

Sinai Temple

Take Back Your Time: Rediscover Shabbat

January/February 2012
Tevet/Sh'vat/Adar 5772



For Your Consideration

Rabbi Mark Dov Shapiro

There is nothing worse than submitting information somewhere and then receiving no response. I don't want that to be the case with our God Survey.

338 congregants responded to the survey. I'm sure more of you at least glanced at the survey. Back in November, I devoted a Saturday morning to reporting on the survey. Now it's time to share some of the results more broadly with SIX comments.

ONE – Here's the big question: Do we "believe" in God? The answer is fascinating. When given the statement, "There is no God," 60% of us disagreed. In other words, we weren't comfortable with no God. When asked if science can explain "everything," 60% of us said no. When asked if the universe reveals evidence that God exists, 45% of us agreed.

TWO – So it appears that many congregants do have a sense for God. It turns out, however, that "beliefs" about God are often not classic beliefs. For example, when asked if God rewards and punishes people, many of us said that didn't happen. When asked if God is all powerful, 39.5% said yes while 39.5% said no and 21% said they were unsure. And is God just? 30.4% said no. 43.4% were not sure.

THREE – Then what do we believe? 74.6% of us who completed the survey agree that "God is hope." That is our strongest affirmation in the entire survey. 71.3% agree that "God is love." Over 60% agree that there is purpose and design in the world, we are partners with God in the on-going process of creation, and there is one God.

FOUR – If you think this sounds almost too neat, rest assured that the congregation also struggles with faith. 93.8% know that innocent people sometimes suffer without any reason. Large number of us have felt distant from God when seeing the devastation caused by natural disasters, when seeing the world in general, and especially when a relative or friend encounters illness or personal loss.

You may remember Question Nine on the survey which read as follows: If God was accepting questions, I would ask...

Some of the responses to this question capture the dilemma we face. People wrote, "God, why do bad things happen to good people? Who are you? What are you? Where are you? Why? Why? Why?"

FIVE – But here is a surprise. As much as people struggled with God and evil, some of us also addressed different kinds of questions to God. In Question Nine some asked, "What is it that you want me to do with my life? How can I best serve humanity? How can I find peace? Why am I living this life? What is my purpose? What happens next – after I die?"

SIX – Apparently, thinking about God leads people to think about the larger questions of meaning in life itself. God is almost shorthand for wondering

continued on page 4

Friday Evenings in January All January services will begin at 6 p.m.

January 6

Birthday blessings as we welcome 2011.

January 13

Foreign Food and Film Festival. Starting at 6 p.m. See page 3. (TOT Shabbat will also take place with a special service in the Oneg Shabbat Room.)

January 20

The 6 p.m. service will include Shir Fun along with Third and Fourth Grade students and their families.

January 27

The 6 p.m. service will feature Kimberly Williams, Diversity Consultant at Baystate Health and the Director of Next Level Development, an organization promoting professional development for people of color. Special music will also mark the first yahrzeit of Debbie Friedman.

Friday Evenings in February NEW TIMES for Services Plus Warm Beverages

February 3 at 6 p.m.

Foreign Food & Film Festival. Focus on India. See page 3.

February 10 at 7:30 p.m.

Hot chocolate and a terrific story. (TOT Shabbat will take place at 6 p.m. with a special service in the Oneg Shabbat Room.)

February 17 at 7:30 p.m.

Starbucks coffee with excellent music.

February 24 at 7:30 p.m.

Irish and Spanish coffees with Torah too! (Sacred Chant with meditation led by the Cantor will precede this service starting at 7 p.m.)

Every Saturday Morning

Torah Study at 9:00 a.m.
Service at 10:30 a.m.

A Message from President Jeff Cossin My Friends,

I wrote this article the evening of December 10, 2011. I had just returned home from our Annual New Member Social Hour and was totally invigorated by greeting and meeting many of our new members who had joined our Community since June 1, 2011. I was impressed by their vastness of experience from a Western New England University Law Student to a Springfield College Dean to a woman who converted to Judaism over 45 years ago. The Rabbi and I encouraged everyone to become involved in our Sinai Community by volunteering in a “One Time Opportunity” experience.

You do not need to be a new member to get involved. The “One Time Opportunity” experiences are for everyone. Please see the description on page 10 . You can call Robin Blanchette Gage at 736-3619 or email her at rblanchettgage@sinaitemple.org with your selection. We guarantee that you will feel more connected to our Community through these opportunities.

OLIVER is coming to Sinai Temple in May, 2012! Sheri Levson, Director of our production, will be looking for on stage and off stage volunteers. This promises to build on the excitement generated by Music Man last year! If you have never been involved in a show before, THIS is your opportunity. Being in this show will definitely connect you to our Community.

