

Vine

Two Services for High Holy Days: A Micah First

BY SHELLEY GROSSMAN

FROM RABBI ZEMEL

RABBI'S PERFECT SUMMER DAY—A GOOD BOOK

DEAR FRIENDS,
Summer.

You can feel it: school's out, beach, mountains, car trips, evening strolls, ice cream, ballgames, hikes, fireworks, lazy time. And a good book.



At Temple Micah, summer is a laid-back time, a time to rejuvenate. Lay leaders run Shabbat morning services, and I am grateful to all who participate in that effort. You bring something special to the table, new ways to look at things, fresh eyes. Friday evening services usually feature just one of our rabbis. Cantor Meryl Weiner and Music Director Teddy Klaus take turns leading the music while the other is on vacation. In early summer we benefit from the presence of another wonderful Micah tradition, our rabbinical student intern.

I love summer for the stack of books that I can plow through, a stack that has accumulated over the year.

What insights will the books in the stack reveal this summer? It is time for personal traditions to be revealed. For the last many summers, my first summer vacation book is the previous year's Daniel Silva thriller featuring the Israeli James Bond, Gabriel Alon. I thank Daniel Silva for churning these out yearly and I make it a point always to stay one year behind awaiting publication of the paperback edition. Mr. Alon's adventures bring me to the summer-time place of my mind.

This year my summer list includes:

Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging by Sebastian Junger

THE HIGH HOLY Days come very late this year—Erev Rosh Hashanah isn't until Sunday, Oct. 2—which is a good thing because the three rabbis, Music Director Teddy Klaus, Cantor Meryl Weiner and Executive Director Rachel Gross have a lot more planning to do than in previous years. For the first time in its 53-year history, Temple Micah will hold two simultaneous services for the general congregation. (The temple has held a separate Next Dor service for the 20s-30s cohort on Erev Rosh Hashanah and Kol Nidre for the past six years.)

It was not an easy decision to make, Rabbi Zemel said. "If we didn't have to do it, we wouldn't do it. But there was no other way. It is just a numbers thing." Every year, the 1,100-seat sanctuary into which 1,200 to 1,300 people crush at the Metropolitan Memorial United Methodist Church (MMUMC)—Micah's High Holy Day home away from home—gets more crowded. Making some worshipers watch a simulcast of the service was unsatisfactory, he said. And turning people away is not an option. The senior staff has been scouring the District looking for a larger venue without luck. "And we're still looking," the rabbi said. Locating a venue is very difficult because the site must accommodate not only the worship services but places for child care, the festival oneg and break-the-fast, the choir to rehearse, and for people who are not permitted medically to fast to get a snack during Yom Kippur day.

"In November, I'm hoping we will have two choices for next year," he said.

After the Holy Days, if the experiment has worked well, next year would be a repeat. Otherwise, Rabbi Zemel is hoping that a new, large venue will be found for 2017.

For this fall, Micah's High Holy Days will remain at MMUMC. There will be only one service there on Erev Rosh Hashanah. (The Next Dor service will take place at the temple as usual.) For Rosh Hashanah morning, Kol Nidre and Yom Kippur day, the planning so far envisions a service in the church's beautiful sanctuary for an uncrowded 1,100 worshippers and a separate but really equal service for about 200 in the Great Hall (where onegs are usually held). Rabbi Zemel will probably conduct the service in the sanctuary with Cantor Weiner, Music Director Klaus and the choir for Rosh Hashanah morning and Kol Nidre. Meanwhile, Rabbi Beraha will lead the service in the Great Hall with the assistance of Danny Moss, the rabbinic student who has served Micah in several capacities in the last few years, and musicians from our monthly Shabbat musical ensemble. Rabbi Landau will conduct the Next Dor service on Erev Rosh Hashanah and Kol Nidre at the temple. She will join Rabbi Beraha on the Great Hall bimah on Rosh Hashanah morning. On Yom Kippur morning, Rabbi Landau will join Rabbi Zemel on the sanctuary bimah while Rabbi Beraha continues to lead the service in the Great Hall. Cantor Weiner, Music Director Klaus and the choir will remain in the

"Every person shall sit under
his grapevine or fig tree with
no one to make him afraid."

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WHAT MAKES MICAH SPECIAL TO YOU?

BY ED LAZERE

Temple Micah is incredibly special to me. As I start my service as president of the Board of Directors, I also want to find out what makes Micah special to you, so that we can work together to strengthen this place we love.

After being in Washington for 30 years, I can say safely that I have built my life here. And Temple Micah has been an integral part for me, my wife Suzanne, and our sons David and Adam.



Most important for me, Micah is a place where I feel comfortable and happy being

Jewish, and not judged if I am unfamiliar with a particular tradition or prayer. Rather than just focusing on the details of ritual, Micah works to make traditions meaningful in our modern context, and celebratory, so that we enjoy getting together as a community to explore our Judaism.

Coming to services at Temple Micah is spiritual and transformative for me. No matter how my week has been, I am moved into a new space in the sanctuary, caught up in the music and moving service. I really feel like I have entered Shabbat when I am at Micah on a Friday night or Saturday morning.

Temple Micah is the place that brought me to Micah House, our home for women in recovery from substance abuse. I was proud to serve on its board, but equally important, I gained so much seeing the courage of women who had been through such difficult times and the joy they felt at re-taking control of their lives.

