Learning Opportunities:***

- The Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion (Reform) is offering a new series of classes on various topics at different times of the day. For information or to register, visit [www.huc.edu](http://www.huc.edu).
- Limmud North America (Pluralistic) is holding an eFestival on Sunday afternoon, June 13, with various classes from 1:00 until 5:00. Mark your calendars for the Global Day of Jewish Learning on Sunday, November 7. Visit [www.limmudna.org](http://www.limmudna.org).
- The Shalom Hartman Institute (Pluralistic) announced its summer program, *Hope, Love, and Compassion: Torah of Optimism for an Uncertain Future*, that will run from July 5 through July 15. Registration is not yet open, but visit [www.hartman.org.il](http://www.hartman.org.il) for information.

I look forward to seeing you -- either in-person, masked, or on the big screen -- on Friday evening, May 7, at 7:00.

Stay safe; wear your masks; get the Covid-19 vaccine as soon as you can!

*Shalom* with some hugs thrown in,

Susan

## TBS Sisterhood

Lin Gentry, Sisterhood President

I've been looking over my calendar for this past year, trying to remember what sisterhood has done in order to write up my report for the upcoming annual congregation meeting. It seems we weren't as active this year as we have been in the past, but we all know that we're living in strange and different times. The annual Hanukkah fair was still able to go on (online). Thanks to Kathy,

Sheri, and Jaimi, some homemade hamentaschen were delivered to some mature members of our congregation. We have been able to socialize virtually a few times and I'd like to do some more fun virtual activities. I've written in the newsletter before about taking care of yourselves, reaching out to others, washing your hands, and wearing a face covering. These things are still important. And now I can add to be sure to get vaccinated. I love seeing people at services and social events, even if it is on zoom. But it'll be great when we can see each other in person again. Take care of yourselves and take your shot.





## TBS Sunday School Program

Kathy Jones, Sunday School Principal

The TBS Sunday School held its last official virtual class for this school year on April 25<sup>th</sup>. We covered the history and traditions surrounding Shavuot as well as practiced reading our Hebrew. Hopefully, all of the students and their families will be able to join the Congregation for the Virtual Shavuot Service on Sunday, May 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 P.M., in place of having Sunday School that morning. We will not be meeting on Sunday, May 9<sup>th</sup> so that everyone can spend the time honoring their mothers for Mother's Day. Baskets containing activities to engage the students in celebrating Mother's Day and Shavuot will be delivered to their homes this week. Our final meeting will be June 6<sup>th</sup> for our traditional end of the year party. We hope to meet outdoors and be able to do crafts and games.

We thank the Sederholm family for donating to our Sunday School in honor of their father, Burt Sederholm. We will put it to good use helping our young people learn to love their Jewish heritage!

Anyone wishing to know more about TBS Sunday School and to receive the Zoom links, should contact Sunday School Principal, Kathy Jones, at [krsjones2002@yahoo.com](mailto:krsjones2002@yahoo.com).

## Harriet Sederholm Scholarship Fund



The Harriet Sederholm Scholarship Fund was established by a long-standing Temple member, Burt Sederholm, to honor his wife Harriet, who died shortly after her retirement after 25 years with the Catawba County Department of Social Services. Mr. Sederholm's efforts provided the initial funding from generous family members and friends and it has been added to over the years. The scholarship is available to students. Temple members are looked upon favorably, but one does not need to be a temple member nor Jewish to apply. The scholarship fund dividends are used to provide scholarship

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

Interested students should submit their essay 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 15th. 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 board meeting will be **DATE TBD**. Board meetings are open to all temple members. Contact Susan Goldstein if you wish to join the meeting.

TBS Board members are:

#### Officers:

- Susan Goldstein, President
- Barbara Laufer, Past President
- Susan Rieder, Treasurer
- Tiffany Hull, Secretary

#### Members at Large:

- Liz Correll
- Karen Ferguson
- Lin Gentry
- Amy Hedrick
- Mary Lee Tosky
- Linda Greenfield
- Kathy Jones
- Susan Huitt
- Jodi Lavin-Tompkins



### Donations

Bryan and Kathy Jones in honor of Ross Vanderlinden

Mark and Laura Faruque  
Rhett and Jodi Lavin-Tompkins  
for the Community Relations and Social Action Fund

### TBS Gives through Donations

**Our donation for May was sent to Kwanzaa Family Inn**

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

Please consider these funds for  
your next donation:

Building and Grounds  
Security  
Sunday School  
Community Relations and Social  
Action



When we get back to temple again, please consider pairing with a board member(s) to host a weekend 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.

