



## Upcoming Events

### Coffee with Scholar-in-Residence Bob Wolfson: The Politics of Hate

Sunday, January 29, 10:30 a.m.

### Let's Meet our Tri-Faith Neighbors

Wednesday, February 1, 6:30 p.m.

### Amsterdam, Prague and Malta: A Jewish Journey with Cantor Shermet

Thursdays, February 2-23, 10 a.m.

### February First Friday and Grade 3 & 4 Shabbat

Friday, February 3, Candle Lighting and Kiddush in the Simon Community Court, 5:30 p.m., Services, 6 p.m., dinner following

### Sounds in Silence: An Introduction to Jewish Meditation with Rabbi Crystal

Sundays, February 5 & 12, 10:30 a.m.

### Temple Israel's Annual Super Bowl Party!

Sunday, February 5, 4:30 p.m.

### How to Deal with the Stories in Torah that We Did Not Study in Religious School with Emeritus Rabbi Aryeh Azriel

Wednesday, February 8, 6:30 p.m.

### Shabbat Shira: The Sabbath of Song!

Friday, February 10, 6 p.m.

### OTYG Spaghetti Dinner

Sunday February 12, 5 p.m.

## Meet Our New Senior Rabbi!



Rabbi Brian Stoller has been selected to become our new senior rabbi beginning July 1. Rabbi Stoller's selection was approved at a Congregational Meeting held on Sunday, January 22. Rabbi Stoller is currently the associate rabbi at Congregation B'nai Jehoshua Beth Elohim (BJBE), Deerfield, IL. He has served at BJBE since 2008 when he was ordained as a rabbi from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, OH, where he is currently also a Ph.D. Candidate in Rabbinics.

Rabbi Stoller grew up in Houston, TX, and attended The University of Texas where

he received a Bachelor of Business Administration in Honors Business Program & Finance in 1996. After graduation, he first worked as a Political Consultant and Hill Consultants in Houston and then serviced as Press Secretary for U.S. Senator Peter Fitzgerald (IL), Washington, DC. Rabbi Stoller has stated, "Seven years in politics is enough to drive you to God. That is my short explanation for why I left my career as a U.S. Senate press secretary to become a rabbi – although, in truth, there is a lot more to the story. While politics can certainly be disillusioning, I see my journey from the Capitol to the rabbinate as a personal spiritual evolution toward a fuller, more authentic version of myself, a deeper engagement with things that really matter, and the realization of my destiny to be a teacher and spiritual guide to others."

Rabbi Stoller is married to Karen Flayhart and they have two children, Lindsay (7) and Zachary (3). For enjoyment, Rabbi Stoller likes cycling and is learning to play ukulele with his daughter along with learning to read German.



# Clergy Report

## New Beginnings

As we kick off this new year together, we will soon begin reading from a new book of Torah: Exodus. Exodus is the story of our people; the story of how we became slaves in Egypt and how God freed us with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. This seminal story, a foundational event that explains who we were, continues to remind us of who we are today and who we will be tomorrow.

“Avadim Hayinu” we were once slaves in the land of Egypt. This often-quoted catchphrase reminds us that we, the Jewish people, have a heritage that we call upon to direct our future. We remember this fact in our sacred texts, our liturgy, our commentaries, and our Jewish rituals. Our choices, our rights, and our freedoms were taken from us; our dignity as human beings stripped bare.

And these collective memories are the stories that guide us, that help us make decisions today and every day. Because we were slaves in the land of Egypt, we know what oppression feels like. Because we were slaves in the land of Egypt, we know what it is like to be vulnerable and afraid. Because we were slaves in the land of Egypt, we know what it is like to be the stranger in an unknown land. Because we were slaves in the land of Egypt, we know what it is like to be persecuted. Because we were slaves in the land of Egypt, we know what it is like to live in poverty with our food and shelter and basic human needs subject to the whim of others.

And because we know this, we are obligated to act to help those who are still held captive in the bonds of slavery. So we work to help those who fear persecution. We work to decrease poverty and increase opportunity. We work to end discrimination

and anti-Semitism. We work to make our communities a place where all people feel welcomed and accepted.

