TEMPLE BETH SHALOM

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Temple Beth Shalom
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Hickory, North Carolina 28603
www.hickoryjewishcenter.com

From the Bimah: Our Rabbi's Message

Rabbi Dennis Jones

I Will Set My Bow in the Clouds!

What an amazing time we have shared together for our High Holiday services virtually. Services were much more participatory and uplifting than I ever thought possible over Zoom. Special thanks to everyone who participated and who logged in. We have truly been blessed with something special here at Temple Beth Shalom, and for that I am deeply grateful! When we gather for the reading of the Torah on Shabbat morning, October 24th, we will be reading from Torah portion Noach, Genesis 6:9-11:32. This Torah portion covers a broad range of very interesting topics, beginning with an introduction to Noah and his family. About two chapters are devoted to explaining God's decision to destroy the world, including most of mankind and most of the animal kingdom (6:9-8:22). That is followed by an account of life starting over again, the Almighty promising not to destroy all life by flood again, and the establishing of a set of laws which our rabbis have called the

Noahide Commandments, or laws of Noah (9:1-17). Most of chapter 10 is taken up with the repopulation of the earth, including specifics on the families and their descendants. Then in chapter 11 we get the fascinating story of the Tower of Babel and the decision by God to scatter mankind over the earth and to give the various family groups each a different language (vv. 1-9). Chapter 11 concludes with the records of the descendants of Noah's son, Shem, culminating in the first introduction in the Hebrew Bible of our patriarch and matriarch, Abraham and Sarah (vv. 10-32).

Regarding this Torah portion, it is my sincere belief, that like hundreds of generations of Jews before us, we too, in the modern age, can find light and inspiration from these ancient passages of Scripture. That may, however, require deep study, questioning, and discussion. One question that might arise from the accounts in Genesis 1-11 is: "How did the creation that, when observed by God in Genesis 1:31 was said to be "very good," get so off track, that by Genesis 6 we read the chilling passage, "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of humans was great on the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that humans had been created on the earth, and God was grieved to the heart" (vv. 5-6)?" Surely this demonstrates that being created in the image of God, as man and woman are, brings with it an extremely high level of free will or choice. That freedom of choice obviously has amazing potential in both directions—evil or good. Clearly the evil was prevailing in the days of Noah leading up to the flood. But in our own day, I would like to believe that we have learned the lesson of history, and that we are channeling our choices toward the good. I think I see evidence of that around me. For example, when we had the horrific racially motivated murders at Mother Emmanuel Church in Charleston, South Carolina in June 2015, rather than sparking more racial hatred and friction, I believe the crime moved many, many individuals to reach across racial lines and show a willingness to enter into dialogue, and even expressions of brotherly love. When a disaster befalls our country like the current coronavirus pandemic, are not the hearts of many stirred to help and to give what is needed to bring healing and restoration to the affected areas and individuals?

Another question that naturally arises from the flood story as it begins in Genesis 6 is: "Why would the Almighty choose to destroy not only the evil men and women, but also a very large portion of the plant and animal life on the planet?" This question is difficult to answer. Could it possibly be to show that those creatures which were created in God's image, namely man and woman, bear a deep responsibility for everything that happens on this planet and for all species both plant and animal? Surely we have seen in the 20th and 21st centuries how our decisions, our use of resources, and our lack of proper waste disposal have had a profound impact on the entire earth ecosystem. Once again, I believe that we are learning from the past and from our mistakes. We are taking definite steps to rein in many of the wasteful and polluting practices of the last 200 years. Of course, more needs to be done!

Also on a global scale, it is from Torah portion Noah that the rabbis of the Talmudic period derived seven laws applicable to all mankind. A discussion of these Noahide Laws or Commandments, as they

are called, can be found in the Talmud, in tractate *Sanhedrin a-b*. Those seven laws are the prohibitions of idolatry, blasphemy, murder, sexual immorality, stealing, eating the flesh of a living animal, and the positive commandment to establish courts of justice. One of the amazing things about these seven laws is the universalist view of God's relationship with humans that they convey. Going back to the earliest days of the Jewish faith, our sages **never saw the need to convert all humankind to Judaism**, thus the absence of proselytizing from our religion. The laws of Noah were seen as elevating all people to the will of the Creator, and making them **equal partners** in the perfection of the creation that was entrusted to man and woman from the very beginning (Gen 2:15). *All* men and women share the Divine image, and it is incumbent upon them all to make choices which are "godlike." In so doing, the earth, including the plant and animal kingdoms, can be moved in a positive direction, fulfilling the ultimate plan, expressed in the Hebrew Prophets, of what God intended this garden planet to be.

