

Temple Or Olam is the Perfect Fit for Many in Cabarrus County Area

Temple Or-Olam, serving University City, Harrisburg, and Cabarrus County, is an independent congregation where Dr. Barbara Thiede, senior rabbinic student with ALEPH (the Alliance for Jewish Renewal) leads two Shabbat services each month. What makes those services different from all other religious services? We asked some recent visitors what they thought.

"It isn't what you'd expect," said one, "at least it wasn't what I expected. I was running late, and I was sort of nervous to be going at all ... it was my first Jewish service. I had all kinds of unanswered questions: what was I supposed to wear? Would I be able to understand the sermon? But I walked in, and an older couple near the rear of the gathering waved for me to sit down. Later, at the Oneg, I sat at a table full of people, visited a little, ate countless brownies, and you know, I just really felt welcome."

Another regular visitor had this to say: "It's a good fit for me. Some places you walk into and it

doesn't feel right. For me – for my family – this feels right. We like that it's small because it's also such a welcoming environment. And I don't mean that fake kind of welcoming. These people genuinely care about each other and they are genuinely interested in getting to know whoever walks through the door. It's nice. And Reb Barbara is terrific. You know, they tell you when you're looking for a temple that you should feel a sort of 'click' with the rabbi, and I absolutely do."

"The first time I visited Temple Or-Olam was shortly after I made the decision to convert to Judaism, and I remember being terrified that I wouldn't like the music, that it would just be too different from what I was used to. Music is a major thing for me. It's a big part of how I connect spiritually, so I was pretty concerned that I wouldn't like it. I couldn't have been more wrong. Reb Barbara and her husband provide a beautiful musical foundation for Shabbat. It's just the right mix of tradition and spontaneity. I'm so very grateful



to have found this community."

The best way to experience Temple Or Olam's music, welcoming community, and the blessing of a joyous Shabbat is to join us for a service. Services are held twice a month at 7 PM at McGill Baptist Church in Concord. Put on your favorite jeans or dress up if you like. But bring a sparkling smile and we'll meet you there.

For information on services, please visit our website, www.or-olam.org, email us at info@or-olam.org, or call 704-720-7577. ☆

Exhibit Opening Gala Features NPR Commentator Susan Stamberg

Celebrate the debut of the exhibit *Down Home: Jewish Life in North Carolina* at the Opening Gala on Sunday, June 13, from 5-8 PM at the N.C. Museum of History in Raleigh. This special occasion will feature a ribbon-cutting, a reception and a talk by NPR special correspondent Susan Stamberg. The event is hosted by the Museum of History Associates and the Jewish Heritage Foundation of North Carolina.

At 5 PM Stamberg will discuss "Why Museums Matter." The nationally renowned broadcast journalist serves as guest host of "All Things Considered," "Morning Edition," and "Weekend Edition/Saturday" and reports on cultural issues for various NPR programs. Beginning in 1972, Stamberg spent 14 years as co-host of "All Things Considered," NPR's award-winning newsmagazine. Then, for three years, she hosted "Weekend Edition/Sunday." The journalist has won every major broadcasting award and has written two books: *TALK: NPR's Susan Stamberg Considers All Things and Every Night at Five*.

At 6 PM join Gov. James B. Hunt Jr., Honorary Chairman of the Down Home project; members of the Jewish Heritage Foundation of North Carolina; Stamberg; and others for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to officially open the exhibit.

From 6-8 PM, enjoy a reception with heavy hors d'oeuvres, wine and the music of the Magnolia Klezmer Band. See the exhibit and

meet Leonard Rogoff, exhibit curator, historian, and author of the book *Down Home: Jewish Life in North Carolina* (UNC Press, 2010). Rogoff will sign copies of the book, which are available for \$35 in the Museum Shop. DVDs of the documentary film (with the same title) are \$19.95.