These are the issues that have plagued us in ancient times, in the recent past, and still in the present - our work is far from finished. In the same week that we begin the book of Exodus, we celebrate and honor the work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in promoting civil liberties and rights for all people. Dr. King reminded us time and again that slavery is more than just a physical state of being, and that it comes in all different shapes and sizes.

Our daily liturgy reflects our celebration of freedom, harkening back to that time in our history when we were not free. In our morning blessings we say “Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who frees the captive.” And we know, deep in our hearts that until all people are free, these bonds will never truly be broken. The story of the Exodus reminds us that the shackles of slavery never truly leave us. We retain a visceral connection to our past which prompts us to act on behalf of those who are still enslaved.

As we begin this new year together, and begin our reading of the book of Exodus, may we dive deep into the text together. May we learn together, study together, and act together to fight slavery, in all its many forms. May this time of study help us to think of different ways to interpret the narratives and lead us to new ways to solve the problems of the present. And may our history, our traditions, and our narratives help us to remember our past and bring peace into our future.



Rabbi Berezin

## A Thank You from Yachad

Thank you so much for the very fun Chanukah Party. Everyone truly enjoyed it! The decorations were so festive, the food was delicious and the activities, singing and games made for a great afternoon! Thank you for your kindness and hard work. Your beautiful gesture was definitely appreciated!  
Fondly, The Parsow Family

# Congregation

## February First Friday and Grade 3 & 4 Shabbat

Friday, February 3

Candle Lighting and Kiddush  
in the Simon Community

**1st Fridays**

Court, 5:40 p.m., Service featuring the First Friday Band,  
6 p.m., dinner following services

Join us and our 3rd and 4th Grade families for this family-friendly service. Everyone is invited to come and support our 3rd and 4th Grade students as they participate in the service. Menu: Grilled Chicken, Roasted Potatoes, Mixed Vegetables and Apple Pie (Chicken Nuggets for children will be available) Cost is \$5 per person, max \$20 per family. Please RSVP to Temple Israel, [RSVP@templeisraelomaha.com](mailto:RSVP@templeisraelomaha.com) or 402-556-6536, by Wednesday, February 1.

## Temple Israel's Annual Super Bowl Party!

Sunday, February 5, 4:30 p.m.

Come watch Super Bowl LI with us on our big projection screens in the Social Hall!

We will be providing all you can eat appetizers and non-alcoholic drinks. BYOB. There will be activities for kids and sitter service provided. The suggested donation for the evening is \$5 per person or \$10 per family. Please RSVP to Temple Israel, 402-556-6536 or [RSVP@templeisraelomaha.com](mailto:RSVP@templeisraelomaha.com). Money will be collected at the door.



Get in the  
**GROOVE**  
with **OTYG**

## OTYG Spaghetti Dinner & Auction

*Sunday, February 12, 5 - 8 p.m.*

Join us in celebration of our Temple Israel youth at the Spaghetti Dinner and Auction! There will be great food, amazing live and silent auction items and friends and family to share this wonderful event with.

The cost is \$10 for adults, \$4 for children ages 6-12 and no charge for children five and younger.

**Please RSVP to Temple Israel, 402-556-6536, by Friday, February 3.**

Proceeds will be going to support Camp Rainbow, a camp for kids with cancer and other blood-related diseases, along with funding youth activities.

**We are still accepting donations for our auction!** If you are interested in contributing, please contact Aliyah Lasky, [alasky@templeisraelomaha.com](mailto:alasky@templeisraelomaha.com) or 402-556-6536.



# Treasurer Update

## Temple Israel Fair Share Dues Program

Gary Kaplan, Temple Israel Treasurer

Most of our annual income comes from member dues. We also get about 15% each from our endowment and religious school fees.

