

Shavuot at Temple Or Olam

After the joy of Passover, the calendar takes us to the celebration of the next great event in Jewish history, the receiving of Torah at Sinai. Although Shavuot was initially an agricultural holiday celebrating the first fruits, later tradition also aligns it with the giving of Torah. Rabbi Arthur Waskow attributes this alliance to the rabbis' sense that Torah represented a contact point with God, that Sinai was the moment of marriage between God and Israel in which the Torah was the contract, the ketubah, of the covenant. One ancient writing, not included in the Tanakh, even holds that Shavuot is observed on the same date that God affirmed His covenants with both Noah and Abraham.

For the rabbis, it was as important for everyone to stand at Sinai as it was for everyone to escape slavery in Egypt — for only if everyone stands at Sinai can the Torah be heard anew in every generation. Indeed, it is partly in this context of “everyone standing at Sinai” that we read the book of Ruth during Shavuot. Not only does the book take place during

the time of the barley harvest, but Ruth is depicted as accepting Torah in her own way. In keeping with this tradition, this year, members of our congregation will be engaging in an intensive study of the Book of Ruth with the rabbi.

Although the origin of the practice of eating dairy on Shavuot is attributed to various causes, it is certain that our study session will be accompanied by an indulgence in cheesecake, blintzes and other goodies. Who knows — perhaps Naomi first learned to love Ruth because she made the best noodle kugel in the family?

Temple Or Olam is an independent, egalitarian congregation that serves Cabarrus county and parts of Mecklenburg county (including University City, Davidson, and Huntersville). For information on our services or other congregational activities, please visit our website, www.or-olam.org and subscribe to our mailing list. You can also email us at info@or-olam.org, or call 704-720-7577. ☆

Charlotte Area's Newest Congregation Begins Second Year

The Charlotte area's newest congregation, Temple Kol Ami, enters its second year amid high expectations and great hopes for the future. Temple Kol Ami, currently has members from Fort Mill, Indian Land, Lake Wylie, Tega Cay, York, Rock Hill, and the Steele Creek area of Charlotte.

Temple Kol Ami began its second year with its first annual general membership meeting on May 22. After meeting at St. Philip Neri Catholic Church for the past nine months the congregation moved to Unity Presbyterian Church at 303 Tom Hall Street in Fort Mill for all of its activities starting with a Shabbat service on May 20.

Unity Church recently built a new sanctuary and invited Temple Kol Ami to use their old historic sanctuary which was built in the 1880s and is now on the National

register of historic places. Temple Kol Ami will be able to worship there on a regular basis, store materials, hold meetings, and provide religious education for both children and adults on the premises.

Temple Kol Ami, founded in an area just south of Charlotte where the size of the Jewish population was totally unknown, has had a very successful first year under the leadership of Jonathan Shaw, one of the founding members and current congregation President.

The first major challenge the new congregation faced was providing High Holiday services within just months after the congregation was formed. It was clear to the leadership there was a definite need for the congregation when attendance for Yom Kippur topped 100.

Also during the first year, they celebrated Sukkot and Simchat Torah, and held their first fundraiser, “An Evening at the Shuk” at the Levine Museum of the New South. They have also worked within the community by making food donations to the Fort Mill Care Center and participating in a local Habitat for Humanity build.

Temple Kol Ami which holds Shabbat services the first and third Fridays of each month is an unaffiliated, traditional Jewish congregation that welcomes those from all walks of Jewish life as well as interfaith couples and those rediscovering their faith.

For additional information about Temple Kol Ami, visit their website at www.kolamitemple.com or email them at yorksynagogue@gmail.com. ☆

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES

Crisis/Case Management and Community Resources

JFS is the focal point for addressing the social service needs of the Charlotte Jewish Community and is committed to preserving and strengthening the quality of life for individuals and families. Through Case Management, JFS helps others help themselves by providing vital support to our community members at critical stages in their lives. Working directly with individuals and families from all walks of life who are experiencing financial crisis, JFS offers advocacy, referrals, outreach, and emergency financial assistance with the goal of developing effective long-term solutions. Our programs work collaboratively and seamlessly with one another.