We are continuing to attract new members to Sinai Temple even after the traditionally busy High Holiday season . So far since June 1, 2011, we have welcomed Twenty One new households to our Community. The trend has become very positive over the last two years. Our involvement in the Try a Synagogue outreach effort has fueled some of this growth. But we need to continue to encourage more growth in our Community. We have so much to offer and we want to share that with as many members as possible. If you know of a potential new member, call our Temple office.

It is very important for our members individually to reach out to those people they do not know, welcome them and involve them in our conversations. Be sure that EVERYONE in the Oneg Shabbat Room feels comfortable. This builds and sustains Community.

Our Sinai Facebook is LIVE at www.facebook.com/SinaiTemple or via our Sinai Temple web site! Just click on the “Like us on Facebook” link. It is a work in progress. We actually started to benefit from Facebook during the October snowstorm.

Lastly I want to let everyone know that Rabbi Shapiro will be on Sabbatical from the end of December to the end of March. He WILL, however, be in our Purim

Notes from Cantor Martin Levson

As you have already read in this bulletin, Rabbi Shapiro will be taking a few months of much-deserved sabbatical. This means I am going to be “minding the store,” and I expect that I will be a rather busy Cantor during the next three months. But that’s OK with me; in fact, I see Rabbi’s sabbatical as an interesting opportunity.

One of the things that attracted me to the Cantorate was the fact that it was NOT just a musical position. Being a Cantor in the 21st century means I teach Jews of all ages (not just B’nai-Mitzvah students, and not just music), I can lead services, I can write *divrey Torah*, I can make pastoral visits, I can spiritually counsel, I can do baby namings, weddings, and funerals. Oh, yes, and as part of my job I occasionally get to sing and play the guitar!

In the coming months, I hope that I will get to know some members of Sinai Temple a little better. Rabbi Shapiro won’t be here, but I will. I am grateful for the trust that Rabbi and the leadership of Sinai have shown in me, and for their thoughtful analysis of what “Rabbinic” duties should be my responsibility, and what can be done by capable, volunteer laypeople. If there is a simcha (joyful event) in your life, I look forward to sharing it with you. If you find yourself in the hospital, I will come and visit you. And if, God forbid, death touches your family, I will do what I can to bring some portion of comfort from our tradition.

It’s the middle of a New England winter. The days are short, the nights are long, and it’s cold outside. But there are lots of warm and wonderful things happening here at Sinai in the coming months. Please join us; I look forward to seeing you as I (metaphorically) wear two kippot.

Ivdu et Hashem B’simcha!
Serve the Holy One with Joy!

Please note – This bulletin is an eight week bulletin – covering January AND February 2012.

presentation! The congregation will be in excellent hands with Cantor Levson, Sheila Shear, our Executive Committee and Board, our office staff and Donna and Angel. We have been preparing for this for over six months. Please let me know if there are any concerns: 567-7320 or PHOhead@aol.com.

L’Shalom
Jeff Cossin



Foreign Food & Film Festival

Middle Eastern Cuisiné followed by
“The Last Jews of Libya”

Friday, January 13

6 p.m. – Kabbalat Shabbat Service

7 p.m. – Dinner and Film

Something new!

Libya is in the news and Sinai will be there.

After services, we will devote our evening to the experience of Libya's Jewish community. The film to be shown traces the story of one Jewish family from the Turkish Ottoman Empire through to Mussolini, Hitler, and the rise of Arab Nationalism. Archival footage and in-person interviews give this film great strength and feeling.

Dinner will be catered by AMANOUZ CAFÉ of Northampton.

Advance reservations are required. \$5 per person.

Via snail mail to the Temple or through the website www.sinai-temple.org

LOOK FOR OUR NEXT
FORIEGN FOOD &
FILM FESTIVAL
TO TAKE US TO INDIA
ON FRIDAY,
FEBRUARY 3!

Childcare at the Foreign Food & Film Festival

What about children on Friday, January 13?

We've got you covered.

Childcare will be available during the showing of the film

From approximately 7:30 to 8:15 p.m.

When you RSVP, please let us know if you want childcare.

We will have childcare only if parents let us know to prepare. RSVP asap, please.

Foreign Food & Film Festival – Part Two

Indian Cuisine followed by
“Salaam Shalom: The Jews of India”

Friday, February 3

6 p.m. – Kabbalat Shabbat Service

7 p.m. – Catered Dinner and Film

Bombay, Cochin, Calcutta...Visit with the Jews of India whose connection to India extends back 23 centuries.

What is it like to be a minority among the vast population of India?

Come see. Come taste India. Catered by Sitar Restaurant of Springfield.

Advance reservations required. \$5 per person. Childcare available with your reservation.

Rabbi Shapiro - continued from page 1

about human existence. Here are three comments from Sinai members. You'll see how talking about God so clearly becomes asking how our lives hold together and what our purpose might be here on earth.

—“I used to think about God much more in my 30's through my early 50's. Now, it seems as though I've come to a state of comfort with my formulation about what God has meant to me at varying times and stages in my life, so right now I'm less perplexed and intrigued and simply more accepting that I am part of God's plan for this earth, that I have a specific task to do, and I may not even know when I've completed it. And, that seems to be OK for right now. In another decade or two that may or may not be such a reassuring position.”