Ticket Information

Tickets to the gala are \$50 per person (\$40 for Museum of History Associates and members of the Jewish Heritage Foundation of North Carolina.) Registration is required by Monday, June 7. Call 919-807-7849 to register. Seating is limited, so sign up early. Dress is business attire. Parking is available at the corner of Wilmington and Jones Streets.



Susan Stamberg

For more information about the Museum of History, call 919-807-7900 or access ncmuseumofhistory.org or Facebook®. The museum is located at 5 E. Edenton St., across from the State Capitol. Parking is available in the lot across Wilmington Street. ☆

A Day in the Life of a Rabbi The Encounters of an Out-of-Town Rabbi

By Rabbi Chanoch Oppenheim

An interesting aspect of being an "out of town" Rabbi is the eclectic group of people that I have the opportunity to meet. There are Jews from all walks of life who live and travel through Charlotte, but the number of non-Jews who approach me really astounds me. They see my yarmulka and ask, "What's that cap on your head?" When I'm with my eleven year old son, there are even more inquiries. Sometimes if I walk away for a moment, I see someone approaching him, and by the time I get back he is explaining why he wears a yarmulka and tzitzit. People are always respectful and genuinely interested; many openly express their support for Israel. The beauty of our country is that we're all entitled to our beliefs or lack thereof; most of us get along in relative peace.

Recently I received an email from a non-Jewish college student whose assignment was to speak with a clergy member from a different religion. He requested an interview, and I met with him at my home. The man who pulled up in a pickup truck was different than I had expected: a gruff, husky man beyond his teenage years, he had long hair, a beard, and a heavily tattooed, thick arm. I asked him to tell me something about himself. Immediately I remembered how unproductive it is to judge people by their appearance.

Speaking softly and respectfully, he explained that he was a "medically retired soldier," a veteran of Iraq and a Purple Heart recipient. His fascination with the Jewish people dates back to when he read Elie Wiesel's *Night* in his first college course on religion. He admitted to having thought that Jews were "weird" but after seri-

ous consideration realized that there's nothing wrong with being different. I found his remark insightful and wished more Jews would realize this truth. We can be proud despite (or because of) the ways we are different. For instance, our Torah, the foundation of Jewish values throughout the ages, is unambiguous in espousing values like "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," also the guiding principles of the United States of America. Why should a Jew feel anything but pride in being different?

This curious student asked about Judaism's approach to women. I told him of the many statements in the Talmud explaining that the women, not the men, were responsible for our redemptions from Egypt and elsewhere.

People forget that throughout our long exile the Jewish home, even more than the synagogue, ensured the continuity of our people. I said that the gratitude owed to Jewish women has ramifications in Jewish law: The Rambam (Maimonides) actually codifies this in his Mishna Torah when he instructs a man to give more honor to his wife than to himself.

He then asked me how Judaism views other religions. What he wrote in his paper nicely sums up our conversation: The attitude of this religion towards others is an attitude that I have to respect.

They do not believe in missions or converting people to their faith. Rabbi Oppenheim put it beautifully when I asked him about this because his reply was something that was so simple it surprised me. He said, "Live and let live."

Our job is not to convert the world, but to better ourselves and our community. By doing so we will be a light to the nations; we don't force our light on others. I was glad to have had the opportunity to speak about this important topic with someone so different from myself.

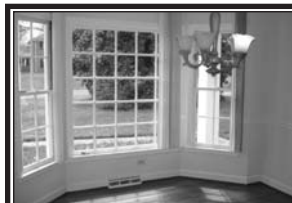
Before we parted ways, I introduced the topic of anti-Semitism and the theory among some anti-Semites that Jews control the world. His reaction was thought provoking yet again.

He wrote: I was ... surprised to find out that there are only about fifteen million Jewish people in the world. When compared to the estimated number of six point eight billion people in the world, this seems like a very small number. Rabbi Oppenheim went on to say that it does not make sense that people believe the Jews are taking over the world when it is considered that such a small percent of the population is Jewish.

This student was genuine in his quest to know more about Judaism. He learned much from me. And just as important, I learned much from him. ☆



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