

A New Chapter Begins: Fort Mill's Temple Kol Ami

By Jonathan Cohen

For more than 50 years, Jews in York County, SC have had no place to worship. Since the closing of Rock Hill's synagogue in the late 1950s, Jewish families have had to drive more than 45 minutes to Charlotte or Gastonia to attend services. But no more.

In January of this year, Jonathan Cohen and Jonathan Shaw began exploring the need for a Jewish community in the York County area. "Initially we had considered forming a chavurah or minyan that would meet once per month. We anticipated maybe thirty or forty people attending, but we never dreamed of the response we would receive," said Jonathan Cohen. The response Cohen refers to is the more than 90 families who contacted Cohen and Shaw about the new endeavor. "We knew once we received such an overwhelming response that people desired a synagogue; a home for themselves in an area where one did not exist," said Jonathan Shaw, the congregation's first President.

On April 25, an organizational meeting was held to explore the idea of forming a synagogue. More than 50 people attended the first meeting. A Steering Committee was selected to help guide the fledgling congregation through its early stages of development. "It was truly exciting watching a dream become reality and the enthusiasm displayed by so many, which had longed for a Jewish community," said Cohen.

Choosing the name, Temple Kol Ami, which means "All My People" was an important first step in the young life of the new synagogue. "We want to form a congregation, which is inclusive of all Jews and their families. We truly want to become a 'community synagogue,'" added Cohen. As such, Jews from all movements and backgrounds flocked to the first Shabbat service of the new Temple Kol Ami held on June 4. With more than 170 people in attendance, rabbinical student Jonathan Cohen led the service, which included a keynote address from congregational President Jonathan Shaw, festive music, an oneg, and even a baby naming.

Despite its youth, Temple Kol Ami is positive about the sense of community it can bring to Jews in the greater York County area. "There is a tremendous need for a nexus to pull the Jewish community together," said Shaw, and added, "our mission is to become such a nexus and offer a haven for Jewish families to worship, learn, and come together."

Currently, Temple Kol Ami is holding Shabbat services every 1st and 3rd Friday of the month at 7 PM with Saturday morning service offered every 1st Saturday at 10 AM. Services are being held at St. Philip Neri Catholic Church at 292 Munn Road East in Fort Mill. In addition, Kol Ami will host its first High Holy Day services, celebrating Rosh Hashanah September 8-10 and Yom Kippur September 17-

18. Tickets are \$100 and can be purchased by contacting the synagogue.

Said Cohen, "We plan on beginning a religious school very soon along with adult education classes. Other items we still need are a Sefer Torah, High Holiday machzorim, and so on," remarked Cohen. "We hope those in the Charlotte Jewish community can help us with some of these items," he added.

One thing is for certain; howev-

er, Temple Kol Ami is meeting the need for a burgeoning Jewish community in the greater Charlotte area.

If you would like more information about Temple Kol Ami or if you would like to make contributions, please contact the synagogue at yorksynagogue@gmail.com or by phone at 803-701-0149. You can also find the congregation on the internet at www.kolami-temple.com or on Facebook under "York County Synagogue." ✪

Havurat Tikvah High Holy Day Schedule
 Selichot: September 4
 Rosh HaShana: September 9 & 10 at 10 AM
 Kol Nidre: September 17 at 7 PM
 Yom Kippur: September 18 at 10 AM
 Services held at
 2201 Springdale Ave.
 Visit www.havurattikvah.org or call 877-203-5848 or email bcfain@gmail.com.

The Sins of Our Generations: Temple Beth El and Temple Israel Come Together for Selichot

Rabbi Judy Schindler, Rabbi Murray Ezring, Rabbi Micah Streiffer and Rabbi Faith Cantor

Ashamnu... Bagadnu... Gazalnu....

The haunting melody of the vidui, the communal confession, aids us in our quest to uncover the changes we must make within ourselves for the new year. As Jews we confess our sins in the plural - "We have gone astray; we have done wrong" - because we recognize our collective responsibility for each other and for the actions of the community.

How have our deeds changed? What were the confessions offered by Jews in the 1920s? What wrongs were committed by those living in the '40s, '60s or

'80s? How do our prayers of remorse differ from those of the other generations? From the excesses of the interwar era, to the national divisions of the years of student rebellion, to our responses - or lack thereof - in the face of humanitarian crises throughout the world, or to prevent the great oil spill devastating the Gulf... Our prayers reveal a great deal about who we are.

We invite you to join us on Saturday night, September 4, as Temple Beth El and Temple Israel will once again welcome the season of reflection together. For the second year, we will gather as one community to observe Selichot, the opening moments of the High Holy Days. The evening will begin at 8:30

PM with an engaging discussion entitled "The Confessions of Each Generation." At 9:30 PM we will gather for a dessert reception. Then at 10 PM the Selichot Service will inspire us with the uplifting music of the combined Temple Israel and Temple Beth El choirs, led by our gifted Cantors Andrew Bernard and Elias Roohvarg.

We Need Your Help: Please email us your feedback to be used (anonymously) as the basis of our discussion. Share your answer to this question: "What do you feel were the sins of each particular decade or era through which you have lived?" (Please email responses to either mstreiffer@beth-el.com or rabbicanor@templeisraelnc.org.) ✪



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When our oldest, Michael, started school, Bob and I looked at all the private schools out there. The Charlotte Jewish Day School's student:teacher ratio and the attention given to each student are what impressed us the most.

Over time we realized that by choosing the Day School, we gave each of our boys a wonderful gift - the development of a Jewish identity. Each child in his own way has demonstrated the joy he finds in Judaism and applied it to his everyday life. The boys know and love the Jewish tradition, but what is more - it's in their hearts.

- Nancy Kipnis

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Pictured left are Michael (Washington University in St. Louis), Josh (Vanderbilt), Noah and Daniel (Charlotte Country Day School) with their parents, Bob and Nancy.