Darcy Alban is a Case Manager with JFS. The main role of the JFS case manager is to assist those in need with long-term financial resolution. Darcy is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with a Masters in Social Work. In her role as a Case Manager, Darcy helps individuals and families to become self sufficient and access financial and community resources. She may assist with applying for food stamps, lower cost housing, low cost medical assistance, budgeting and financial assistance, just to name a few. She collaborates directly with Crisis Assistance Ministries which allows her to complete financial applications, when appropriate, so that our clients do not have to travel to the Crisis Assistance location.

JFS provides the following Case Management Services:

Food Pantry – JFS provides non-perishable food, personal care items and other necessities to help individuals and families through tough times until independence is re-established. JFS food pantry recipients leave with more than just groceries – they leave with a feeling that the community cares

about them and they are not alone. In addition, clients facing medical or other limitations may benefit from home cooked meals donated by local volunteers.

Financial Assistance – JFS manages the Community Tzedakah Fund, a special fund made available through the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte. Financial distress can cut across all socioeconomic levels and ages. The increased unemployment rate and cost of living – food, gas, housing, electricity, and other necessities – can result in the need for help. Through the Community Tzedakah Fund, JFS is able to provide assistance to members of the Jewish Community who qualify for assistance.

Jewish Experience Fund (Camp Scholarships) – The Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte's Jewish Experience Fund promotes Jewish identity building among our Jewish youth through Jewish camping, community building, leadership development and informal educational opportunities. All scholarships are needs based and requires the completion of paperwork. Please direct all inquiries to the JFS office at 704-364-6594.

Jewish Education Loan Fund – The Jewish Educational Loan Fund grants interest-free loans to Jewish students from Georgia, Florida, North and South Carolina and Virginia for post-secondary study at accredited institutions. JELF's loans are “last dollar” – they supply the final funds that a student needs to attend school. Applications for interest-free loans for post-secondary education (college, graduate school, vocational and professional courses) are available to Jewish students. For more information, visit the JELF website at www.jelf.org, email info@jelf.org, or call 770-396-3080.

Charlotte Jewish Preschool Scholarships– Over the last several years, the Charlotte Jewish Preschool utilized the services of the JFS Case Manager to evaluate constituents' needs and to make recommendations regarding available scholarship funds. Through this process, the JFS case manager is able to make referrals and recommendations for both financial and community resources.

Dues Abatement - Last spring, both Temple Beth El and Temple Israel engaged the services of the JFS Case Manager to provide this service to make decisions regarding dues abatement and religious school financial assistance. In this way JFS helps maximize the resources of the entire Jewish Community by applying a consistent approach to evaluating individual scholarship needs.

Hebrew Cemetery - On behalf of the Hebrew Cemetery Association, the JFS case manager meets with individuals and families to assess financial need for those unable to pay full price to bury a loved one. Please contact the Hebrew Cemetery Association for additional information at 704-576-1859.

It is important to contact JFS before financial situations become a crisis. Make an appointment to speak with a case manager before your financial difficulties deepen so that you can be given the resources and tools to get back on track.

Community Resource List
 Jewish Family Services – 704-364-6594
 Charlotte Mecklenburg Department of Social Services - 704-336-3150
 MeckLINK – 24 hour mental health – 704-336-6404

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Jewish Family SERVICES

Mitzvah Baskets created by JFS

Zachary Strawser, Rachel Strawser, Rachel Cohen, Maddy Gorelick, Joey Kelso, Sophie Levinson, Rachel Fellman

In March and April, Hadassah provided 140 meals for JFS to distribute. Those who made this possible are: **Barbara Abrams, Susan Aizenman, Madeline Aron, Cathy Bogus, Ellen Bottner, Sharon Cavanaugh, Helene Cullen, Gloria Feibus, Zelma Fink, Sandy Hoagland, Karen Kantrowitz, Judy Kaufmann, Penny Krieger, Malka Me-Zehav, Sharel Persin, Phyllis Romaine, Jenny Sperry, Gabby Starr, Hagit Stav and Joyce Stoll.**

MONTHLY DONATIONS AND TRIBUTES TO JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 25

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