



# Time

## FROM RABBI ZEMEL

### SEEKING A NEW APPROACH TO 21ST-CENTURY AMERICAN JEWISH LIFE

DEAR FRIENDS,

Teaching a class on comparative Jewish-Christian Theology with the Very Rev. Gary Hall, dean of the Washington National Cathedral, gave me new insights into the American Jewish experience. As Reverend Hall talked about the importance of the church as an institution, I pondered



the role of the synagogue and how it has evolved in America. I considered where it should go from here.

Excluding the world of Orthodox Judaism, the American Jewish religious experience has charted two different, if overlapping, courses, one focused on the home and the other on the synagogue. It is time for a substantive conversation about how, at the least, each can learn from and enhance the other. Perhaps we might be bolder yet. By looking deeply and creatively at the strengths of the past and the reality of the present, we can create a new conversation—a third course—that yields a bright and ever more vibrant future.

Historically, what I will call Approach A centered around Jewish life in the home and emphasized such practices as observing kashrut, the Jewish dietary laws, and Shabbat. This approach correctly understood that the defining institutions of Jewish life, traditionally, were the home and the family; it sought ways to maintain that structure.

Focusing the observance of Judaism in the home on dietary laws made total sense. The Pharisees had done much the same thing 2,000 years earlier, which my

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 ►

## BREAKING NEWS!

### MICAH GIVES NOD TO NEW ASSISTANT RABBI

The Board of Directors voted to hire Susan Landau as the new assistant rabbi on March 3 and she accepted the offer on March 4. The congregation will be able to ratify Landau's appointment at a special meeting on Sunday, March 22, at 10 am. She plans to start at Micah on July 1. (For more information, see President's column on page 2.)



## Micah to bid farewell to Rabbi Lederman, Rabbi Zemel's "Right Arm"

BY SHELLEY GROSSMAN

RABBI LEDERMAN SAT on the sofa in her office beside her 18-month-old daughter Zoe, who was carefully tossing her toys on the floor.

"It was not an easy decision (to leave Micah). I love what I do," she said, as Zoe nimbly climbed down from the sofa and headed for the toys she had dropped. "The family piece was important. The hours of a congregational rabbi are not family friendly."

Now Zoe was standing at her knees with arms raised. Rabbi Lederman picked up the child, who was missing pre-school to recover from a bug. "I'm not home on weekends. I'm not with them on Shabbat. I've missed the Young Family Shabbats, but now I'll be able to go with them"—Zoe, her 3-and-a-half-year-old brother, Ari, and their dad, Scott Gant.

The family aspect isn't the only reason for her departure, Rabbi Lederman

continued. The job she is taking with the Washington office of the Union of Reform Judaism "is an opportunity I just could not pass up." She'll be directing a new URJ program called Communities of Practice, which helps networks of congregations work together to improve their practices. "I'll be doing new things, but the skill set required and mine match well and I'm very excited about it."

Nonetheless, "I feel very sad about leaving," she said.

A lot of people at Temple Micah, staff and congregants alike, are sorry to see Rabbi Lederman go.

"I'm losing my right arm," Rabbi Zemel said. "This has been a total, total great working relationship and partnership. She'll be missed in every way."

Rabbi Lederman will leave at the end of June, and the congregation will honor

CONTINUED PAGE 6 ►

**"Every person shall sit under his grapevine or fig tree with no one to make him afraid."**  
 MICAH, CHAPTER 4, VERSE 4

# Vine

Vol. 50 No. 4

TEMPLE MICAH—  
 A REFORM JEWISH CONGREGATION  
 2829 Wisconsin Ave, NW  
 Washington, D.C. 20007  
 Voice: 202-342-9175  
 Fax: 202-342-9179  
 Email: [assistant@templemicah.org](mailto:assistant@templemicah.org)  
[vine@templemicah.org](mailto:vine@templemicah.org)  
 Web: [www.templemicah.org](http://www.templemicah.org)

**Daniel G. Zemel**  
 RABBI

**Esther Lederman**  
 ASSOCIATE RABBI

**Rachel Gross**  
 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Josh Beraha**  
 RABBI, DIRECTOR OF  
 CONGREGATIONAL LEARNING