### TBS Message Board

*Remembering Burt Sederholm, Pete and Ginny Sobotkin*

If you wish to post a message to acknowledge a special event or achievement, condolence, or send a get well message, give or send your message and a \$5 donation to Temple Beth Shalom Message Board, PO Box 9142, Hickory, NC 28603. A greeting card will be sent acknowledging your donation and your message will appear here in the next issue of the TBS Bulletin.

## TBS Community Mitzvah Projects

The negative economic impacts of the Pandemic have begun to lessen, but the needs in our community continue. We encourage all TBS members to help out wherever they can, by donating their time and/or funds. The Hickory Soup Kitchen; the Second Harvest Food Bank; The Lenoir Soup Kitchen; The Salvation Army of Taylorsville, Hickory, or Lenoir; and the Kwanzaa Family Inn in Lenoir can always use assistance.

Our own TBS Community Relations and Social Action Committee (CRSAC) collects hygiene and cleaning supplies, gently used bedding, towels and washcloths, small kitchen appliances, sets of dishes, glasses, and silverware, as well as cooking utensils, pots, and pans, and even furniture on an ongoing basis. These items are distributed to area families in need of them, particularly those who are being rehoused after a period of homelessness.

Thank you to Mark and Laura Faruque and Rhett and Jodi Lavin-Tompkins for their generous donations to CRSAC this past month. Thank you also to everyone who has supported this activity throughout the past year!

If you have any items or monetary funds to donate, or if you know of a person or organization needing any kind of help, please contact CRSAC Chairperson, Kathy Jones, at [krsjones2002@yahoo.com](mailto:krsjones2002@yahoo.com)



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

## 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  
Suite 170  
Hickory, NC 28602  
828-345-0800

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

**Ghiora Mehler**  
The Southern Chickpea  
Falafel Truck  
[thesouthernchickpea.com](http://thesouthernchickpea.com)  
828-999-0496



## Temple Beth Shalom Life Cycle May Events

### Birthdays

Grayson Cohn 5/2  
Ashley C Cohn 5/2  
Eileen Cangemi 5/6  
David Engelman 5/7  
Linda Guttler 5/8  
Clyde Ferguson 5/9  
Ross Guttler 5/18

Ariel Cohn 5/19  
Amanda Garrick 5/24  
Kevin Huitt 5/26  
Mark Sobotkin 5/30

### Anniversaries

Aaron and Mary Lee Tosky 5/4  
Ron and Sue Cohn 5/6  
Bud and Connie Tosky 5/24

### Yahrzeit

Ruth Laufer 5/15  
Richard Fox 5/15  
Sam Griffin 5/17

## Member Business Directory

Scott and Julie Owens  
Taste Full Beans Coffeehouse  
29 2nd St NW  
Hickory, NC 28601  
828-325-0108  
[www.tastefullbeans.com](http://www.tastefullbeans.com)

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

## Local and Regional Events



The Center for Judaic, Holocaust, and Peace Studies remains dedicated to supporting the campus and public population. We are actively practicing social distancing, which means we remain open for business but we are limiting the number of visitors on campus. If you need to contact the Center, phone (828) 262-2311 or email [hillms@appstate.edu](mailto:hillms@appstate.edu).

### The **19th International ASU Summer Symposium on Children in the Holocaust To Be Held Virtually for the first time in its nineteen year history, from July 18-23, 2021.**

Participating teacher-participants will learn and analyze how the Nazi regime sought to indoctrinate Gentile children and turn them into supporters of their regime. They will also examine how persecuted Jewish children tried to cope with persecution and, eventually, outright genocidal onslaughts. The presentations and assigned materials will shed new light on children's complex challenges and struggles under Nazi rule and occupation, in the ghettos and even camps, as well as many's resilience and despair.

For more information on this symposium and access to the online registration forms, see [here](#). For responses to any questions, please contact the Center at [holocaust@appstate.edu](mailto:holocaust@appstate.edu) or 828.262.2311.



**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 2020-21

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

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Bulletin Deadline</u>	
May	7	<b>Friday Night Service 7PM In person and Virtual</b>	April 24
	9	<b>Sunday School !!canceled!! for Mother's Day</b>	
	16	<b>Erev Shavuot Service (Sunday) 7PM In person and Virtual</b>	
	22	<b>Saturday Morning Service 10AM In person and Virtual</b>	
	23	<b>TBS Annual Membership Meeting (Sunday) 10AM Virtual</b>	
June	4	<b>Friday Night Service 7PM</b>	May 28 (Fri.)
	6	<b>Sunday School Final Session 10AM</b>	
	19	<b>Saturday Morning Service 10AM</b>	
July	9	<b>Friday Night Service 7PM</b>	N/A
	24	<b>Saturday Morning Service 10AM</b>	

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.