

## Annual Wildacres Retreat Over Labor Day Weekend

It is not too early to start planning your Labor Day weekend trip to Wildacres for Temple Beth El's Annual Retreat. Each year we escape to the mountains, where we eat, drink, learn, play, pray, and eat some more.

- \* Meaningful and engaging Shabbat and Havdalah with tree canopy as our synagogue
  - \* Special activities for kids, adults, and families together
  - \* Lingering afternoons chatting over a glass of wine gazing at the Blue Ridge Mountains
  - \* S'mores over the campfire with stories and songs
  - \* Lots and lots and lots of conversations, food, and drink
- There is always plenty of time

for relaxation, spending time with family, kibitzing with friends, making new connections, and exploring the beauty of the mountains and the beauty of our community.

Register early and be part of the planning.

What and where is Wildacres? Nestled atop Pompey's Knob in the Blue Ridge Mountains, Wildacres is located 112 miles from Shalom Park. Wildacres was dedicated by I.D. and Madolyn Blumenthal to the betterment of human relations and interfaith dialogue. It is our tradition at Temple Beth El to gather as a family – young and old – singles and families – Jewish and interfaith –



friends we've known forever and friends we haven't yet met – each Labor Day weekend to celebrate community together. We hope you'll join us. Visit the Temple Beth El website at [www.templebethel.org](http://www.templebethel.org) and view the Calendar for registration details. Questions? Contact the Temple office at 704-366-1948. ☆

## Celebrate Charlotte Pride 2015 with Temple Beth El

Temple Beth El is proud to support our LGBTQ community and participate in the largest Pride event in the Carolinas.

We invite the entire Jewish community to join us for two special Pride events:

- Charlotte Pride Interfaith Service Sunday, August 9, 4 PM at Caldwell Memorial Presbyterian Church, 1609 E. Fifth Street, where we will celebrate the dig-

nity, worth, and value of all people.

- Shabbat Outdoor Morning Service, Saturday August 15, 9 AM at Charlotte Pride on S. Tyron Street in Uptown, where we will celebrate friendship, inclusion, community, and Shabbat.

Contact Temple Beth El at 704-366-1948 for additional information. ☆



## Out of the Shul, into the World

This summer, the members of Temple Or Olam have taken some time to reflect on our community's purpose; to reconsider what our intentions are. Polling the membership, organizing community meetings, brainstorming what

we want and need was instrumental to that process.

The results have been interesting.

Members spoke about their spiritual lives at shul; how important it was to feel that everyone walked into services carrying true Shabbat joy into the room, ready to engage in prayer as only a hopeful and positively-minded community can. But they also spoke a great deal about the need to have a communal life outside the shul space, in the world. Much attention was given to the issue of how the community defined itself – not by a particular set of four walls, and not about its size.

"It needs to be about what we do," one member said. "About who we are, not where we meet."

And another, who is married to a transgender individual said: "This is the first place we've gone where we don't need to hide who we are."

So what did our members want?

There was a deep attention to maximizing our tikkun olam efforts and minimizing fundraising. All sorts of potential projects emerged, from supporting an interfaith community garden project that hopes to supply food deserts with organic produce to spending our Pesach packing and packaging food for distressed and hungry populations worldwide. We talked about making a deter-

mined effort to help with the maintenance of our host church and building and contributing birdhouses to a wildlife refuge one of our members has been involved in maintaining.

Education also leapt out of the surveys and group conversations; our members want to study, to learn. Topics ranged from mysticism in Judaism to the building a model of the Tabernacle and studying the texts that describe our first, and mobile sanctuary. Afterlife is not just Christian and reincarnation is not just Eastern: What happens when we explore Jewish views of life after death?

What other ways could we get into the world? On Rosh Hashanah, a walk in a nearby park will be part of our prayerful celebration of the New Year and the birth of all creation. At Sukkot, we plan a retreat on a lake. Members will camp under the stars and study Torah.

Many of our education programs may be taking place in people's living rooms, outside on the porch, and in green spaces and places. We learned that we all need our Jewish practice to extend itself into our homes, into our parks, into our real world.

It's good to listen to each other and learn. Summer was a good time to do that. Now, we will begin our planning for a new year. While we will meet in shul, we will leave it, too, to go out into the world – Jewishly. ☆




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