—“As I have approached (and now passed) age 50, and the real sense of the limited number of days I have on this Earth, the sense of how to make life meaningful seems a more pressing question.”

—“I wonder about the meaning of our lives in our world and struggle every day to make sense of the challenges presented to us.”

In a nutshell, that's the God Survey! 338 respondents. 807 mini-essays. Are we done now? Time for the next project?

I don't think so. There is a great deal more information in the survey. We can see, for example, how responses vary according to age and to gender. We can learn much more about the details of our questions and affirmations.

Stay tuned for more.

Better still, visit our website where Howard Kalodner has made available a video of my whole presentation and PowerPoint on the survey. This is the presentation I did on Saturday, November 19. See what I said. Let me know what you think and feel.

We'll talk more and continue the conversation soon.

FAMILY SHABBAT – Saturday, February 4 at 10:30 a.m.– You are invited to a family morning service on the first Saturday of February. Shir Fun. Excellent liturgy to involve everyone followed by a light lunch.

JUDAICA GIFT SHOP CORNER

Once again we have had a fun filled, busy and exciting Chanukah season! We want to thank all our wonderful volunteers. Now we set our sights on Spring; we're ready for the engagements, weddings, B'nai Mitzvah and graduations.

Thais Fischel 786-9577

What would a stronger, better Springfield look like?

Let's talk and listen to each other
Sunday, February 12 at the Temple
9 to 10:30 a.m.

Everyone knows Springfield is not at its best right now. We also know that our well-being is connected to Springfield's well-being. A stronger Springfield makes a stronger Longmeadow, Wilbraham, and Suffield too!

On Sunday, February 12, leaders of the Pioneer Valley Project will host a conversation on Springfield and our own hopes and fears for the city.

This conversation at Sinai is part of a larger listening campaign being conducted by PVP to find ways for strengthening our city.



Fathers and sons enjoying themselves at our December program for boys.

A d u l t O p p o r t u n i t i e s

What Time are Services at Sinai Temple?

A New Answer to an Old Question

Change is on the Way

Although some people can keep track of our varying service times on Friday evenings, many remain confused. Is it 6 or 7 or 7:30 p.m. and which night is which? To make life simpler, here is Sinai's new schedule.

In January, all Friday evening services begin at 6 p.m.

Starting in February, Friday evening services will take place at only two times: either 6 p.m. or 7:30 p.m.

Starting in February, our Kabbalat Shabbat service will move to the first Friday of the month. Kabbalat Shabbat will start at 6 p.m. All other Friday evening services will start at the same time, which will be 7:30 p.m.

Let's try it. New times. 6 p.m. and then 7:30 p.m. for the rest of the month.

Monthly Morning Services

Wednesdays, January 4 & February 1

at 7:30 a.m.

A chance to start your day with a different focus. We meet on the bimah for a service of 20 minutes. Breakfast follows. Those who need to leave for the rest of the day are free no later than 8:15 a.m. Future "morning minyan" services will take place on Wednesdays, March 7, April 4, May 2, June 6.

Sinai Book Club

Wednesday, January 18 at 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, February 15 at 7:00 p.m.

Our January book is "The Dovekeepers" by Alice Hoffman, set in Jerusalem as the Second Temple is destroyed and at Masada. This is the imagined story of the women and children who survived to tell the world the story of Jewish resistance against the Roman empire. Historical background courtesy Josephus and the archaeology of Yigal Yadin. Our February book will be announced in a future e-vent.

Questions and suggestions...e-mail Laurie Weinberg sagecitrus@aol.com

Rabbi Shapiro on Sabbatical

The Rabbi will be away from Sinai for three months – from late December through to the end of March. The sabbatical will offer the Rabbi an opportunity for some "time away" from the everyday and an opportunity to study, reflect, and recharge. During the sabbatical, Cantor Levenson will be undertaking extra responsibilities along with Sheila Shear to be sure that Temple life carries on with excellence and energy.

TGIT

Thank God, It's Torah!

Come Learn Every Saturday at 9 a.m.

Exercise your brain. Enjoy the bagels. If you want to touch base with Judaism's basics, Torah Study is for you. Come once or come occasionally. Newcomers welcome. No prior knowledge necessary.

Women's Seder

Help Plan for Thursday, March 29

Several women have begun the planning for our March Seder, but lots of help is still required. Exercise your writing abilities or your organizing abilities or your spirit or your kitchen talents.

Help create the Haggadah, consider logistics, food preparation, or publicity.

Call the Temple office and we'll set you up!

Join a Chavurah:

It's Happening Right Now!

Chavurot have been formed and initial meetings are taking place. Members are excited about their newly formed groups and look forward to the wonderful opportunities that await them. If you are thinking about joining a Chavurah, do not delay! There is still room for you!