**Meryl Weiner**  
 CANTOR

**Teddy Klaus**  
 MUSIC DIRECTOR

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Jodi Enda**  
 PRESIDENT

**Ed Lazere**  
 VICE PRESIDENT

**Marc Levy**  
 VICE PRESIDENT

**David Diskin**  
 SECRETARY

**Joel Korn**  
 TREASURER

**Martha Adler**  
**Larry Bachorik**  
**Sheri Blotner**  
**Patty Brink**

**Jeff Davis**  
**Marina Fanning**  
**Helene Granof**  
**Victoria Greenfield**  
**Alison Harwood**  
**Marcia Silcox**

## VINE STAFF

**Dorian Friedman**  
 CO-EDITOR

**Shelley Grossman**  
 CO-EDITOR

**AURAS Design**  
 PRODUCTION

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

# NEW ASSISTANT RABBI CAPS CHANGES COMING TO MICAH

BY JODI ENDA

*Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or the present are certain to miss the future.*

—John F. Kennedy, 1963



One of the things I love about Temple Micah is that we always have an eye on the future, even as we pay tribute to our past and savor our present. And now, we have a few big changes to anticipate and embrace.

First, I am delighted to tell you that the Board of Directors voted March 3 to nominate Susan Landau to be our new assistant rabbi. She is a crackerjack rabbinical student who will be ordained in May and is poised to join our staff July 1.

Landau is sharp, creative and thoughtful, and appears destined to become a great rabbi. A native of Providence, R.I., she impressed us with a powerful combination of intellectual heft, personal warmth and enthusiasm to become part of a congregation like ours. She currently is a rabbinic intern at a temple in Bedford Corners, N.Y., and previously served as an intern or student rabbi at several other congregations across the country as well as at two nursing homes. She also is a trained singer who is learning to play the guitar.

We selected Landau following an extensive national search that garnered applications from dozens of experienced rabbis and nearly every job-seeking student on all three campuses of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.

Rabbi Zemel and I first came across Landau when we flew to Cincinnati in February to participate in the official process set up by the Central Conference of American Rabbis to hire graduating rabbinical students. Over the course of two-and-a-half days, we interviewed one dozen soon-to-be-rabbis.

When we returned to Washington, we had one day (under the CCAR rules)

to decide which students to invite to interview with our search committee and meet with the senior staff. We chose three. Within four days—amid heavy snowfall—the first one arrived.

Over the course of the next week, the 10-member search committee, chaired by Vice President Marc Levy, interviewed each of the three candidates. The committee also interviewed two experienced rabbis. After seeking input from the senior staff, the committee recommended that the board offer the position to Landau, subject to congregational approval. The board voted six days later and, following strict CCAR rules, we contacted her March 4. Landau accepted on the spot.

The full congregation will have the opportunity to ratify the board's recommendation at a special meeting at 10 a.m., Sunday, March 22. Unfortunately, the CCAR process does not permit congregations to meet candidates before voting to hire them. That's why we were careful to select search committee members who represent our diverse membership. Each of them spent considerable time interviewing the candidates, participating in a lesson led by each candidate, reading each one's sermons and other writings and conducting additional research to ensure we found the right person for Micah.

In addition to nominating Landau, the board voted to recommend changing Rabbi Beraha's title to assistant rabbi, director of congregational learning. After serving as our rabbinic intern for two-and-a-half years, Rabbi Beraha joined our staff full time last July. Since then, he has spearheaded a thoughtful and exciting transformation of Machon Micah, launching a process that we think will catapult Jewish learning to a new level.

Rabbi Beraha also has led worship services, and he has a special knack for that as well. While he will continue to run the machon, Rabbi Beraha now will have an increased presence on the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7 ►

# Tzedek: Your Chance to “Do Justice” with the Micah Community

BY ED LAZERE  
CHAIR, TZEDEK COMMITTEE

WHICH OF THESE sounds like your social justice thing? Donating food for the hungry? Swinging a hammer to fix up the home of a needy neighbor? Teaching writing, job interview skills, or GED test prep to teens or adults? Or attending rallies to push for public policy changes to make our region a fairer place?

Wherever you feel most comfortable, Temple Micah's Tzedek Committee has a way to get involved. Beyond fulfilling the prophet Micah's call to do justice, these are great ways to get to know fellow Micah members and explore your Judaism in a new way.