Of course, Temple Micah is also the place where my family has grown as Jews. It was welcoming to our family with one non-Jewish spouse, and then supportive when Suzanne decided to convert. I loved seeing her chant Torah at the culmination of her B'nai Torah class. (She will do it again this August.) And it is the only Jewish home my sons have known, from religious school to becoming bar mitzvah. Among my most special Micah moments were David and Adam's graduations from MiTY (Micah Temple Youth), where the graduates sang together with the youth choir.

There are many other great things I could talk about, like Micah's candlelight Hannukah service, with special eyeglasses to view an aura of Jewish stars around the candles and a joyous, raucous night of singing.

These special experiences don't just happen. They are created. Rabbis Zemel, Beraha, and Landau, along with Cantor Meryl Weiner, Music Director Teddy Klaus, and the rest of the staff work to make Micah's services, educational programming, and acts of tzedakah meaningful, to bring us closer together to share and understand our Judaism. In addition, the many activities created and led by congregants offer amazing opportunities to build community and explore our Judaism beyond Shabbat and other holidays.

I am grateful for the experiences I've had and the relationships I've built at Micah. And I want to do my part to make and keep it special for you. I hope you will take the time to talk with me, to share what you love about Micah and what you want to do to keep it strong. Let's plan to have coffee or just a chat. You can reach me at president@templemicah.org.

The Temple Micah community thanks Jodi Enda for her six years of service on the Board of Directors, the last three as president. Her boundless energy, enthusiasm and commitment will leave an enduring imprint. Enjoy your "retirement," Jodi!

Czech Torah Mystery Solved

BY SHELLEY GROSSMAN

THE MAY-JUNE ISSUE of the *Vine* reported that the history of how Temple Micah obtained its first Czech Torah in the 1960s is clouded in mystery. (“*Saved from Holocaust, Czech Torahs Serve New Generations at Micah*,” May/June 2016, p. 1). Further research into temple newsletters and board minutes of the period as well as *Derech Micah*, Brenda Levenson’s history of Micah’s first fifty years (which is available in the library), came up with much of the story, and also provides another glimpse into the human side of Micah’s early history.

The temple—then called the Southwest Hebrew Congregation (SWHC)—learned in late summer of 1966 that it was eligible to receive one of the Torah scrolls saved during the Holocaust from the synagogues of Czechoslovakia. The scrolls had been transferred to Westminster Synagogue in London, which established the Memorial

Scrolls Trust that continues to oversee the distribution of these antique Torahs.

Micah member Joya Rosenberg and her 5-year-old son Philip were visiting in London, her home town, and agreed to undertake the paperwork involved in securing the scroll and to bring it back with her to Washington. However, the scroll assigned to SWHC—No. 1531, which had been rescued from the synagogue in Ivanceice in southern Moravia—was in need of extensive repair and, worse, Philip came down with the chickenpox. The Rosenbergs had to change their plans.

The September 1966 *Newsletter* reported that the specially designated SWHC Dulles Airport Welcoming Committee had to cancel its planned ritual reception. Nonetheless, the October 1966 *Newsletter* announced that the scroll would be dedicated at Friday evening services on October 7. That announcement proved to be premature as the Torah



wasn’t dedicated for another 17 months, on March 22, 1968. The reason for the delay remains unrecorded. The *Bulletin*, the renamed newsletter of the newly renamed Temple Micah, described the dedication ceremony as taking place under a chupah (a bridal canopy) to symbolize the marriage between the Torah and the community. Sid Booth, still a major presence at Micah today, led a procession to bring the scroll, adorned with a breastplate and rimonim

(crowns) contributed by about a dozen members, to the chupah, where it was officially received by the temple’s president at that time, Stanley Siegel.

Finding and preserving snippets of Micah lore like this story is part of the Living History Team’s effort to develop an interactive, web-based venue to chronicle Micah from its beginning to the present and into the future. Pictures, artifacts and anecdotes are welcomed by the team. ▼

SHOW YOUR PART IN MICAH’S LIVING HISTORY

Question 1: Did you (or your children) celebrate a life cycle event at Temple Micah? Do you have pictures of it? The Living History Project—an effort to capture Micah’s history from the beginning on an ongoing interactive website—is looking for pictures (especially from the early days) of Micah b’nai mitzvah, weddings, major anniversary parties, and other major celebratory events that took place at the temple.

Question 2: Did you meet your mate at Temple Micah? The Living History Project would like to know and, better yet, get the story.

If your pictures are digitized already or if you can digitize them, please send your contributions to livinghistory@templemicah.org. Otherwise, please email the Living History Team to make arrangements for digitizing your pictures and returning them unscathed to you.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Here's a sampling of coming Micah activities. For a detailed schedule of all upcoming events and services, check out www.templemicah.org.