Our newly formed Chavurot at Sinai include but are not limited to: Mom's Therapy (just for moms of teens), Couple's Social (just for empty-nesters looking to make some new friends), Adventurers (couples and singles interested in travel and social outings), Interfaith, and Family/Couples (parents looking to have some time with adults and on occasion with families). Specific interest has been expressed in a Chavurah for couples in the Wilbraham/Hampden area. Please visit our website or use the application on page 7 of this bulletin.

**Letting Go with Love and Confidence:
Raising Responsible Self Sufficient Teens in the 21st Century**
Wednesday, January 25 at 7:00 pm
At the Jewish Community Center
Registration is Free.



**Featuring Wendy Grodnick, Ph.D, Professor, Director of the
Frances L Hiatt School of Psychology and Education, Department of Psychology at Clark University.**

Dr. Grolineck is the mother of two girls and is also the author of two books. Pressured Parents, Stressed-Out Kids: Dealing with Competition while Raising a Successful Child and The Psychology of Parental Control: How Well Meaning Parenting Backfires. Wendy is also a member of Sinai Temple.

This program is a collaborative initiative of Sinai Temple, Springfield JCC, Jewish Family Service, and Temple Beth El.

The Challenge of Diversity: Are We Making Progress?

Friday, January 27

During our Shabbat Service at 7:30 p.m.



Kimberly Robinson Williams, Diversity Consultant for Baystate Health

Our guest works for diversity at Springfield's Baystate Health. She is also the founder and Director of Next Level Development, an organization promoting the personal and professional development of women and people of color. She is an adjunct professor at Bay Path College and guest lecturer at Springfield College, School of Social Work.

Ms. Robinson Williams has worked for many companies in the private and non-profit sectors across many industries; including pharmaceutical, financial services, aerospace manufacturing and now health care. She has a graduate degree in human resource management and recently earned an SPHR designation from the HR Certification Institute

- Mardi Gras - Jewish Style
 - Purim Arrives at the Beginning of March
 - Wednesday evening, March 7
 - Laughs, History, and Dinner Included

Sinai Temple Chavurah!

What is a Chavurah? A Chavurah is a group of approximately 12 to 16 Temple members who gather on a regular basis to share Jewish experiences, study, celebrate life and spend time together.

Who can join? All Temple members are invited to join. Just fill out the application and return it to the Temple office. The application can also be found at

www.sinai-temple.org

Are there different kinds of

Chavurot? Chavurot may consist of families, individuals on their own, or couples. Some may be limited to a given age group. Other Chavurot can include a diverse cross-section of the congregation. One Chavurah may concentrate on Jewish study, while another may mostly celebrate and socialize.

Who runs the Chavurah? Each Chavurah will be autonomous. The Chavurah will organize its own leadership. Temple member, Heather Sullivan will be the Chavurah Coordinator. She will be receiving the applications and completing the matching process that will create the Chavurot. There is a Chavurah committee that will be working with Heather to make sure each group is running smoothly.

Questions? If you are interested but not sure about Chavurot, please contact Heather Sullivan, our Chavurah coordinator. You can reach her at heathsuesullivan@gmail.com or 736-3619 ext. 13.

*The Chavurah Program is made possible by
gifts in memory of Peter Roth*

Chavurah Application

Please fill in the information that best reflects you and return to the Temple office. This application can also be completed on the Temple website: www.sinai-temple.org

Name _____
Phone _____
Address _____
Email _____
Your Age (Circle)
Under 30 30-40 40-50 50-60 60-70 70-80 Over 80
Children (if participating)
Name Gender Age

Type of Chavurah (number in priority order)
____ Family (including preschool and younger aged children)
____ Family (including school aged children)
____ Family (including teens and older children)
____ Couples
____ Singles
____ Women only
____ Men only
____ Other (fill in) _____
Number in your order of preference the following Chavurah activities:
____ Study Discussions, e.g. Jewish history, values, Israel, etc
____ Celebrations, e.g. Jewish holidays/ Shabbat
____ Social, e.g. cooking, outdoors, crafts
____ Social Action activities
____ Other _____
Would you feel comfortable hosting a chavurah gathering in your home? Yes No (circle)
If you were to create your own chavurah, what would its focus be?
Is there any other information that may be helpful in the matching process?

Message from Director of Education

Sheila Shear

Shalom Chaverim

It is cold and a little gray outside but as I think of what is going on here I am warmed by the energy, joy and enthusiasm in the building. In the next month or so we have a variety of activities and projects. We finished up our fall Tzedakah projects by each class deciding where they would like their money donated. Such projects as Hazon, UMass Hillel and JFS were supported by our students. Our spring contributions will go to The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel. You can find out more about this organization at www.aspni.org. Coming up in January all classes, grades K-7, will be studying a different aspect of Israel. Details of what is taught each week can be seen on the Sinai Temple Religious School Blog Spot, http://www.sinai-temple.org/Religious_School/parents/. Teachers post to this site each week to keep you all informed about what is going on in each class.