Many members say social justice is an important part of their Micah experience. I hope you will find time in your busy schedules to support one or more of the following:

**Purim-to-Pesach Food Drive:** In the fall, we collect underwear for the

homeless before winter comes. This spring we will collect food as this is the time when food pantries often run low. Starting with a mac-n-cheese box as a Purim grogger, bring non-perishable food items *every time* you come to Micah between March 4 and April 14. Think of it as part of cleaning out your Hametz (but please also bring other food items).

**Befriend a Youth in Need through Sasha Bruce:** Micah has partnered with Sasha Bruce Youthworks to support their needs: creative writing, GED (high school equivalency) tutoring, an after-school program, and a Girl Scout troop. These are great ways to make a difference in the life of a child.

**Repair the Home of a Low-income DC Resident:** Micah brings together a group every year for a “Sukkot in Spring” weekend home repair project. You don't need to have any skills, since the tasks range in difficulty and there

is on-the-job training. Look out for an announcement of this year's Sukkot in Spring date.

**Help DC Residents Prepare to Look for a Job:** Jubilee Jobs needs volunteers to spend half a day helping DC adults polish up their resumes and practice job interview skills. There will be an evening training in advance.

**Advocacy for Affordable Housing and Universal Paid Sick Leave:** Some Micah members are working to support increased funding for affordable housing in DC, and others are supporting legislation in Maryland to make sure everyone gets paid sick leave from their job. We are partnering with Jews United for Justice on these.

All of these opportunities should be listed on the Temple website. If you have other questions or trouble finding anything, contact me at edlazedc@gmail.com. ●

## FORGING MICAH CONNECTIONS TO LAUNCH NEW CHAVER PROGRAM

By Peter Gluck

The Forging Micah Connections (FMC) team is preparing to launch a program, called Chaver, to pair new Micah members with compatible longer-term members. The purpose of the program is to engage members in the life of Micah by connecting recent arrivals to Micah with mentors who can be a resource and support, answer questions about the community, create a pathway to participation and help familiarize the newcomer with the temple's myriad programs and activities. The FMC team will try to pair members of similar age and family composition or other shared interests if they so desire.

Serving as a Chaver (“friend” in English) is voluntary and involves a one-year commitment. Chaverim are expected to stay in touch with the family or individual member they are paired with and invite them to attend Shabbat services from time to time, answer questions and encourage participation in Micah's many programs and activities. For exam-

ple, if you attend Lunch & Learn invite your member buddy to attend with you. If you participate in Book Club or Torah Study, encourage them to come along. When there's a special event at Micah (and there are many throughout the year) like a Family Shabbat or the Community Shabbat Dinner, Spring Auction, Shabbat Shalom Around Town or Meet Micah Friends, invite your buddy to join you.

Forging Micah Connections was created as a result of the Listening Campaign undertaken by Temple Micah several years ago. In addition to Chaver, FMC has inaugurated a Theater Group and is exploring a Jewish movie night.

If you would like to learn more or are interested in participating in this new program as a mentor or partner, please contact Peter Gluck at (chaver@templemicah.org). And for more on the many efforts of Forging Micah Connections, contact David Diskin at forging-connections@templemicah.org.

## COMING ATTRACTIONS

Here's a sampling of Micah activities on tap during the next two months. For a detailed schedule of all upcoming events, check out [www.templemicah.org](http://www.templemicah.org).

FRIDAY-MONDAY, MARCH 6-8.

**Aaron Altschul Scholar in Residence Wendy Zierler**  
HUC professor of Modern Jewish Literature and Feminist Studies considers Orthodoxy vs. Reform, feminism and other contemporary issues through modern books, poetry and films.

SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 6 PM – 9 PM

**Temple Micah Spring Auction**  
Have a great time with Micah friends, bid on terrific stuff and support Temple Micah—all at the same time. Food, drink, lots of laughs and the good feeling of helping the temple provide services for you and your family. What's not to like?

SATURDAY, APRIL 4, 6 PM – 9:30 PM

**Community Seder sponsored by Kol Isha**  
Celebrate the exodus from Egypt with friends and family. Re-tell the age-old story with our own Haggadah, written and illustrated by Kol Isha members. Eat, drink and relish our freedom.

FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 10:15 AM

**Passover Service**  
Morning service for Passover. Yiskor will be read.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 7 PM

**Yom Hashoah Service**  
A powerful and moving service to remember the Holocaust. Following the service, author Avrom Bendavid-Val will speak about his book, *The Heavens are Empty: Discovering the Lost Town of Trochenbrod*, in which he brings to life the town where his grandfather and father were born and that destroyed in 1942.

FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 7:30 PM – 9 PM

**Community Shabbat Dinner**  
Celebrate Shabbat with Micah friends, old and new, at this delicious, catered dinner following Kabbalat Shabbat service.

## INTERESTING SPEAKERS!

Temple Micah features two monthly lecture series—on Sunday morning and Wednesday noon. For more details, go online to [www.templemicah.org](http://www.templemicah.org).

### SUNDAY SPEAKER SERIES

*Sundays from 10:15 to 11:45 am*



**March 8 – Wendy Zierler** on “Reel Theology: The King’s Speech,” the final of four lectures by the 2015 Scholar in Residence. Zierler, Professor of Modern Jewish Literature and Feminist Studies at Hebrew Union College, will explore what the movie *The King’s Speech* can teach us about the theology of Moses as a stutterer and leader of the children of Israel. She will also speak on March 6 and 7.



**April 19 – Marc Lee Raphael**, on “The Representation of the Holocaust in Poetry.” Few of us were present in Europe between 1941–44 during the Holocaust. Can artists, filmmakers, and musicians portray the Shoah for us who were not there? Professor Raphael, chair of Judaic Studies at the College of William & Mary, will discuss several poets who, in different languages, have tried to do so.

**April 26 – Panel Discussion** on “The Role of the Arts in American Jewish Life.” Featuring Carole Zawatsky, Chief Executive Officer, DCJCC; Liz Lerman, dancer, choreographer; and Jenna Weissman Joselit, Charles E. Smith Professor of Judaic Studies and Director of the Program in Judaic Studies at George Washington University.

### LUNCH & LEARN

*Wednesdays from noon to 2 pm*

A monthly program sponsored by the Aging Together Team. Reserve online at [www.templemicah.org](http://www.templemicah.org). Please contact Nancy Raskin via email at [lunchandlearn@templemicah.org](mailto:lunchandlearn@templemicah.org) or call the temple office at 202-342-9175 for details.

**March 11 – Shelley Grossman**, on “We are all Food-ish: Around the World and Through the Ages with Jewish Food.” Food has always played a central role in Judaism. From ancient times, as Jews wandered the world, they adapted their traditional food to new conditions and adapted local cuisine to Jewish law. Shelley, co-editor of the *Vine* and retired journalist, will share her research on Jewish foodways and the importance it has played throughout the long history of our people.

**April 8 – Teddy Klaus**, on “Jewish Music.” Throughout history, Jewish liturgical music has imported the music from outside the synagogue walls to inside our sanctuaries. Teddy, the temple’s longtime music director, will bring his unique perspective to a conversation about this practice over the last couple of centuries in various locations in Europe and America.

# New Purchasing Alliance Saves Micah Money and Advances Social Mission

BY JEFFREY P. COHN

LAST FALL, TEMPLE MICAH joined an innovative buying cooperative, the Community Purchasing Alliance, that serves faith-based institutions and other nonprofit groups in the Washington region. The co-op saves its member institutions and other participants money on commonly bought goods and services.

With its new member status, Micah also invests in the co-op and shares in any profits. In addition, CPA, which bills itself as a 'social-purpose cooperative,' ensures that vendors help meet laudable social and environmental goals.

Micah began working with CPA as a participant in 2011 to reduce the cost of electricity, a move that now saves the synagogue about \$1,000 a year, said Micah Executive Director Rachel Gross.

Now the temple also contracts with CPA for trash and recycling, saving \$750 a year. Community-based purchases of natural gas yield another \$500

annually. Other purchases of ACE/cleaning supplies and office supplies bring the total savings to about \$2,000 to \$2,500 a year.

The temple now is considering expanding its community purchases to include snow-removal services, copier leasing and solar. "The co-op gives us access to a group of buyers that lowers our cost," Gross said. "It also gives us access to expertise in dealing with vendors. It's a model for others around the country."