TUESDAYS, JULY 12, 19 and 26 • 10 AM – 12 noon

Sacred Circle Dancing, Sponsored by Wise Aging

Join other Micah members for meditations that embody and integrate mind, body, and spirit. No previous dance experience or partners necessary. For details and to confirm weekly schedule, email wiseaging@templemicah.org.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 4 (and the first Thursdays of every month) • 10 AM – 12 noon

Musical Mornings, Sponsored by Aging Together

Beginning on August 4, the first Thursday of every month will be a musical morning at Temple Micah, where you can play a “work in progress” for an audience that doesn't care if you make a mistake as long as you love music. If you prefer to play with someone else, we will find you one or more partners. This is just for the fun of it! Musicians and audience members of all ages and levels of experience are welcome. For details, contact Barbara Diskin at musicalam@templemicah.org.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 12 • 6 – 8 PM

Young Family Shabbat Services and Dinner

Every second Friday of the month, Rabbi Beraha leads a brief family service (best for ages 0-7). Stay for a festive dinner followed by crafts for the young children and friendship for their parents. Dinner is \$5 per person. For details and to RSVP, email youngfamilyshabbat@templemicah.org.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 13 • 7:45 PM

Annual Tisha B'Av Service

Tisha B'Av (the 9th of the Hebrew month of Av) is the anniversary of the destruction of the ancient Temples in Jerusalem as well as other Jewish and world disasters. This participatory service—held by candlelight while sitting close to the floor—provides the opportunity to reflect on the horrors and tragedies we Jews faced as a people but also to remember our endurance, our resilience and our triumphs over adversity.

INTERESTING SPEAKERS!

Temple Micah features two monthly lecture series—on Sunday morning and Wednesday noon. The Sunday discussions are on summer break, but please join us for one of our Wednesday Lunch & Learn sessions. For more details, go online to www.templemicah.org.

LUNCH & LEARN

Wednesdays from noon to 2 pm

A monthly program sponsored by the Aging Together Team. Reserve online at www.templemicah.org. Contact Cecilia Weinheimer via email, lunchandlearn@templemicah.org, or call the temple office, 202-342-9175, for details.

July 13 – Valerie Strauss, on “Issues in Education.”



Strauss has been covering education for at least as long as she went to school—from kindergarten through graduate school—and she says that *The Answer Sheet*, her blog at *The Washington Post*, gives her the opportunity to keep on learning. She researches her own pieces that reflect the (often unfortunate) historic changes underway in American public education, and publishes the work of

teachers, parents, researchers and others, with some of whom she disagrees. She takes a wide view of what constitutes an education topic: Anything she happens to be interested in. And she tries to mention the Beatles or Bruce Springsteen whenever it makes the slightest bit of sense to include them. She'll explore whatever is on her mind—and yours—in what's sure to be an engaging conversation.

August 10 – Virginia Spatz, on “Jews and Racial Justice.”



The story of Jews and race relations in the U.S. is complex and conflicting. In past decades, Jews were sometimes viewed as outside “whiteness” and sometimes inside it; some Jewish work for black civil rights came from a brotherly vantage point, while some took a more paternalistic view. Jewish individuals and groups have led in many social justice efforts intended to benefit

communities of color, but Jews who look more like Sammy Davis, Jr. than Bernie Sanders continue to report experiences of exclusion from Jewish communities around the country. We'll outline a little background, explore where we are now, and hear how some Jewish groups approach contemporary racial justice challenges. Spatz, a longtime Micah member, is a human rights activist and urban advocate.

Labor Leader to Headline Labor Day Shabbat Service

Cathy Feingold, Director of International Affairs for the AFL-CIO, is scheduled to speak at Micah's annual labor service, at 6:30 pm on Friday, Sept. 2. Feingold is a leading advocate for global workers, women, and human rights. She previously spent three years in Haiti and the Dominican Republic promoting good jobs with fair wages. The AFL-CIO International Affairs Department works with labor unions around the world to advance freedom of association and collective bargaining.

LESSONS FROM LANDAU

SHAVUOT THOUGHTS FOR SUMMER FROM THE ICE CREAM RABBI

BY RABBI SUSAN LANDAU

Shavuot, which we celebrated in mid-June, is one of my favorite holidays. Why? It's the natural and essential bookend to Passover, it provides plenty of opportunities to learn and teach Torah in creative ways and, of course, there is ice cream.

On Shavuot we celebrated Revelation at Sinai and receiving the Torah by enjoying dairy foods, such as ice cream. This Shavuot Next Dor partnered with Ice Cream Jubilee, a fantastic local ice cream shop, to sample six creative and decadent flavors ranging from Thai Iced Tea to Caramel Popcorn. But why is eating ice cream part of Shavuot? The multifaceted reasons behind our dairy consumption on this holiday make me like it even more.

The Next Dor members and I studied texts together as we tasted our dairy delicacies. We discovered no fewer than four different reasons why we can celebrate Shavuot with

ice cream, and even generated a few more of our own. For example, one traditional explanation is mystical: the word for milk in Hebrew, *chalav*, shares a numerical value with the number of nights Moses spent atop Mount Sinai receiving Torah. Another is symbolic: we enjoy dairy on Shavuot because Torah is considered to be a nourishing life-force for the Jewish people, a collective mother's milk from the Divine. We wondered if a dairy meal also sets Shavuot apart from other Jewish holidays, which are traditionally celebrated with meat. After all, the holiday that commemorates receiving Torah holds a special significance.

Torah study is a custom in observing Shavuot, and sorting through these various explanations is a Shavuot learning session of its own.

