

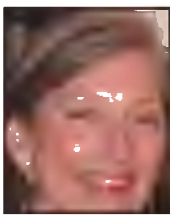
Walking to Sinai

By Charlotte Miller,
Administrator, Temple Or
Olam, Concord

We have finished escaping from those narrow places that hold us fast — to the hurtful, to the disrespectful, to the harmful habits, to unresolved issues, to the fear of the new and the choices it demands. I say “we” because this year I was included at the congregation’s Seder table for the first time as more than a guest. I am now a “convergence” seeker, a student of all things Jewish that can transform me from questioning Christian to practicing Jew. I am finally honoring the Jewishness at my core.

I am different from my Southern family members, most of whom marched nicely through their lives being the same social and cultural Christians as the community they inhabited. I was (am) stubborn, questioning, and passively disobedient from a young age. Even as an obstinate person, I managed to make the same social decisions — go to college, get married, have children, forego a career. It has been a good life, though the glimmer of what I really was has long been bubbling to the surface.

A chance meeting at Beth El’s comparative religion series brought me to Rabbi Barbara Thiede and Temple Or Olam in Concord. It’s a small community. Small enough to know everyone



Charlotte Miller

well. Small enough to accept me as a vital part of the congregation. Small enough to study with Rabbi Thiede. I wanted to begin that study.

Last year she asked me what happened after I asked myself “when?” I answered, “why not now?”

It was time to learn. There is no way around the eventually obviously fact that to be Jewish, a person must practice the rituals that remind us of the covenant. I have begun at the base with learning Hebrew and regular Torah study, attending services, and enjoying holidays and festivals. I look forward to lighting the candles on Friday night with wine, a good dinner, and peace at the end of the week. There are choices I must make as my husband becomes acclimated to a dual-religion household. But the path has been chosen.

Where is this willingness to take another path coming from? As someone with a long-time interest in and comfort with Judaism, might I be a *gilgul*? Now I am realizing that other people saw what I was not able to admit. Many of the friends who are happy for me said they are not surprised. If my nature has been that obvious to the outside, maybe with my public declaration I have given myself permission to express what has lain obscured so long.



What about other reactions? Mostly “if it’s something you want, then go for it!” from friends. Children wanted to be certain this was a well-considered decision. I had a wonderfully-long conversation with a friend whose family is ancestrally-Jewish but now agnostic. That was thoughtful opportunity to converse about what we both believe.

I look forward to the next year or so and how this process will unfold. I’m sure the euphoria of the first encounters will diminish as we all settle into what it means in the real world to apply practices and observances. We shall see what transpires. Whatever it becomes, it will be interesting and I am looking forward to the adventures along my path. ✧

News from Temple Kol Tikvah at the Lake

Since its dedication ceremony on April 14, 2013, Temple Kol Tikvah has become an integral part of the Lake Norman community. This dynamic Reform Jewish congregation has focused its efforts and programming on the members and the needs of the neighboring areas. Under the spiritual direction of Rabbi Michael Shields, Lynn Calnek, Director of Lifelong Learning, and many dedicated committees, the results have been both rewarding and meaningful.

Rabbi Shields serves as an adjunct chaplain for Davidson College, and together, Temple Kol Tikvah partners with the school on many projects. T.K.T. also provides food for both Ada Jenkins and Loaves and Fishes through a food collection program. The congregation continues to support the Levine and Dickson Hospice House in Huntersville as well.

On March 23, T.K.T. held its first 5K/Fun Run event, with the help of the Davidson Youth Baseball Association. Despite a dismal weather forecast, over 150 eager runners and walkers participated.

People of all ages enjoyed the competition. Part of the proceeds from the event will be shared with the D.Y.B.A. to help their recreational program.

Temple Kol Tikvah hosted a Community Passover Seder on April 15 at Northstone Country Club, for members and non-members. There is excitement building for T.K.T.’s first Mitzvah Day (doing good deeds), which is planned for May 18. A blood drive and various activities will be organized to provide community service. Be sure to also mark your calendars for a Giant Tag Sale fundraiser, which the Temple will be holding on June 1 (rain date of June 8). If you are interested in the possibility of winning up to \$10,000, then you won’t want to miss the Reverse Raffle and Silent Auction dinner on September 13.

We look forward to continue shining light on our community and beyond. Please join us for weekly Shabbat services, and visit us at www.templekoltikvah.org to learn more about us and gain additional information about upcoming events. ✧



**Like us on Facebook:
Charlotte Jewish
News**

CELEBRATE INDEPENDENCE!



**Charlotte
Jewish Preschool**

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

- Age 1 - PreK
- Full Day & Half Day
- Located at Shalom Park

CJP is currently enrolling for the 2014-15 School Year!

At CJP, we are dedicated to instilling within each child an excitement towards learning and a joyful attitude toward Judaism.

Schedule Your Personal Tour Today!
cjpkids.org • 704-944-6777