We use a Fair Share Dues plan based on the following principles:

- We want Temple Israel to be affordable for all of our members.
- We need everyone to contribute a fair amount to sustain the congregation.
- We understand that young members and families starting out usually cannot pay the full cost of their membership, which is \$2,720.
- We understand that there are unexpected challenges that require exceptions to paying Fair Share Dues. Our Executive Director handles those requests on a very confidential basis.
- Most of our members stay with us for many, many years. They pay higher dues as their incomes rise. In this way we are able to keep dues affordable for those with less income.

Graduated rate examples of the current Fair Share Dues Plan:

- Dues start at \$150, but exceptions are made, if this is out of reach
- At an income of \$10,000 the rate is 1.55%
- At an income of \$50,000 the rate is 1.85%
- At an income of \$100,000 the rate is 2.05%
- At an income of \$200,000 the rate is 2.40%
- Top dues is \$5,892 for incomes over \$220,000 or \$2.5 million net worth

In addition

- Over 20 families are Patrons who donate an extra \$2000 annually
- Over 80 families are Sponsors who pay an extra 25% over their fair share.

You will be receiving a Dues re-evaluation form this spring. Please fill it out and be sure that you will be doing your fair share for Temple Israel next year. Thank you for your support of Temple Israel!

## Calendar

### תפילות Pray

#### February First Friday and Grade 3 & 4 Shabbat

Friday, February 3

Candle Lighting and Kiddush in

the Simon Community Court, 5:30 p.m., Service featuring the First Friday Band, 6 p.m., dinner following services

See page 3 for details.

**1st Fridays**

#### Shabbat Shira: The Sabbath of Song!

Friday, February 10, 6 p.m.

#### Kol Rina and Saint Paul United Methodist Choir

Friday, February 24, 6 p.m., Temple Israel

Sunday, February 26, 11 a.m., St. Paul United Methodist Church, 5410 Corby Street

#### Temple Tots Shabbat

Saturdays, January 28 and  
February 25, 9 a.m.



#### March First Friday

Friday, March 3

Candle Lighting and Kiddush

in the Simon Community Court, 5:30 p.m.

Service featuring the First Friday Band, 6 p.m.,  
dinner following services

Menu: Vegetable Lasagna, Soup, Salad and Ice Cream  
(Chicken Nuggets for children will be available)

Cost is \$5 per person, max \$20 per family. Please RSVP  
to Temple Israel by Wednesday, March 1.

**1st Fridays**



# Calendar

## Learn למוּדִים

### Religious School Grades PreK-12

Contact Religious School Director Sharon Comisar-Langdon for more information.

Grades PreK-6, Sundays, 10 a.m.-Noon

Grades 3-6, Wednesdays, 4-6 p.m.

Grades 7-12, Wednesdays, 6-8 p.m.

Family School, Wednesdays, 6-8 p.m.

No School Wednesday, February 15 and

Sunday, February 19.

### Adult Education

Contact Program Director Scott Littky for more information.

### Torah Study

Saturdays, 9:15 - 10:15 a.m.

### Wednesdays @ Temple

#### Let's Meet our Tri-Faith Neighbors

Wednesday, February 1, 6:30 p.m.

A representative from the American Muslim Institute will

aid us in learning more about the principles and practices of Islam.



#### How to Deal with the Stories in Torah that We Did Not Study in Religious School with Emeritus Rabbi Aryeh Azriel

Wednesday, February 8, 6:30 p.m.

Often when children learn Bible stories much of the story is not taught because it may not be deemed appropriate at their age. This course will review some of those stories and try to analyze their purpose in Torah.

#### Jewish Influences in Modern Comic Books with Barry Grossman

Wednesdays, February 22 and March 1 & 8, 6:30 p.m.

An overview of how Jewish comic book writers and artists influenced the comic books which are a major part of pop culture in the U.S. today through books, movies, and television.

### Thursday Mornings @ Temple

#### Amsterdam, Prague and Malta:

#### A Jewish Journey with Cantor Shermet

Thursdays, February 2-23, 10 a.m.

Explore the sights and sounds of the Jewish communities visited last winter by Cantor Shermet.