The Haftorah portion associated with Torah portion Noah, Isaiah 54:1-55:5, reinforces this view of individual and corporate responsibility for our actions, and also reinforces the idea that while negative things may happen as a consequence of poor decision-making, there is always the opportunity for turning from our ways (repentance) and the insurance of a brighter future. The prophecies found in this passage from Isaiah, come on the heels of a severe destruction which was delivered to the people of Israel through the hands of the Assyrians in the seventh century B.C.E. And then of the Babylonians in the sixth century B.C.E. We learn elsewhere in the Prophets that those destructions were the consequence of the northern ten tribes, Israel, and the southern kingdom of Judah, not being faithful to the laws and precepts of God. But, the message of the Haftorah portion is one of hope. It is connected by the Prophet Isaiah with the situation in the time of Noah. We read, "For this is like the days of Noah to me; when I swore that the waters of Noah should not flood the earth again, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you nor will I rebuke you.… My lovingkindness will not be removed from you, and my covenant of peace will not be shaken, says the LORD" (54:9-10). Amazing promises are they not? The entire Haftorah reading is full of hope. Look, for example at verse 8, "In an outburst of anger I hid my face from you for *a moment*; but with *everlasting lovingkindness* I will have compassion on you."

Heartening that though we may make mistakes, and though we may fall short of the ideals set forth for us in God's law, bringing consequences that are sometimes severe, there is always the opportunity of turning from our wrong choices and changing the course of events for ourselves and for our world. I notice that this Isaiah Haftorah reading closes with a mysterious statement, referring obviously to a future time, "Behold, you will call a nation you do not know, and *a nation which knows you not will run to you*, because of the LORD your God, even the Holy One of Israel." I have some definite views on who that nation that will turn to the Jewish people is, but I will save that for another message. For now, as we ponder the passages of Torah portion Noah and its Haftorah from Isaiah, may we receive insights that inspire and elevate us to partner with the Creator in bringing ***not harm***, but ***good*** to all of

the amazing creation with which we have been entrusted! *Ken yehi ratzon!!*—May this be God's will!!

President's Message

Susan Goldstein, President

We did it! For the first -- and, we hope, the last -- time, Temple Beth Shalom joined with synagogues around the world in executing virtual High Holy Days services. Thanks to everyone who logged in and participated in these services. We are especially grateful to our tech crew, Mary Lee and Aaron Tosky, without whom we could not have pulled this off.

I've been thinking of ways to make 5781 a year of Jewish growth. Opportunities abound! I'd like to share a few with you.

- The Shalom Hartman Institute (hartman.org.il) is a pluralistic Jewish think tank located in Jerusalem. Hartman also has a strong North American presence and, since April, has made free virtual classes available. Linda Greenfield and I have taken advantage of these opportunities and look forward to learning what the post HiHo offerings will be. If you visit the website, you'll be amazed at what you can learn.
- The Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTS) -- (www.jtsa.edu) -- also offers virtual classes on an ongoing basis. Some are free, while there are fees for others. I look forward to starting a new series on the 13th. Torah commentary is available on a weekly basis.
- Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks (https://rabbisacks.org) is a former Chief Rabbi of Great Britain and a prolific writer. His latest book, *Morality*, is available on Amazon. His weekly (sometimes more often) emails are always interesting and challenging.
- Yossi Klein Halevi (www.yossikleinhalevi.com) is a fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute. His latest book is *Letters to My Palestinian Neighbors*. Yossi lives in Jerusalem and, literally, has Palestinian neighbors. Beautifully written, his book is a call for dialogue between Jews and Arabs and has been a motivating force in attaining that goal.

These are some of my faves. I'm sure that you can find many more, and I hope you'll search and share.