The reality is that all of these reasons for eating dairy on Shavuot divert our atten-

tion from the original culinary focus of the agricultural holiday, fruit and grain. Therein lies the beauty of Shavuot—or any Jewish holiday, in my opinion. We have an inheritance of some of the most ancient celebrations, and in order to get to know each one we must sift through layer upon layer of rabbinic interpretation, cultural evolution, and the refinement of Jewish collective conscience.

Shavuot, the Festival of Weeks, was originally established at the harvest season. Over time it became the holiday of Revelation (bringing with it a new excuse to enjoy some ice cream), just as Hanukkah commemorates both a military victory and an oil-burning miracle, and Passover took on Messianic undertones and universal freedom narratives. And we have the privilege of discovering (sometimes, uncovering) the layers that most resonate with us as we make Judaism come



alive and make it our own.

Layers of meaning bury nearly every Jewish milestone in the calendar, and it is up to us to dig into them, learn their multifaceted histories, and discern the observance that most resonates for us. This brief discussion of Shavuot fails to address the full vast array of thematic offerings, which also include notions of conversion, commitment, and sisterhood from the book of Ruth, self-actualization that caps the completion of a mystical counting of the Omer, and more. Shavuot, like most Jewish holidays, offers us a chance to be explorers within our own tradition, and find our place within Jewish time and space. There is so much to delve into when marking Shavuot, so why not accompany the celebration with ice cream?

Exploring Israel: Two Micah Trips Coming Soon

BY THE EDITORS

IN A MICAH first, the temple is sponsoring two trips to Israel in the months ahead: a Birthright adventure from December 26 to January 5, and, from March 12 to 24, a more typical Micah mission but this time stopping first in Berlin.

The Birthright trip is part of a national program that offers free tours to young Jewish adults, particularly first-timers to the country. But this excursion will be a special Micah community journey, led by Ronit Zemel, daughter of Rabbi Daniel and Louise Zemel. As a Birthright Fellow, Ronit is certified

to lead such trips, and this will be her second. The itinerary involves travel throughout the country to religious and cultural sites and get-togethers with Israeli 20-somethings, generally soldiers in the Israel Defense Forces. The goal of Birthright is discovery (“taglit”)—a discovery of Israel and its people, discovery of one’s own personal connection to Jewish values and tradition, and discovery of how one can be a part of the larger Jewish community. If you or someone you know is between 20 and 26 and would like to learn more, please call the temple office or e-mail

birthright@templemicah.org.

Micah Israel trips are much more than typical guided tours. While a professional guide leads the trip, Rabbi Zemel is at the front of the bus offering his special insights. And the visits provide an opportunity to forge closer friendships with other members of the Micah community. While the group visits the major sites around the country, it also has speakers on current topics.

Rabbi Zemel carefully plans the tours around particular themes. The

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BEHIND THE SCENES

TEMPLE MICAH'S HOUSE COMMITTEE

BY DORIAN FRIEDMAN

MEMBERS OF TEMPLE Micah may be aware that the synagogue was designed both physically and symbolically around three “houses”: a *beit t'filah* (house of prayer); *beit midrash* (house of study); and *beit kneset* (house of community). What you may not know is that these houses—and virtually everything within their walls—are overseen by the temple's House Committee. The committee's members work behind the scenes to ensure that the facility is kept in excellent condition, that improvements are made on schedule

and within budget, and that Micah is able to anticipate—as much as possible—upcoming maintenance projects and capital expenses.

Over the years, the committee has served three main functions, explains Bill Nussbaum, who recently stepped down as chair of the committee after more than five years of service. First is overseeing the long-term capital improvements, such as major systems like heating and air conditioning, and making recommendations to the Board of Directors. Second is helping

the temple's staff address the day-to-day issues of owning a building—what Nussbaum calls “home ownership 101—the things that tend to be invisible to most people, but they're critically important.” Recently, this has included everything from a leaky roof over the sanctuary... to a broken diaper changing station in the men's restroom... to replacement of the little motor that raises and lowers the reading table on our bimah. And third, rounding out these duties are diverse special projects—the installation of new solar panels

(coming later this summer!), or a new assisted-hearing sound system, for instance.

Todd Jasper, the newly appointed chair of the House Committee and its liaison to the temple board, credits Nussbaum for his tireless work. “Bill has done an outstanding job and leaves some very large shoes to fill,” he says. “I am grateful to have personally benefitted from his leadership and expertise.” Nussbaum, in turn, demurs, “The Committee works only because there are so many people who bring diverse

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10 ►

Annual Meeting: Report on Past but Focus on Future

By Shelley Grossman

Annual meetings usually are devoted to reviewing the past year. Yet while Temple Micah's annual meeting on June 5 covered the requisite highlights of 2015-16, much of the emphasis was on the future. Rabbi Zemel began his remarks by saying, “We all lived through the year, so why talk about it?” Instead, he decided to reflect on Temple Micah and the larger Jewish world in the 21st century.

But he also announced two specific items for the immediate future. For the first time in its history, Micah will hold two simultaneous services on the High Holy Days this fall (see page 1).

Noting that Jodi Enda was retiring as president of the congregation and also from the board, Rabbi Zemel praised her wisdom and humor and singled out two special accomplishments of her tenure: “She landed Rabbis Josh Beraha and Susan Landau,” he said. At a board meeting immediately following the annual meeting, the board elected Vice President Ed Lazere as the new president.

