

# Rabbi Micah Streiffer To Be Installed at Temple Beth El

By Jo Minchew

Sometimes, it only takes a moment. For Rabbi Micah Streiffer, who will be installed as Temple Beth El's newest clergy member at 8 PM, October 19, that moment came during an 11th grade trip to Israel.

"Through the Eisendrath International Exchange, the Reform Movement's semester abroad program for high school students, I had the opportunity to live and study in Israel, to learn Hebrew and to study Jewish history where Jewish history happened," he says. "For me, that was very powerful; very meaningful."

At the end of the semester, he remembers the program head saying something that the serious-minded boy from southernmost Louisiana took straight to heart. It set him on the path, he notes, that eventually led him to Charlotte.

"His words left me with a sense of responsibility towards the Jewish community," Rabbi Streiffer recalls. "He told us that having studied Jewish history and religion so intensely, we were now among the most educated Jews in America and that we needed to do something with that; to go back and teach others."

Rabbi Streiffer went on to earn his Bachelors in Judaic Studies

from George Washington University and was ordained at Hebrew Union College, Jewish Institute of Religion, in Cincinnati earlier this year. At his October installation, words of blessing will be offered by one of Rabbi Streiffer's former teachers, Rabbi Mark Washofsky, Professor of Jewish Law and Practice, Hebrew Union College, with whom he studied nearly every semester.

His early discovery of the relevance of Judaism in his own life is something Rabbi Streiffer looks forward to sharing with the younger members of Temple Beth El. "During my years here, and I hope there will be many, I'm looking to working with the youth and helping them connect with Judaism in many ways, because," he asserts, "there are many ways to make this connection through prayer, through ritual, and



Rabbi Micah Streiffer

through...getting together with other Jewish people."

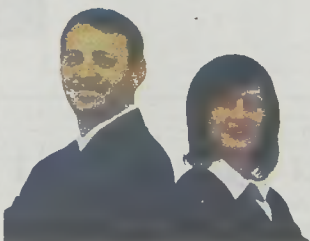
Rabbi Streiffer feels that Temple Beth El is an exciting place to begin his rabbinate. "In looking for a congregation, I

(wanted) a place that was vibrant, a place that had a lot going on, a place where I could learn. I was really attracted to Temple Beth El because of the breadth and depth of the type of programming that goes on here, the amount of exciting things that go on here, and the depth of both the learning and the engagement of the congregation.

"We're a large congregation...but it feels like a family," Rabbi Streiffer concludes. "I'm enjoying meeting a lot of people and getting to know them as I begin this exciting endeavor." ☆



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## New Jewish Congregation Reaches Many Milestones

The Lake Norman Jewish Congregation is entering its second year with a long list of accomplishments. "We initially hoped for about 30 families to join last year, and we doubled that number very quickly," stated Slade Goldstein, President of the local lake-area Jewish congregation. "The LNJRC Religion School also exceeded our expectations, with double the enrollment anticipated. ... We are also very excited to announce that we changed our Religious School schedule to Sunday mornings, instead of Sunday afternoons. Most parents prefer the morning classes for their children so they can enjoy

the rest of the day together," said Goldstein. The congregation is approaching 80 members, including mostly family memberships, with over 40 children enrolled in the religion school.

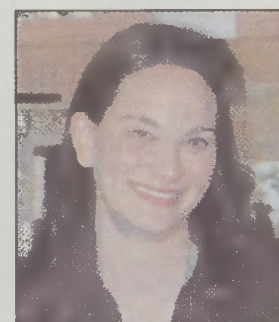
A recent donation by Amy and Walt McNulty has helped LNJRC start its first fund that will provide for the congregation's immediate and long term needs. The McNultys made their donation to honor the memory of Amy's father, Maurice E. Smith. After a recent request for donations to help the congregation acquire 150 copies of the prayer book, "Gates of Repentance," the McNultys stepped up to the plate. "This High Holiday Prayer Book will be used for many years to come," said Amy McNulty. "My husband and I saw this as an opportunity to honor the memory of my father and add an important link in the legacy of the Lake Norman Jewish Congregation." A mission statement was created for the special fund: The Maurice E. Smith Memorial Torah/Book Fund has been established to provide for written material needs of the Lake Norman Jewish Congregation. Maurice was a leader in providing for and encouraging Jewish learning and study in the Boston, MA, area. This fund will be used exclusively to purchase, care for and provide any published materials that the congregation owns or the



Pictured above are the newly acquired Torah and Ark. The Torah is believed to be 100 years old and originate from Eastern Europe or Russia. The portable Ark was custom made to house and transport the Torah safely. Photo courtesy of Bill Hooker.

Board of Directors deems it needs for the congregation's use.

Other milestones reached in 2007 include the acquisition of a Torah, the recent donation of a portable Torah Ark, and the first Bat Mitzvah in the lake area. Thanks to a donation by Arlene and Steven Simms, and the help of Florence and Louis Goldbrum, LNJRC purchased a Torah from a congregation in Florida. "This particular Torah is believed to be 100 years old, originating in Eastern Europe or Russia," said Rich Cooper, past president of LNJRC. The congregation also recently received the donation of a Torah Ark. "I searched the internet for a portable Torah Ark without any success," stated Jack Grossman, a member of LNJRC. "I realized that we would need to make one, and since my former employer was a custom cabinet shop, I approached them to see if they would work with me in the fabrication of the Ark." Hands-On Woodworking willingly fabricated the Ark from detailed designs that Grossman created. "I wanted it to look very clean, yet display unique details," said Grossman.



Sarah Wolf, 5th-year Reform rabbinic student, is leading services for LNJRC. Photo courtesy of Bill Hooker.

(Continued on page 10)

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