Vayechi, which will be read on the first Shabbat of 2012, teaches us that when we make a commitment to get something done, it is important to follow through, as did Joseph when he assured his father Jacob that he would make certain that he would be buried in Israel. Our commitment to helping you give your children strong Jewish roots continues to be firm. We wish you all a happy healthy 2012 and look forward to sharing the coming months filled with learning and celebration.

Congratulations to Sinai Students in the National Honor Society

Talya Chait	Ben Leavitt
Maddy Cohen	Aaron Neiman
Rebecca Cohen-Lindfors	Austin Percy
Alexa Engelman	Eric Pers
Hallie Goldstein	Hannah Skiest
Taylor Gordenstein	April Solon
Zachary Kalman	Leah Winer

Jewish Summer Camping Can Make All the Difference in Preparing a Jewish Child for the Future

Our Reform movement runs two remarkable summer camps in the Berkshires. One is called Eisner; the other is called Crane Lake. Last year several Sinai students attended each of the camps. Your child would love either camp. Scholarships are available for sessions in July or August. Please direct your requests to the Rabbi's assistant. rblanchettegag@sinai-temple.org

Scholarships for Free

If your son or daughter is planning to attend any kind of Jewish program this summer, please take advantage of the Temple scholarship program. Thanks to the Joseph Emanuel, Rabbi Herman Eliot and Adele Biederman Snyder Memorial Fund, scholarships are available in small and larger amounts. We are also thankful to the family of Edna Simon and Judy and Michael Cohen who support summer scholarships as well.

Your request should go to the Rabbi's assistant. rblanchettegag@sinai-temple.org no later than February 15.

For High School and College students A Summer Program Making Money; The Susan M. Broh Tikkun Olam Award

This summer Sinai Temple invites students to get involved with tikkun olam – repairing the world. We would like to underwrite students who choose to spend their summer in a project that enriches the world. Interested students can get involved by thinking of a project or an area of interest related to tikkun olam/fixing the world. Applications should be in the mail soon. Call the office if you haven't received one. Those who are selected will be paid a salary of approximately \$7.50 an hour. (College students living outside the Pioneer Valley are welcome to find a project wherever they'll be spending the summer.)

Why is the Temple offering this program? We began this program to honor the memory of Susan M. Broh, a Temple member who died in September 2001. Susan began her career of "tikkun olam" by dedicating two years of her life to the Peace Corps. After that, Susan devoted her professional and volunteer life to making this world a better place. She believed passionately in the Jewish obligation of pursuing justice. Susan's friends and family have created this program to honor her memory and to encourage other Jews to strive for holiness as Jews must always do.

From Generation to Generation

Sinai Temple has been a part of our lives for 35 years, more than half of our lifetimes. Our experiences range from volunteering, to membership on a variety of committees, to experiencing the joys and sadness of various life cycle events. We were married at Sinai Temple, and our sons, Lee & David, received their Jewish education and became Bar Mitzvah there. As a family, we've traveled to Israel reinforcing our dedication to our Jewish identities.

We both are very grateful for Sinai's part in supporting our family's desire to maintain and pass on to our children the Jewish faith and heritage. It is our pleasure to be members of Sinai's Legacy in order to enable future generations to have the same enriching experiences.

—Jayne & Geoff Berman



If you would like to explore joining Jayne and Geoff in the Sinai Legacy Society, your first step is to discuss opportunities with Rabbi Shapiro or members of the planned giving committee. Please give the office a call at 413-736-3619. There is no obligation in this conversation, and, of course, a gift of any size is welcome.

Sinai Temple's
Legacy Society
Our Turn to Create Sinai's Future
in Partnership with —
Create a Jewish Legacy of Western Massachusetts

PURIM
PURMI
PRUIM
RIMPU
Can you spell fun?
Wednesday evening, March 7

**The MICAH Award Dinner
Honoring Sandy Suib Dutcher
6:00 p.m. Saturday, January 28
At Sinai Temple**

Sinai Temple is very pleased to join forces with the Pioneer Valley Project for a community dinner honoring Springfield citizens who exemplify the words of the Prophet Micah: What does the Lord require of you: to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God. Sinai is also honored to be the HOST CONGREGATION. The dinner will take place in our own building.

Our 2012 honoree
will be **SANDY SUIB DUTCHER**.

To attend the dinner in honor of Sandy, please send a check for \$35.00 per person to Pioneer Valley Project, 235 Eastern Avenue, Springfield, MA 01109. Make the check payable to PVP.

To make a donation in honor of Sandy, please send a check for any amount payable to Sinai Temple to 1100 Dickinson Street, Springfield, MA, 01108. Sandy's donations will go to Sinai's Isaiah Fund for the Hungry.