The rabbi thanked Sheri Blotner, who also was retiring from the board, for her dedicated service. To fill the two vacancies, the congregation elected Harriet Tritell and Todd Jasper to the board and reelected Marina Fanning and Alison Harwood—as well as Lazere—to another term. Jasper also will take over the reins of the House Committee from retiring chair, Bill Nussbaum. And Jill Berman has stepped into Ellen Sommer's former slot to run the Judaica Shop.

Joel Korn, the treasurer, reported that, “The state of the temple's finances is very healthy.” And he noted that membership now stands at 585 households, up from 557 last year.

Turning to the subject that is most on his mind, Rabbi Zemel said the American synagogue in the 21st century needs to find a “galvanizing idea about the Jewish future,” and he sees Temple Micah as a major actor in that search. The American synagogue today, he suggested, is all about preserving the past—an important function, he said. Historically, American synagogues were “havens of European culture transplanted,” he said. As time went on, “nostalgia replaced immigrant memory” with the result that “we were living vicariously through experiences we never had.” After World War II, the synagogues' focus switched to preserving the memory of the Holocaust and then moved on to supporting the state of Israel.

Now “we need our own vision of what we have experienced,” the rabbi urged. All of which leads to what he frequently refers to as advancing the Human Project. He has been mulling these ideas over in his head for some time but still considers them “a tentative thought,” he said, and Temple Micah an “ongoing work in progress.”

Rabbi Zemel “never stops thinking outside the box,” Enda said in her final remarks as president of the Board of Directors. “If anyone can move the Human Project forward, it must be this visionary man.”

Board Asks Members to Include Micah in Their Future Financial Plans

BY MARCIA SILCOX, CHAIR, BOARD FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

DEATH, ESPECIALLY ONE'S own, is hardly a favorite topic. But that doesn't stop universities, public radio and myriad other organizations from sending out pleas to consider them in your will. There is one such plea, however, that the Temple Micah Board really wants congregants to pay attention to. That's the one from the temple's Legacy Committee.

The Legacy Committee has been established to organize gift giving to the Endowment Fund through bequests and other means. Estate gifts to Temple Micah are a critically important way to build the temple's Endowment and other funds. Each estate gift strengthens the community now, and helps fortify its financial future.

"A strong endowment is vital to maintaining and expanding temple programs," explained Jim Hamos, the committee chair. "It will provide a revenue stream to close any gaps between income and expenses. It's an easy way for members to establish a firm foundation

for the future."

So, if you are thinking about drafting a will, creating a trust or updating previous documents, the Legacy

Committee asks that you consider adding Temple Micah to your named bequests. Several members have already done so.



Committee asks that you consider adding Temple Micah to your named bequests. Several members have already done so.

Debra Knopman is one of them. "The temple has been a major part of my life for many years," she said. "I want it to remain vital and vibrant for decades to come, even if I am not here. I made a commitment through my will to make sure that happens."

Indeed, it was another legacy gift from a long-time member that allowed the board to kick-start the Endowment and Innovation Funds with significant seed money. But these funds must grow to create significant revenue, and thus ensure stable finances. To this end, the Legacy Committee will be speaking with groups such as Aging Together, Wise Aging, and Kol Isha, and reaching out to individuals who are interested in learning more about planned giving.

Legacy gifts can come from wills, of course, but

also by naming the temple as a beneficiary of a retirement account or insurance policy, or as a bequest from a trust or donor-advised fund. A member of the Legacy Committee can explain the details. Then, the process starts in consultation with a legal or financial advisor. The important point to remember is: specifically name Temple Micah in the documents.

The Legacy Committee asks that members contemplating such an action, please fill out the Estate Plan Intention Form to alert it and facilitate a grateful thank you for your legacy intentions. The form need not contain the exact dollar amount of the potential gift.

Considering Temple Micah in estate plans can ensure that its spirit continues to thrive l'dor v'dor (from generation to generation). For more information, to answer questions, make a commitment or just start the conversation, please contact the Legacy Committee (Legacy@TempleMicah.org) or call the temple office. ▼

Exploring FROM PAGE 5 ►

March itinerary is still tentative, but will most likely follow a similar pattern. In Germany, the focus is, "Where Judaism Met the Enlightenment," the 18th-century philosophical movement throughout Europe that gave birth to Judaism's Reform movement. The group will also visit Holocaust sites and other places of interest. And it will spend a day in Potsdam, the site of the conference after World War II that divided up Germany among

the victorious allies. Another reason for visiting Berlin, Rabbi Zemel has said, is because it is a divided city that has become totally united. Jerusalem, on the other hand, is a city that was divided and is now united in theory but not in practice.