The CPA website explains that it calculates how much its members spend collectively on commonly purchased items such as electricity, thus offering potential vendors access to many small purchasers. It estimates that CPA members save about 15 percent on their electricity purchases, for example.

When CPA started in 2011, it just purchased electricity for its members. Now it helps members save money on such disparate products and services as

solar panels, trash removal, snow plowing, and purchasing and payroll services. The cooperative boasts more than 100 members and 30 participants, mostly other synagogues, churches, schools and other nonprofit organizations in the Washington area.

CPA is not only about saving money, but also promotes environmental and social causes. It encourages its vendors to pay their employees a living wage, to supply electricity generated by renewable energy sources and to use transfer stations and recycling facilities as part of their trash removal.

Beyond saving money and doing social good, the co-op serves another function. Gross said it enables her to stay in closer contact with her colleagues at other DC-area synagogues and churches.

"It gets me more actively involved with what they are doing," she says. And that helps Gross better serve Micah and its members. ●

## NEW BOOKS IN THE MICAH LIBRARY

The temple's lending library boasts more than 3,000 volumes, including a considerable reference collection and subscriptions to several journals and newspapers. Here is a sampling of recent acquisitions. To find these or other books, use the online catalog on the temple website, [www.templemicah.org](http://www.templemicah.org).

*Let Me Create a Paradise, God Said to Himself: A Journey of Conscience from Johannesburg to Jerusalem*, by Hirsh Goodman

*Coming Together, Coming Apart: A Memoir of Heartbreak and Promise in Israel*, by Daniel Gordis

*Day After Night: A Novel*, by Anita Diamant

*Walking Israel: A Personal Search for the Soul of a Nation*, by Martin Fletcher

*Rubber Bullets: Power and Conscience in Modern Israel*, by Yaron Ezrahi

*The War on Women in Israel: The Story of Religious Radicalism and the Women Fighting for Freedom*, by Elana Sztokman

*Torah Queeries: Weekly Commentaries on the Hebrew Bible*, by Gregg Drinkwater, editor

*Israel: A History*, by Anita Shapira

*Father, Son, Stone*, by Allan H. Goodman

And for children and youth:

*Angels Watching Over Me*, by Julia Durango

*Brainteasers from Jewish Folklore*, by Rosalind Charney Kaye

*Lech Lecha: The Journey of Abraham and Sarah*, by Alison Greengard

*Mother Goose Rhymes for Jewish Children*, by Sara G. Levy

*The Kids' Fun Book of Jewish Time*, by Emily Sper

*Children Write for Peace*, by children who took part in programs at Givat Haviva, Israel

**Lederman FROM PAGE 1** ▶

her at a Kabbalat Shabbat service June 12. Rabbi Zemel and the Board say they hope to welcome Susan Landau as a new assistant rabbi on July 1.

“We were not trying to replace Esther,” Rabbi Zemel said, indicating that would be impossible.

“This is an entry-level position for a talented person who will stay with us for a certain amount of time and then take the next step in her

career,” he continued.

As soon as Esther announced her resignation, President Jodi Enda named a 10-member search committee representing a cross section of the congregation. “We have younger and older people, gay and straight, married and single, parents with kids in the machon, empty nesters, a former president, two members of the board as well as relatively new members,” Enda said.

Search committee members are: Chairman Marc Levy, Martha Adler, Amy Berman, Marina Fanning, Aurie Hall, Richard Harwood, Mary Beth Schiffman, Kerry Susser, and Rabbi Zemel and Enda, ex officio. The search committee recommended Landau to the board, which nominated her March 3. The congregation has the opportunity to ratify hiring her at a special meeting on Sunday, March 22, at 10 am.

To employ a Reform rabbi, a congregation can't just post a want ad, but must go through a highly structured process controlled by the Central Conference of American Rabbis. (For more details, see President's Column on page 2.)

“There were a lot of attractive candidates this year,” Rabbi Zemel said.

“We wanted to hire a great rabbi that is a good

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 ▶

**Rabbi's Message FROM PAGE 1** ▶

teacher Jacob Neusner described as “table fellowship.” In the wake of the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in the year 70CE, the Pharasaic revolution moved Judaism from a sacrificial worship cult to a home-based practice. In America, Approach A entailed regular family-home practice. This, in turn, made Shabbat a time for weekly family gatherings. The meal on Friday evening was a festive event combining food, family and Shabbat observance.