#### Meanings within Meanings, Stories within Stories: Uncovering the Wisdom of the Torah with Rabbi Crystal

Thursdays, March 2, 9, 23 & 30 and April 6, 10 a.m.

The Rabbis believe that beyond the words of a story in the Torah that every word and letter conveys a message from the Divine. The mystics expressed this idea when they said that the Torah is not just parchment and ink, it is black fire written on white fire. The early sage who wrote the Torah commentary called Midrash, Medieval rabbis and mystics, modern scholarship, and contemporary writers all offer interpretations of the Torah to for their age.

### Sundays @ Temple

#### Coffee with Scholar-in-Residence Bob Wolfson: The Politics of Hate

Sunday, January 29, 10:30 a.m.

#### Sounds in Silence: An Introduction to Jewish Meditation with Rabbi Crystal

Sundays, February 5 & 12, 10:30 a.m.

Jewish meditation has experienced a revival in the past ten years. Jewish meditation is rooted in the Torah, grew in the time of the Rabbis, and flourished in the Middle Ages through the teachings of Jewish mysticism. Today, mediation helps us develop a "mindful" awareness of our souls and the world. Meditation also provides a means for enriching our experiences during services. By developing our inner life, we more openly relate to others and live with greater wisdom. The workshop will introduce you to several forms of modern Jewish meditation. Each session is independent you can attend one or both.

#### Temple Israel Book Club

Sunday, February 12, 10 a.m.

# Calendar/Congregation

## Grief Support Group

with Marla Cohen, MS, NCC, LMHP

Sunday, February 12, 10 a.m.

For those who have suffered the loss of a loved one.

## Temple Israel TED Talk

Sunday, February 26, 11 a.m.

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## Engage פעילות

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### Holy Smokes

Tuesday, February 7, 7 p.m.

Copa Cabana, 17520 Wright Street, #108

We look forward to Emeritus Rabbi Aryeh Azriel leading this men's only (21+) evening featuring cigars, spirits, beer and philosophical discussions of men's issues and perspectives from Jewish texts. We will be meeting at Copa Cabana. Cost is \$20 and includes two coupons, each is good for one of the following: a cigar, well drink, beer or soda. Please RSVP to Scott Littky, 402-556-6536, by Friday, February 3.

### OTYG & JYG

Contact Director of Youth & Young Adult Engagement Aliyah Lasky for more information.

### OTYG Meetings

Sunday, January 29, 12 p.m.

Sunday, February 5, 12 p.m. (lunch provided)

### OTYG Spaghetti Dinner Prep Days/Nights:

Join OTYG with decorations, donations, and other tasks as we prepare for Spaghetti Dinner!

Sunday, January 29, 12-4 p.m.

Monday, January 30, 5-7 p.m.

Tuesday, January 31, 5-7 p.m.

Sunday, February 5, 12-4 p.m.

Tuesday, February 7, 5-7 p.m.

Thursday, February 9, 5-7 p.m.

### Junior Youth Group Chavurah

February 3-5, Kansas City, MO

### OTYG Spaghetti Dinner

Sunday February 12, 5 p.m.

## Births לידה

*Mazel tov on the birth of...*

**Lev Joseph Rathsam**, son of Marla Schuchman and Jonathan Rathsam.

**Steven Arthur-John Speer**, son of Elisa and Steven A. Speer, grandson of Paul Gerber & Kathy Keeney and Steven W. Speer & Cathy Speer, and great-grandson of the late Arthur & Bernice Gerber, Ella Mae Keeney and the late John W Kenney, the late Ruth & Wayne Speer, and the late Donald & Esther Muntz.