Sandy has been a long time member of Sinai. During this time she has been a member and chair of the social action committee. Over the years the committee has been involved in a multitude of causes. Some of her favorites projects have included Habitat for Humanity, coordinating the "Shoes that Fit" collection for the Gray House in Springfield, the Yom Kippur food drive, resettlement efforts for refugee families, Mitzvah Day, environmental projects and urban cleanup. She also sat on the board of trustees at Sinai for two terms and also coordinated the docents for visiting groups.

Professionally, Sandy is the special needs Preschool Coordinator and Childfind Director for the Ellington Public Schools in Ellington, Connecticut. Prior to this position, she taught bilingual children in the Austin Texas Independent School District and taught medically fragile home-bound children. She has an advanced graduate degree in the field of early childhood special education. Over the years she has been on several educationally related boards and committees in the state of Connecticut.

Sandy is married to Henry Dutcher and they have two sons, Ethan and Elliot. Sandy's family will confirm that she has yet to find a liberal, social action cause that she hasn't supported.



**One-Time Opportunities:
Don't give away your life.
Just an hour or maybe three to become a part
of Sinai's Community**

We sometimes hear congregants say, "I'd love to get involved with something at the Temple, but I just can commit to anything long term." That's certainly understandable... busy is an understatement in many people's lives these days!

An opportunity to lend a hand and give back to the community is often a way to recharge and feel connected, and it doesn't have to be a major time commitment. Sinai has several events coming up that we are calling "One-time Opportunities". Take a look at the list, if you see something that interests you, give Robin Blanchette-Gage a call at (413) 736-3619, extension 10. She can provide you with the appropriate contact information for person in charge of these events.

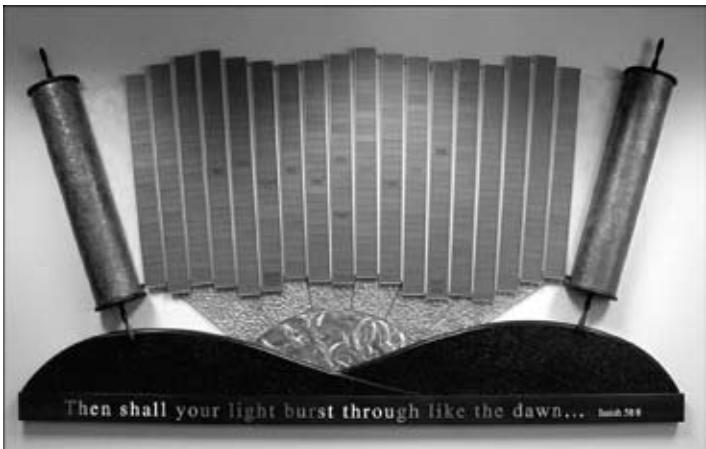
Give it a try...our Sinai community will benefit and we're guessing you'll feel good about helping out too!

Upcoming "One-Time Opportunities":

- Friday, Jan. 13th - Foreign Food & Film Festival help setup & welcome
- Friday, Feb. 3rd - Foreign Food & Film Festival help setup & welcome
- Thursday, March 29th - Women's Seder help create the Seder, cook, bake, setup, invitations or publicity
- Wednesday, March 7th - Purim celebration help in the Purim "play" or setup for dinner
- Oliver - there are many "one-time opportunities" to help with this play that Sinai is putting on in May. Things such as...Making signs, Publicity, Helping to decorate the foyer prior to the production, Dressing room set-ups, And many more opportunities
- Loaves & Fishes:
 - February 12th - Just need cooks...the recipe is provided
 - March 15th - Cooks and servers are needed
- Sunday, March 25 - School Seder help with setup, preparing charoset

NOTE...SINAI IS PRINTING ONLY SIX BULLETINS THIS YEAR. COMING BULLETINS WILL BE MARCH/APRIL AND MAY/JUNE. THIS IS A VERY STRONG REASON FOR OUR WANTING TO STAY IN TOUCH VIA E-MAIL. PLEASE SEND US YOUR E-MAIL.

Scroll of Life



The Scroll of Life is a work of art in the Oneg Shabbat Room. It was created by Presentations Gallery of New York. The Isaiah quote at the bottom of the Scroll was taken from the Yom Kippur Haftarah as an expression of hope.

The Scroll has space on it so that Sinai members can commemorate either joyous events or memorialize loved ones. Each contribution of a plaque on the Scroll will be used to enrich the life and strength of Sinai. The cost of each plaque is \$200. The inscription may be 3-4 lines with a maximum of 27 spaces per line.

Transportation Needed?

Maybe you need The Sinai Shul Shuttle



Do you ever need a ride to the Temple? Have you ever missed a service or an adult education class or any other event because you couldn't find a ride?

Call the Temple office at least two business days in advance to make a reservation. The Caring Community Committee will connect you with a Temple member who will happily do the driving.

If you know someone who needs transportation or if you are someone who wants to volunteer as an occasional driver, please call the Temple office as well.



Fathers and sons enjoying themselves at our December program for boys.