The title of the Israel portion of the trip is, "The Modern Miracle: Achievements and Challenges." Among the additions to the standard sights, the group is scheduled to visit a Hand-in-Hand school where Jewish and Arab

children are taught together in Hebrew and Arabic and learn each other's history. It will learn about desalination efforts and infrastructure projects, medical research, and why Israel has been lauded as "The Start-Up Nation." The plan includes visiting an Arab village in the Galilee and meeting with Arab mayors. The Tel Aviv portion of the tour will be devoted to art and culture. To learn more about the Berlin-Israel trip, please contact Rabbi Zemel directly at rabbi@templemicah.org. ▼

TZEDAKAH

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IN HONOR OF
Elka and Sid Booth, by Chris Pabon

BUILDING FUND

IN MEMORY OF
Eva Jacob, by Lora Ferguson

ENDOWMENT FUND

IN HONOR OF
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IN HONOR OF
Mort and Roberta Goren's Anniversary, by Skip and Barbara Halpern

MACHON MICAH

IN MEMORY OF
Belle Chernak, by Beverly Sherwat

MICAH COOKS

Benjamin Fleurence and the Fleurence Family

MICAH HOUSE

Ken and Monika Harris
Ellen Nakashima, Alan and Natalie Sipress
Susan Bandler and Joel Korn
Leda Gottlieb
Brian Nagle

IN MEMORY OF
Eva Jacob, by Beverly Sherwat
Lotte Povar, by Richard and Susan Lahne

MUSIC FUND

IN HONOR OF
Marina Fanning and Larry Cooley, by Judy Ludwin Miller and Jim Miller
Cantor Meryl Weiner, by Trish Kent; Rabbi Lynne Landsberg and
Dennis Ward, Catherine Lynch, Judy Ludwin Miller and Jim Miller, Geri
Nielsen, Mary Beth Schiffman and David Tochen, Beverly Sherwat, the
Trager family, Burton Greenstein, Nancy Raskin, Thelma Weiner

IN MEMORY OF
Gloria Feldman, by Sheila Platoff and Robert Effros
Sidney Goldman, by Stephanie Kaufman
Eva Jacob, by Dan and Else Moskovitz

NEXT DOR

IN HONOR OF
Rabbi Esther Lederman, by Claire Bergeron

RABBI BERAHA'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

IN HONOR OF
Our Wedding, by Dan and Mimi Steinberg

IN MEMORY OF
Jeanna Dillon, by Rich Lehmann

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Mace Broide

IN HONOR OF
Haley Lena Abramowitz and Jane Kerschner's grandson, by Susie Blumenthal
Allison Mathis' marriage to Gregory Thomson, by Andi Mathis
Eleanor Ivy Schwartz, by Daniel N. Schwartz and Dana Slone

IN MEMORY OF
Ben Appel, by Harriette Kinberg
Lotte Povar, by Lee Futrovsky and Yael Traum
Leonard Rosenstein, by Andi Mathis
Arnold Soloway, by Susie Blumenthal, David and Lorna Melendy
Steven Stein, by Susie Blumenthal
Elbert Evans Ward, by Dennis Ward and Rabbi Lynne Landsberg
Joseph Weisman, by Stephen Weisman
Irene Wolfson, by Robert Saginaw

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IN MEMORY OF
Leon David Freedman, by Jean Freedman
Sylvia B. Lang, by Trish Kent
Lotte Povar, by Michael and Maxine Mantell

WORSHIP FUND

IN MEMORY OF
Sarah Blumenfeld, by Norman Blumenfeld
Shirley Springer, by Victor Springer

THE RABBI DANIEL GOLDMAN ZEMEL FUND FOR ISRAEL

Myra and Mark Kovey
Peter Kristensen and Sunny Kaplan
Michelle Sender

IN HONOR OF
The wedding of Matt Cutler and Jessica Katz, by Susan and Richard Lahne
Givat Haviva, by Mary Beth Schiffman

IN MEMORY OF
Shlomo Haim Bardin, by David Jonas Bardin
Leon Chadajo, by Jack and Judy Hadley
Olga Lehmann, by Rich Lehmann
Lotte Povar, Regine Ransohoff, by Jack and Judy Hadley

Three Dangerous Ideas Offered on Shavuot

By Sid Booth

The new tradition of floating “dangerous ideas” at Temple Micah’s Shavuot service, explained Rabbi Zemel, was inspired by Moses. The revered leader of the Jewish people asserted the dangerous idea that Torah was the gift of an invisible God.

At the service on a warm June 11 evening, three Micah members accepted Rabbi Zemel’s challenge to introduce their own dangerous ideas.

Jarrett Ferrier, an artist, suggested that our mental and physical health would benefit if we could summon the heart, courage, and intellect to let a little spirituality into our lives each day, even when we aren’t involved in a life cycle event or daunted by trag-

edy. Ferrier presented life-size cutouts of the Lion, Scarecrow, and Tin Man, familiar denizens of Oz, as symbols of the qualities that would help us feel less alone as we journey on our own yellow brick roads. (Rabbi Zemel welcomed Ferrier’s offer to let the Oz cutouts join Yoda as residents of his office.)

Peter Lovenheim, an author and journalist, said it was time to get to know our neighbors rather than live isolated lives caused by a distorted faith in American independence and self-reliance. Too often, he said, Americans—who readily connect through social media with people and institutions around the world—

need to break down social barriers and enrich our lives by face to face meeting and getting to know our own neighbors.

Manya Magnus, an epidemiologist, urged parents to help their children develop skills to avoid disconnection. She said children need to learn to take risks and be open to seeing people in new ways. She said we need to take concrete actions to force ourselves “into the world” and to overcome “otherness.” As photos of human faces of different race and color were displayed on a screen, Magnus invited us to find something in the eyes of strangers so they are no longer seen as “the other.” ▼

MAZAL TOV!

