

The Days of Awe: Spiritual Magic

Temple Or Olam is blessed with a boy whose wide-open nature is a constant reminder of what really matters in this world. The child has autism.

He tells us exactly what is on his mind. He is without guile. He does not know subtexts.

Recently, he led a prayer at a Kabbalat Shabbat service. When the last notes had been sung, he announced to the congregation, "This was the best prayer ever."

Everyone in the room smiled and nodded: It was the best prayer ever. The boy had told us so. He had spoken truly.

~Abracadabra!
Abracadabra is an Aramaic phrase. Each word in the phrase mirrors cognate words in Hebrew. The first part of the word, abra means "I create." The second part of the phrase, "cadabra" means "like I speak." When you say "abracadabra," you are saying, in effect, "What I speak, I bring into being."

What are the Days of Awe if not the opportunity to understand – deeply – that by speaking, we create?

In Pri Ha'aretz, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk wrote with exquisite tenderness about the power of speech. His commentary on Parsha Vayera states: "And he who speaks, behold this person is creating new heavens and new earth like that which was at the beginning of creation: 'By the word of the LORD



Rabbi Barbara Thiede

the heavens were made" (Ps. 33:6). Humankind is likened to the Source of All Being, though Menachem Mendel reminds us: All true speech comes from the Holy One of Blessing. True speech is holy speech. Holy speech is the manifestation of divine shefa, divine spirit flowing into the real world. We ourselves are channels for the Holy One. According to Targum Bereishit, the birth of humanity that we celebrate each year on Rosh Hashanah was immediately accompanied with God's loving gift of our capacity for speech: "There was in the body of Adam the inspiration of a speaking spirit, unto the illumination of the eyes and the hearing of the ears." The Holy One fashioned humanity through divine speech in Genesis 1. God's

own creation inherited the capacity to create, like God, through speech.

What would godly words sound like from human beings? Surely we know. They would be words of truth and possibility, of kindness and understanding, of forgiveness and atonement. They would be the very words of love.

This year, during Temple Or Olam's High Holy Days, we will consider the power of our words. A new year opens wide before us. Let us name the things we must make. By articulating those things, by naming them through prayer and reflection, we can make them real.

Abracadabra.
Temple Or Olam is a Jewish Renewal community that serves Cabarrus county and parts of

Mecklenburg county (including University City, Davidson, and Huntersville). We support the full participation and empowerment of all our members regardless of denominational background, financial means, age, or sexual orientation. We encourage heartfelt, easy access to all things Jewish.

For more information, 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. ☆

Installation of Rabbi Jonathan Freirich and Cantor Mary Thomas

Join Temple Beth El for the installation of Rabbi Jonathan Freirich and Cantor Mary Thomas on Friday night, November 4 at 8 PM. Through a moving service



Rabbi Jonathan Freirich



Cantor Mary Thomas

with inspired guest clergy to lead us, Beth El will formally welcome these bright and dynamic clergy to our congregation. Rabbi Freirich has already enriched Beth El with his learning and warmth as has Cantor Thomas inspired us with her voice and wisdom. Charlotte is blessed to have both these new leaders and invites you to join in celebrating their place in our community.

The installation speaker will be Rabbi Myra Soifer, Emerita of Temple Sinai in Reno, NV. For 25 years, Rabbi Soifer led Temple

Sinai in Reno. In the 1970s, she was among the first women clergy to be ordained in the world. In the 1980s, as a visionary in that day, she started an interfaith clergy group that together studied and examined social issues. For two and half decades, she has been activist and advocate for human rights. Some of you, who are longtime Charlotteans, might remember Rabbi Soifer as she served Beth El as a student rabbi in the mid-1970s.

In addition to the spoken words, the music of the evening will also lift the occasion to higher and holier levels as a guest musician will join us to make the celebration and ceremony of installation complete. ☆

Mommy & Me

MONDAYS 9:15 - 10:15 AM

OCTOBER 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

NOVEMBER 7, 14, 28

DECEMBER 5, 12

AGES
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