Mazal Tov To:

- Caroline and Robert Schapiro on the birth of their son, Alexandre Laurent.
- Esta and Tony Sobey on their daughter, Melissa Sobey Radin, passing the New York State Bar exam.
- Richard and Bobi Steingart on their new grandchild. Richard and Bobi's daughter, Lindsay Hanford, and her husband Kyle Hanford are the parents of William Thomas, who was born on November 23. William is little brother to Ryan.
- Mel and Beth Chafetz on becoming grandparents. Mel and Beth's daughter, Jessie Carleton, and her husband Johnny Carleton are the parents of Cy Alonzo, who was born on November 24.
- Ronnie Leavitt whose son Alan has become engaged to Jenni Cagalayan. A September 2012 wedding is planned.
- Ellen Rowles on the engagement of her daughter, Heather, to Mariusz Koziol.
- Michael and Carole Katz on the birth of a new grandson. Blake Ryan Goldman is the son of Jessica and Andrew. He is the little brother of Harrison Daniel Goldman.
- Larry and Sue Bernstein on the birth of two grandchildren. Benjamin Joseph Bernstein is the son of
- Michelle Hermann and Andrew Bernstein. Noah Jacques Telio is the son of Rachel Bernstein Telio and David Telio.



Message from Men of Sinai

President Jack Henrie

It is December 18th as I am writing this. We just had an outstanding breakfast with MOSVP Phil Lesser speaking on all that goes on in the OR. The three dozen people who were there bombarded him with at least 3 dozen questions and his responses demonstrated his intimate knowledge of his subject through a couple decades of experience. We all came away from the breakfast far more enlightened...full in body and mind!

On December 23rd, MOS will provide the menu for a fourth day of Chanukah dinner and service. Last year we had nearly 300 people and we are hoping that this year will be a similar number, and another night of enjoying one another's company at Sinai amid the light of our candles...and on one another's faces.

We are looking forward to an eventful January and hope that Sinai's men will join us on Wednesday, January 11th for an evening with the Cantor...an evening not to be missed. Saturday, January 21st is a night of Hockey and Havdalah. Please see the sidebar on this and please make your reservations now, if you have not already done so.

On Sunday, January 29th Shir Rincon will be our speaker following our 9:30 breakfast. Our breakfasts are open to our entire community, and we hope that you all will be there for what I am sure will be a fascinating presentation by our Israeli ambassador. Our breakfast in February will be on Sunday, the 19th. We are looking into inviting Martin Miller from WFRC but have not confirmed him as of this writing. Please watch the e-Vents for our update on this.

I want to thank all of you who have already joined MOS this year and all those who have pitched in to help us in any way. If you have not yet joined, we would love to have you. Please come to some of these events and give us a try. This is another "happening" year in our support of the Sinai community!!

Hockey and Havdalah

Saturday, January 21

The Men of Sinai is proud to announce a night of Hockey and Havdalah on Saturday January 21, 2012.

At 5:00 we will meet in the OS Room for a Havdalah service led by Cantor Levson. MOS will provide a light dinner. We will then carpool to The MassMutual Center to watch the Springfield Falcons play the Albany Devils for a 7:00 face off. Advance purchased tickets are \$10 per person and everyone (members and non-members) alike are welcome. Please contact Buff Maniscalco at jodiman@comcast.net or the Temple Office (413-736-3619) by January 10th to reserve you tickets.

Thanks for the books

Link to Libraries would like to thank those caring individuals who participated this year in donating over 130 books to our organization on Yom Kippur. The books will go to non profit and public school libraries throughout western MA and CT.

Susan Jaye-Kaplan

Co-founder, Link to Libraries, Inc.

Super Sunday ~ January 22, 2012



Make the Calls that Make a Difference!

On Super Sunday, more than 100 volunteers come together to build a community based on compassion and justice. Join Super Sunday Co-Chairs Michelle Anfang and Margie Berg as we reach out to thousands of donors and raise vital funds for the Federation's 2012 Annual Campaign to support the programs and services that are making a difference in the lives of Jews here in Western Massachusetts, in Israel and around the world.

There are 2 sessions on Sunday, January 22: 9:00 – 11:00 am, and 11:00 am – 1:00 pm. Calls can be made at the Federation's office in Springfield and at Lander~Grinspoon Academy in Northampton. A follow-up session will take place on Sunday, January 29 from 9:00 – 11:00 am in Springfield.

For more information, please contact Debbie Peskin at the Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts, 737-4313 x121. Register online at www.jewishwesternmass.org. If you are unable to volunteer, you can still make a difference. When a volunteer phones to ask you for a contribution, please answer the call and give generously.

Mission Statement

Sinai Temple is a welcoming and inclusive Reform Congregation where our members pursue a continuing journey of Jewish growth. We are guided by the history and traditions of the Jewish people as we encounter the challenges of the modern world. We encourage participation in prayer, life-long Jewish learning, and social justice within a joyful, creative, and compassionate community.