Lincoln Sklar and Caleb Stine, on their marriage

Matt Cutler and Jessica Katz, on their marriage

Roberta and Mort Goren, on their 50th wedding anniversary

Susie and Harvey Blumenthal, on the birth of their granddaughter, Haley Lena Abramowitz

Nancy and Ken Schwartz on the birth of their granddaughter, Eleanor Ivy Schwartz

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Dean Brenner and Robin Schaffert

Elsie Heyrman Klumpner

Jason Levin and Lori Mihalich-Levin

Sarah Remes and Seelig Sinton

CONDOLENCES

The Temple Micah community extends its deepest condolences to:

JEFF BLATTNER, on the passing of his mother, Edie Blattner

FRED JACOB AND WALTER JACOB, on the passing of Fred’s wife and Walter’s mother, Eva Jacob

ZOE MIKVA AND THE MIKVA FAMILY, on the passing of the Honorable Abner Mikva, a former member of Temple Micah

BEN MOSS AND DANNY MOSS, on the passing of their grandfather, Henry S. “Hank” Moss

JACK SCHWARZ, on the passing of his mother, Patricia Ann Schwarz

KEVIN AND ROBIN STEIN, on the passing of Kevin’s father, Steven Mark Stein

BRIAN WOLF, on the passing of his father, Saul Morris Wolf

NANCY YANOFSKY, on the passing of her mother, Marcia Miller Yanofsky

May their memories be for a blessing.

Rabbi's Message FROM PAGE 1 ►

Culture by Terry Eagleton
Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis by Robert D. Putnam
Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End by Atul Gawande
When Breath Becomes Air by Paul Kalanithi
As Close to Us As Breathing by Elizabeth Poliner
Sherlock is My Name by Howard Jacobson
The Last Flight of Poxl West by Daniel Torday
 If time permits, I would like to re-read two classics:
The Nature of Doctrine by George A. Lindbeck
 and
The Myth of the Eternal Return by Mircea Eliade
 What guides my reading choices?
 1. The benefits of reading more fiction, a guide that, unfortunately, I don't get the chance to follow. Why fiction? Daniel Gordis has written:

"There is knowledge to which the heart can lead us that the mind cannot. As much as Jews take the intellect seriously, we understand its limitations. There is a sort of knowing that can come only through telling—or hearing—a story. It is the difference between great philosophy and profound literature. As critical and even world-changing as some of the great philosophers have been, for many of us, it is the broken heart and the soul laid bare that we encounter in great literature that touches us more deeply."

2. The temper of the times. I read to gain a deeper understanding of the world in which I live.

We say that we hunger for community. What does that mean?

We say that we struggle to find meaning. Where is meaning found? Is meaning a means or an end?

3. The Jewish saga. I always want to deepen my understanding of the Jewish story. What are our themes? What have been the various Judaisms that have emerged over time? I use the term "Judaisms" deliberately. More and more I

am struck by the wisdom of my teacher at Brown, Professor Jacob Neusner, who taught us that never at any time or place has there been just one Judaism. Or as Rabbi Larry Hoffman, another one of my teachers, puts it, "Judaism is an ongoing conversation on what Judaism is."

4. Finally, stimulating Temple Micah's engagement in the Human Project. We engage in the Human Project through our experience as Jews. This is a project of lifelong personal growth and discovery, perhaps better understood as the modern task of identity formation. It is the dual project of moving the world forward and refining the self. It is the task of public citizenship and of personal growth, or, we might say the work of *reshut ha-rabim* and *reshut ha-yachid*, the public arena and the private space.

How can Temple Micah participate in this most ancient and primary of Jewish tasks?

Summer reading. It opens up the world.

Shalom,
 Rabbi Daniel G. Zemel

High Holy Days FROM PAGE 1 ►

sanctuary for both morning services. The notion of two services raises in some minds the specter of inequality—e.g., favored people in the sanctuary, others in the Great Hall (or perhaps vice versa). Rabbi Zemel vigorously rejects that notion. "There will decidedly be no second class," he said. Worshippers will get to choose which service they want to go to (first come, first served). New ticketing software has been obtained

that will permit mixing and matching services between the two venues, although one will have to attend the service picked in advance online.

Plus, the plan is to mount two very different services that each will appeal to various members of the congregation. In addition, the two venues have different attractions. The sanctuary with its high ceiling and stained glass windows provides one kind of prayerful atmosphere while the Great Hall with its huge windows and

neutral colors is airy and full of light, making for an entirely different religious experience. Also, the back of the sanctuary is very far away from the bimah while everything in the Great Hall would be closer together and more intimate. "Some people might like the intimacy of the smaller room," Rabbi Zemel said. "The service can be more conversational."

Planning two services also necessitates more than the rooms and the rabbis. A second portable ark will have to be obtained as will another

collapsible drafting table that is used (covered in velvet) on the bimah. The number of ushers will have to be increased and the number of Torah and Haftarah chanters doubled. To meet that requirement, adults will be asked to chant Torah and Haftarah in addition to the usual youngsters. "So much thinking went into this and there is a lot more thinking to come," the rabbi said. "I just want to make it so that everyone can feel they have a fulfilling Holy Day at Temple Micah. I think we can do that." ▼

Committee FROM PAGE 6 ►

talents and expertise to the effort." He thanks former member Sue Baum, who for years oversaw the building's landscaping, and Adrienne Umansky, who recently concluded years of service on the committee. Together, they

applaud current members Elliot Cafritz, Ed Grossman, Paul Shapiro, Sheri Zaitz-Blotner and Robert Weinstein, as well as the temple's Executive Director Rachel Gross for their hard work and dedication.