Once again, *todah rabah* to Mary Lee and Aaron for handling the tech part of our Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services. Also, *todah rabah* to:

- Rabbi Dennis and Kathy Jones for their extraordinary shofar blowing;
- Barb and Larry Laufer for their on going advice and support;
- Susan Rieder for not only handling our finances, but also for picking up our mail and getting it where it's supposed to go; and
- Karen Ferguson for skillfully editing The Bulletin and for sending out all of our emails.

Have a wonderful *Sukkot* through *Simchat Torah*. I look forward to seeing you at our virtual *Erev Shabbat* service on Friday.

Chag Sameach!

Susan

TBS Sisterhood

Lin Gentry, Sisterhood President

Shanah Tovah everyone!

I hope you had meaningful and joyful high holidays.

Sukkot is here, commemorating the 40 years the Israelites wandered in the desert after Adonai led them out of slavery in Egypt. It's the only festival associated with an explicit commandment to rejoice, which appears three times in the Torah. During this time of COVID, how will you rejoice? Maybe we can't gather in a large group under the sukkah, but there are other ways to rejoice. Have snacks outside, play music, decorate, build a blanket fort in your living room. Maybe find a family service project or give tzedakah. There are some great books for kids, whether they're 4 or tweens.

Simchat Torah follows Sukkot, where we celebrate the completion of the annual reading of the Torah. Unfortunately, that celebration has traditionally included taking the Torah out and carrying it around the packed synagogue, and lots of people reading from it. We can't all come together right now, but there are some activities families can do at home. Make an Israeli flag with foam sheets and wooden dowels, make a wearable Torah cover from an old pillowcase that you can decorate, look at different

synagogues online and notice their arks, and Torah scrolls and mantles. Look at Hebrew writing and yads. Of course, there's always food for the holidays! Pumpkin mousse, Turkish stuffed grape leaves, Moroccan-inspired vegetable couscous, spiced angel pecans, pumpkin challah, roasted butternut squash with apples and onions—all these and more on the Reform Judaism website.

Let me know what you think about us meeting on a Saturday afternoon in October. Still at the temple, wearing masks, and physically distanced.

Happy holidays-take care—

Lin

TBS Sunday School Program

Kathy Jones, Sunday School Principal

This past month, the Sunday School students learned about the meaning and traditions of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur during Zoom classes. Sheri Stock made Rosh Hashanah activity bags and delivered them to all of the students' homes along with prizes that the students won playing High Holiday Bingo on Zoom. Thank you Sheri! Several students then participated in the High Holiday Zoom Services. Our next get together will be on October 11th at 10 AM for a Simchat Torah Zoom service. In the meantime everyone is invited to come by the Temple and sit in the Sukkah and shake the etrog and lulav any time from October 2nd to October 10th!

Anyone wishing to have their children join Sunday School should contact Kathy Jones, at krsjones2002@yahoo.com or (828) 632-9261.

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 **Wednesday, October 14th, at 6:00pm via Zoom**. Board meetings are open to all temple members. Contact Rabbi Dennis if you wish to join the meeting.
Current 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
Jodi Lavin-Tompkins
Mary Lee Tosky
Linda Greenfield
Kathy Jones
Susan Huitt

Donations

Simon Yakopson and Valentina Perlin
High Holiday donation

Mary Lee and Aaron Tosky
Donation in remembrance of Ceil Tosky

Bryan and Kathy Jones
General Donation

TBS Gives through Donations

our donation for October was sent to
The Hickory Soup Kitchen

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

When we do 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. There is a sign up sheet and 'what to do' list posted in the kitchen that make it easy. And please remember that all members present will be glad to help out. Volunteers are greatly appreciated.

TBS Message Board

The board sends wishes of healing and hope to all who are affected by the COVID 19 pandemic, at home, at work, and in hospitals and nursing homes.