My Conversion & the Path Getting Here

Just before Thanksgiving, Jody Maple became Jewish. These are the words Jody shared with the congregation when he had his first aliyah after the mikveh.

In 1987 I met my wife, Lesley, in the Philippines and found out she was Jewish. From those early experiences I felt comfort and security in the Jewish faith. Since that time I have been trying to live my life as a Jew and learn as much as possible about Judaism and Jewish history.

Three years ago I started reading the Torah weekly. I found I needed more, and I needed someone to help me understand.

In 2010 I had started reading the Torah for the third time, and I wanted to talk with someone about what I was reading. So there was one last temple left in the Springfield area that we hadn't visited.

After visiting for a couple weeks we made the decision that this was the place, so arranged for a meeting with Rabbi Shapiro to finally put a finishing touch on my Jewish conversion.

These meetings didn't start off the way I expected. My 20 years in the military and the way I approached most things in life is task-goal oriented. I expected the Rabbi to give me homework and I would be back the next week. Or there would be a class that I would attend or something similar. There wasn't. Rabbi Shapiro gave me a list of books that our home library should consider or should have. He also made a few movie recommendations, some we had already seen and some we hadn't.

I think his approach was much more subtle than my approach, because he let me lead myself down the path that was most appropriate for me.

I started coming to Saturday morning Torah study and this was a real treat, because it brought a new perspective

to my interpretations of the Torah and what I had read. I had read it in a more literal sense and never gave a thought to interpreting it any other way. I know I am probably not the most vocal person on Saturday morning, but I am listening and taking it in, and even adjusting.

Some of the Rabbi's suggested readings were not what I would have picked for myself, and some I am still not sure about, but it broadened my conceptions and understandings. The book "A Driven Leaf", Milton Steinberg, carried the most weight with me because in a way that is what I had been doing with my life for a lot of years. Searching for truths and understanding to backup my beliefs and faith, I could relate to Elisha ben Abuyah but not to the same extreme.

I think the final wonderful thing that has happened was being allowed to attend the holidays here at Sinai Temple. My first experience with Judaism was a Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur in the Philippines in a school class room. We were a part of a military family there more than a Jewish family and I was comfortable around that. My second was in Oklahoma and we didn't have a minyan at either holiday, but we did have a Shofar blower/Cantor from Oklahoma City. I felt comfortable in the community of people I was with.

This year was so much more than those. The crowd of people here, the community and a non-military community, I didn't feel like an outsider and I felt a part of a much bigger community than I expected. I have seen the pictures on the walls in the halls, but until I was here, experienced it and saw it I hadn't wrapped my head around it. I felt warm, welcome and comfortable, and I don't think it was all due to the Rabbi playing with the thermostat. For that I thank you.



Oliver! Auditions Sunday, January 22 & Monday, January 23 7:00pm Sinai Temple auditorium
Please prepare a song (not from the show) and be ready to do some movement. Callbacks, if needed, will be Wednesday, January 25.

Show dates: May 12 & 13; 19 & 20

Who: 8 years - 88 years! There are a lot of speaking and chorus parts for all ages.

For more information, or to volunteer to help with the production, please contact Sheri Levenson: levsong@verizon.net

The Memory of the Righteous is a Blessing

All of us at Sinai Temple extend condolences as we remember the following. Their memories are precious to their relatives, their friends and to each of us who form the community of Sinai Temple.

We remember those who have passed away from October 11, 2011 – December 6, 2011:

- Jane Duval, Jack Henrie's Aunt
- Beastrice Leaderman, Richard Leaderman's Mother.
- Rena Katz, Marilyn Rapaport's Mother.

Scroll of Life:

- In honor of Carol Tivoli's special birthday from her book group. L'chaim!
- Happy Birthday Pop-Pop Love Richie, Roberta, Emily, Lindsay, Kyle, Ryan and Will* "Reach For The Moon."
- In loving memory of Oscar Seldin Ruth, Harold, & Debbie.

Thank you to:

The family of Edward Wallace for a very generous memorial contribution. Before Ed passed away, he was looking forward to seeing his physician and friend, Jeffrey Cossin, become President of Sinai. He wanted to acknowledge that achievement as well as support the Rabbi and the Temple. (Our thanks go as well to Ed's children who carried out his wishes: Laura Wallace, Anne Wallace Yates, and Ben Wallace.)

Now you can make donations to Sinai ONLINE!!! www.sinai-temple.org

You learn about someone's success or someone's sadness. You want to make a contribution but it's so much trouble to write a check.

Now you can skip the check and the snail mail.

Go to Sinai's website www.sinai-temple.org and make the donation to any one of our funds ONLINE.

The Sinai Temple Bulletin is published every other month by Sinai Temple, Springfield, Massachusetts. This is Issue Number 4 for the year 2011-2012.

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Sinai Temple

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First Night of Chanukah at Temple