Jasper says he looks forward to leading the team

and bringing his considerable experience in facility management to the effort. He has worked with the facilities departments in many large federal agencies, such as NASA and USAID, since 2010, and has focused on common facility safety/security issues, maintenance

planning, and improvement projects. "My focus for the House Committee is to continue long-range planning efforts (including energy efficiency), keep the facility in excellent condition, and quickly address any maintenance issues as they arise," he says. ▼

BERAHA'S BLACKBOARD

FOR A FULLER JEWISH LIFE IN AMERICA,
MAKE HEBREW A HIGHER PRIORITY

BY RABBI JOSH BERAHA

The souvenirs I collected on my first trip to Israel at age 16 consisted mainly of candy wrappers, menus and pictures of street signs. Instead of your average candlesticks, sports-themed kippot or "I Got Stoned in Jerusalem" T-shirts, I opted for what most surprised and intrigued me: artifacts written in Hebrew. After years breaking my teeth over the aleph-bet and eventually Hebrew textbooks with stultifying, contrived conversations between Shlomo and Orit at a bus stop in Tel Aviv or on an imagined kibbutz in the North, that trip exposed me to a living, spoken language resurrected from our holy books and taking its place in the cafes, classrooms and courtrooms of our new land. Although the novelty of seeing a McDonald's menu or a movie advertisement in Hebrew has slowly faded, each time I return to Israel I find myself more in love with the Hebrew language; to hear Hebrew is to succumb to its soft rhythm and many intricacies.

I hung the following Danny Siegel poem on my wall in high school, and I keep it with me to this day:

Read me anything, Genesis, or an ad in an Israeli newspaper and watch my face. I will make half-sounds of ecstasy and my smile will be so enormously sweet you would think some angels were singing Psalms or God Himself was reciting to me. I am crazy for her Holiness and each restaurant's menu in Yerushalayim or Bialik poem gives me peace

no Dante or Milton or Goethe could give. I have heard Iliads of poetry, Omar Khayyam in Farsi, and Virgil sung as if the poet himself were coaching the reader. And they move me—but not like the train schedule from Haifa to Tel Aviv or a choppy unsyntaxed note from a student who got half the grammar I taught him all wrong but remembered to write with Alefs and Zayins and Shins.

I love Hebrew and often I wonder about its place (or lack thereof) in American Judaism. In the words of the writer Leon Wieseltier—words he spoke in our very own sanctuary a few years ago, "The American Jewish community is the first great community in the history of our people that believes that it can receive, develop, and perpetuate the Jewish tradition not in a Jewish language." When Wieseltier spoke these words I immediately felt a sense of embarrassment. We don't know Hebrew—he's right! As much as we include Hebrew as part of our worship and teach our students to read it for their b'nai mitzvah and incorporate it into the summer camp experience, most American Jews lack a true knowledge of the language, let alone an understanding of its rules and history. Lest I sound accusatory, I'll add that even those one might assume know Hebrew—my rabbinic and cantorial colleagues—often lack more than a basic foundation in the language.

The 2012 Pew Research

Center's study of Jewish Americans found that 94 percent of American Jews say they are proud to be Jewish and 75 percent have "a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people." It intrigues me that just as Hebrew literacy is on the decline, our commitment to our people is strengthening.

How can we commit to our people but not our people's language?

Here I'm reminded of the father of modern Hebrew, Eliezer Ben Yehuda, who wrote in the journal *HaShahar* in 1879: "If we wish that the name Israel be not extinguished, then we are in duty bound to create something which may serve as a center for our entire people, like the heart in an organism, from which the blood will stream into all the arteries of the national body and fill it with life." Although there are those in academia who argue that American Judaism has created its own language—"Jewish English"—I am curious what holds us together if not our ancient shared language. And do we truly believe that we can perpetuate our religion in English alone, with only a sprinkling of Hebrew?

My answer, I think, is yes, but... Based on American Jewish history thus far, it seems that we can very well build and maintain vibrant Jewish communities that lack a real understanding of Hebrew as part of the Jewish experience. We can advocate Jewish values, tell Jewish stories and live Jewish lives—all



in English.

But our Judaism will surely be lacking, for contained within the Hebrew language are the roots of our people, the beauty that can only be unlocked when we intimately know the language. As the Hebrew poet Hayyim Nachman Bialik famously said, "He who reads the Bible in translation is like a man who kisses his bride through a veil."

I write these words not to provoke or create panic; I'm aware that alarmist narratives rarely inspire or truly help to move any project forward. Rather, after two years of assessment, I have come to the conclusion that Hebrew education must be more of a priority for our community. While English will surely continue as the dominant language of instruction, I would like to increase the amount of attention we give to Hebrew in the hope that when our children visit Israel they will see that Hebrew is not merely an ancient, difficult language relegated to b'nai mitzvah studies, but rather a living language, one that has been at the heart of our identity for thousands of years and, I hope, thousands more to come. My goal is that they'll make sense of the Hebrew candy wrappers, menus and pictures of street signs they bring home as souvenirs, and that Hebrew will become part of their identity.



Temple Micah wishes
you a relaxing and
peaceful summer!



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