## In Sympathy נחמה

*The Congregation records with sorrow the deaths of our members' relatives...*

**Bernice Gerber**, preceded in death by husband Arthur "Sonny" Gerber. Survived by children Paul Gerber, Donald Gerber, Debbie (Ron "Red) Powers, many grandchildren, great-children and one great-great grandchild; loving caregivers Kelly Fields and Denice Swanson;

**Stephen David Greenberg**, brother of Don Greenberg;

**Martin Hersh**, preceded in death by wife Gloria and brother M. Hershey Brill. Survived by children William (Sally) Hersh, Jeffrey (Myra) Hersh, Steven (Sheri) Idelman, Susan (Ed) Moon and George (Jill) Idelman, grandchildren Ali (Nate), Bryan, Jason, Justin, Brandon, Becca, Alyssa, Tommy, Sarah and Emily, great-grandchildren Zachary, Jordan and Joshua, nieces and nephews, and many friends;

**Natalie Justa**, grandmother of Amy Cotton;

*...and extends sympathy to their bereaved families.*

# Congregation

## B'nai Mitzvah בני מצוה

**Nathan Krasno** will celebrate his Bar Mitzvah on Saturday, February 4. He is the son of Roxanne and Todd Krasno and the grandson of Margie and Larry Krasno. Nathan also has two sisters Sarah and Sydney. He is a 7th grade student at Millard North



Middle School where he received the Outstanding Scholarship Award. For enjoyment he loves anything to do with sports especially baseball. For his Mitzvah Project, Nathan volunteered at the Millard Athletic Association during their off season. He assisted their coaches in getting ready for the upcoming season.

### **Abigail Paige Kaufman**

will celebrate her Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, February 11. Abby is a 7th grade honor roll student at Westside Middle School and a participant in the Duke Talent Identification Program. Abby enjoys playing lacrosse for the Omaha Lacrosse Club and is a member of Westside Connection, the Westside Middle School Show Choir, and Center Stage, an all girls' competitive show choir at SNJ Studios. For her Mitzvah Project, Abby volunteered at Girls Inc. Omaha. She is the daughter of Dana and Michael Kaufman, sister to Benjamin Kaufman, and the granddaughter of Ruth and Joe Erman and Lois and Steve Kaufman.



**Delaney Graham** will celebrate her Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, February 25. She is the daughter of Melinda and John Graham. Delaney is in the 7th grade at Westside Middle School and is a participant in the Duke Talent Identification Program. She enjoys competitive softball and has been playing since kindergarten. She has performed on stage in the Jewish Federation of Omaha's Campaign Cabaret and several of the JCC's Musical Theatre Community Groups productions, including the upcoming Oklahoma. Delaney will be returning to Camp Shwayder this summer for the fifth time. For her Mitzvah Project, Delaney volunteered as a Junior Counselor at Munroe Meyer Institute. She is the granddaughter of Jan and Steve Fischer, Kathy Graham, Marty Riemenschneider and the late Paul Graham.



### **Zachary Evan Atlas**

will celebrate his Bar Mitzvah on Saturday, March 4. Zach is the son of Stacey and Brett Atlas, brother of Noah and Marley, and the grandson of Carl and Zoë Riekes, Ellen and Don Israel, and Lauren and the late Ron Atlas. Zachary is a 7th grade at Westside Middle School where he is an Honor Roll Student and participant in the Duke Talent Identification Program. He is the recipient of the WMS "Knight of Honor" award for overall achievement and leadership. For fun and enjoyment, Zachary likes playing baseball for the Suburban Stampede, skiing and hanging out with family and friends. For his Mitzvah Project, Zachary collected stuffed animals for Completely Kids.





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INTERIM SENIOR RABBI Darryl Crystal  
ASSISTANT RABBI Deana Sussman Berezin  
CANTOR Wendy Shermet  
EMERITUS RABBI Aryeh Azriel  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Dennis DePorte  
RELIGIOUS SCHOOL DIRECTOR Sharon Comisar-Langdon  
PROGRAM DIRECTOR Scott Littky  
DIRECTOR OF YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT ENGAGEMENT Aliyah Lasky  
OFFICE MANAGER Misty Weidner



**Fun at NFTY  
Winter Chavurah!**  
TOP LEFT: Olivia Nogg and Aleia Budwig hanging out at the NFTY Social. BOTTOM LEFT: Seth Norton tries to block a shot during the Western region vs St. Louis/Illinois/Iowa district basketball game. RIGHT: All the NFTY seniors together after the basketball game.