

# SYNAGOGUES & CONGREGATIONS

## Temple Or Olam (Formerly Havurat Olam): Who We Are

If you're used to seeing the news from Havurat Olam in this space, you'll notice that we have a name change. Reflecting our growth from a Havurah to a fully operating Jewish congregation, we polled our members for suggestions on a new name. The winning name, Temple Or Olam, means "light of (or to) the world."

The next major step for our congregation will be to secure our own permanent location in Cabarrus County. Our building committee is hard at work, trudging down muddy paths, examining buildings, and debating over bagels and lox. As we settle into a new name, and, soon, we hope, a new space, it's reasonable to ask: Who are we? What's important to us?

The core of Temple Or Olam is community. A sense of community permeates everything we do — from the Friday services where everyone really does know your name, to the karaoke parties where kids and adults (and one memorable gorilla) croon together without fear, knowing that they're among friends.

We value inclusiveness. Non-Jewish spouses feel comfortable. So do guests and friends of the family. We welcome the gifts that every member can bring from his or her background. Our religious leader, Barbara Thiede, takes special care to make our religious services accessible and meaningful to everyone: Those raised



Havdalah hands.

Jewish, Jews by choice, and "friends and family" of Jews.

One of the first questions many people ask about Temple Or Olam is "What is the congregation's denomination?"

The answer: Jewish. We are one of a growing number of congregations throughout the United States and Canada that have chosen not to affiliate with any one denomination. Why? We want to be free to express our Jewishness in the ways that are most meaningful to our members, no matter what their background. While we honor and value the importance of each denomination, as the only congregation in Cabarrus County, we want to be a place where Jews of any background can find something familiar and feel comfortable.

Our services restate

the spiritual vitality characteristic of the Hassidic movement of pre-war Europe through our involved and even exuberant prayer. We engage in spirited Torah study. We also believe, alongside the Reconstruction movement, that Judaism is an evolving religious civilization. We do a lot of our praying in Hebrew, as Conservative Judaism does, and we emphasize social action and egalitarianism as Reform Judaism does.

Dr. Thiede, who teaches at UNC-Charlotte's Department of Religious Studies, is also studying for rabbinic ordination with the Alliance for Jewish Renewal, whose faculty includes ordained rabbis from every major Jewish denomination. So our services draw on the energy, musical variety, and joyous spirit of Jewish Renewal as well.

Maybe the best way to answer the question of who we are is with an invitation. Come and see for yourself. Please join us for one of our Friday evening services, and we will make you feel at home, and, we hope, help you begin your Shabbat with the sweetness it deserves.

For more information, please call 704-720-7577, email us at [info@or-olam.org](mailto:info@or-olam.org), or visit our website at [www.or-olam.org](http://www.or-olam.org). ☆



## Interreligious Coordinating Council of Israel Visits Charlotte

Temple Israel and the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte Community Relations Council (CRC) welcome the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel. Rabbi Dr. Ron Kronish, Director of ICCI, Issa Jaber, Co-chairperson of ICCI, and Reverend Samuel Fanous will visit Charlotte for the first time May 16, 17, and 18. "Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all preach peace. Too often, however, they are corrupted to fuel hatred and violence. ICCI's mission is to harness the teachings and values of the three monotheistic religions and transform them into a source of reconciliation and coexistence." Friday evening's 8 PM presentation will focus on the

historical background of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Authority from Oslo to the present. Shabbat morning, each guest will give a D'var Torah from their religious background. Shabbat afternoon, beginning at 3:30 PM, Temple Israel will welcome representatives from Masjid Ash Shaheed to study and share with members of the Jewish Community the views from ICCI's delegation. Sunday morning, Temple Israel will share an hour of study with ICCI at Providence United Methodist Church.

The excitement is building as we prepare for Shavuot and the extraordinary annual experience of Confirmation. Shavuot cele-

brates the giving and receiving of Torah at Mt. Sinai, a truly exceptional moment in history that still teaches the import and value of each individual human being. As we prepare to receive the gift of Torah anew, so may our time with ICCI, help us to appreciate the value and power of the three monotheistic religions and our potential to lead the world towards peaceful co-existence. ☆



The Temple Israel Social Club, for active couples and singles, invite you to join our social group. Meet new people and enjoy our interesting programs and trips. For information call Janice Rosner, 704-366-5631. Watch for information on our next social occasion, a play at the CPCC summer theatre.

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