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

TBS Community Mitzvah Projects

Many of our neighbors in Hickory and the surrounding area are still experiencing an unprecedented need for food and/or hygiene and cleaning supplies because of illness or high unemployment rates associated with the COVID 19 crisis. We encourage TBS members who can help out without risking their own safety, to continue to donate where these essential supplies are needed, like the Hickory Soup Kitchen; the Second Harvest Food Bank; The Lenoir Soup Kitchen; The Salvation Army of Taylorsville, Hickory, or Lenoir. If you know of other local organizations or individuals in need of support during this trying time, please contact the CRSAC Chairperson, Kathy Jones, at krsjones2002@yahoo.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

Ghiora Mehler
The Southern Chickpea
Falafel Truck
thesouthernchickpea.com
828-999-0496

Local and Regional Events

Center Program with Leading Oral Historian and Expert on Holocaust Survivor Testimonies

The Center for Judaic, Holocaust, and Peace Studies invites the public to an online presentation by renowned oral historian and Holocaust studies scholar, **Dr. Henry ("Hank") Greenspan**, Lecturer Emeritus, Residential College, Social Theory and Practice Program, University of Michigan--Ann Arbor. His **presentation** entitled **"Reflections from Fifty Years of Listening to Holocaust Survivors: Contrarian Views"** will start on **Tuesday, October 6, at 7:00 pm** on **ZOOM**. Like almost all Center events, this online program is free of charge and open to the public. The lecture will be followed by a Q-and-A.

To get the **link for the ZOOM meeting**, instructions on how to install ZOOM on a computer or smartphone, and more information about the event, please contact the Center at 828.262.2311 or holocaust@appstate.edu

Member Business Directory

Scott and Julie Owens
Taste Full Beans Coffeehouse
29 2nd St NW
Hickory, NC 28601
828-325-0108
www.tastefullbeans.com

Dr David Peltzer
Newton Family Physicians
767 West First Street
Newton, NC 28658
828 465-3928
www.newtonfamilyphysicians.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/.

Temple Beth Shalom Life Cycle October Events

Birthdays

Craig Axler 10/3
Samuel Peltzer 10/6
Daniel Tosky 10/7
Steven Gold 10/11
Susan Rieder 10/21
Rich Engelmann 10/31

Anniversaries

Madeleine Guy 10/29

Yahrzeits

Stanley Atkins 10/27
Sid Freedman 10/30

Schedule for Rabbi Services and Sunday School 2020-21

Date		Event	Bulletin Deadline
October	2	Virtual **Erev Sukkot Service** (Friday) 7PM	
	11	Virtual **Simchat Torah Service** (Sunday) and **Sunday School** 10AM	
	24	Virtual **Saturday Morning Service** 10AM	
	25	Virtual **Sunday School** 10AM	
November	6	**Friday Night Service** 7PM	October 31
	8	**Sunday School** 10AM	
	21	**Saturday Morning Service** 10AM	
	22	**Sunday School** 10AM	
	26	**Thanksgiving Community Service** (at Corinth UCC) 10AM	
December	11	**Friday Night Service** (Second Night of Hanukah) 7PM	November 25 (Wed.)
	13	**Sunday School Hanukah Party** 10AM	
	26	**Saturday Morning Service** 10AM	
	27	**Sunday School** 10AM	
January	8	**Friday Night Service** 7PM	December 26
	10	**Sunday School** 10AM	
	23	**Saturday Morning Service** 10AM	
	24	**Sunday School** 10AM	
February	5	**Friday Night Service** 7PM	January 30
	7	**Sunday School** 10AM	
	20	**Saturday Morning Service** 10AM	
	21	**Sunday School** 10AM	
	26	**Friday Night Service/Purim Megillah Reading** 7PM	
March	5	**Friday Night Service** 7PM	February 27
	7	**Sunday School** 10AM	
	20	**Saturday Morning Service** 10AM	
	21	**Sunday School** 10AM	
	28	**Passover Community Seder**(Sunday) 6PM	
April	9	**Friday Night Service** 7PM	March 26 (Fri.)
	11	**Sunday School** 10AM	
	24	**Saturday Morning Service** 10AM	
	25	**Sunday School** 10AM	
May	7	**Friday Night Service** 7PM	April 24
	9	**Sunday School** 10AM	
	16	**Erev Shavuot Service** (Sunday) 7PM	
	22	**Saturday Morning Service** 10AM	
	23	**TBS Annual Membership Meeting** (Sunday) 10AM	
June	4	**Friday Night Service** 7PM	May 28 (Fri.)
	6	**Sunday School Final Session** 10AM	
	19	**Saturday Morning Service** 10AM	
July	9	**Friday Night Service** 7PM	N/A
	24	**Saturday Morning Service** 10AM	

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