Approach A, to be sure, also included synagogue life. What is important for this exploration is that prayer didn't change much. The inherited liturgy was fixed and prayed as it had been in the European shul. New generations were taught to davven like their parents had before them. There was one important difference in America: Judaism became more egalitarian. Separate seating for men and women was abandoned. Bat mitzvah, women in the minyan, women rabbis and cantors all followed. What is important to understand here is that Approach A centered on the home, and the synagogue retained a strong Eastern European flavor.

Approach B looked different. It largely abandoned dietary laws and did not emphasize Shabbat observance outside of the synagogue. Instead, in Approach B, the synagogue itself became central to the Jewish experience. And while both approaches offered Jewish education for children, bar and bat mitzvah and confirmation, they diverged when it came to adults. Approach B took prayer very seriously. The aesthetics of worship were an enormous concern. New musical compositions were written for the synagogue to

enhance the beauty of the service with, initially, the organ and later the guitar and other instruments. Decorum in the prayer setting was emphasized—worshippers didn't davven on their own, but more often prayed in unison. As the aesthetics of worship evolved, influenced by the American culture in which it was embedded, ideology and theology emerged as important fields of inquiry. “Tikkun Olam” was born as an idea to inspire prayer and other Jewish activity.

Both approaches were Jewish, and they always have overlapped. But they have different emphases and practices.

This much crystallized for me through teaching the class with Reverend Hall. It is time to take stock:

1. “Tikkun Olam” is a slogan, not an ideology. It may in some way support social action, but it can in no way serve as a basis, let alone a durable inspiration, for a full and rich American Jewish life.

2. In today's America, Jewish home life for most families requires synagogue support. The opposite is also true. The synagogue alone cannot instill Jewish identity into a Jewish child. The home is the crucial incubator; the synagogue is the support system. The synagogue in America has emerged as a distinctive institution of singular importance. For many—perhaps most—Jews, it is the only Jewish place in which they meet and gather and do Jewish things.

3. The Jewish home has changed enormously. Many—perhaps most—Jewish homes today include non-Jews. This is a potential strength as the synagogue learns not only to be welcoming to all people but to provide moments of deep spiritual depth and emotion to the Jews and non-Jews who pray with us.

4. As we consider the Jewish home and the synagogue, it is time to consider a third way of looking at the Jewish world, one that includes elements of both approaches and goes beyond either of them. Approaches A and B put a menu before the community and emphasize different ways to approach all aspects of Judaism—Shabbat, prayer, home, food, synagogue—through one lens or the other.

We are now coming to realize that America, as a place that emphasizes both freedom and creativity, has pushed the boundaries of Jewish life beyond these two lenses. Ecology, the environment, health care, book clubs, the outdoors, film, art, theater and much more have all become either subjects or locales of Jewish interest and concern.

Midway through the second decade of the 21st century, we face a whole new set of questions. Some of them could be unifying and beneficial: in what ways are Jews Jewish? How do Jews see Judaism manifested in their lives? Are they able to imagine new ways in which they wish to see Judaism present in their lives? Is there a yearning for the sacred? Is there a desire for a new language of prayer or for a way to connect to an ancient and rooted identity?

And then: how can we support these new choices and endeavors? Home and synagogue are a partnership; they always have been. A vibrant Jewish future requires a new conversation between and about them, a creative conversation that will enable both to flourish. How can we create and sustain that conversation? Let's work together to develop an Approach C.

Shalom,  
Rabbi Daniel G. Zemel

## Torah/Tanach Study Group profile

**WHAT:** While noshing on bagels, fruit, pastries or other snacks in the downstairs library, Micah members (and some other friends) discuss, laugh, argue, share ancient wisdom and brand new insights, and then laugh some more as together they learn the Torah and Haftarah portions of the week. Participants in the group, which is lay initiated and led, take turns preparing an introduction to the text and leading the session or providing the snacks. Then the conversation takes off, often in surprising directions. Underway every Shabbat morning, including during the summer, since the temple building opened in 1995, the group is a fluid gathering of longstanding (and new) regulars, drop-ins, visitors and returnees. Friendships (several of which have led to marriage) are sparked. No prerequisites. No commitments. Enter the conversation or par-

ticipate by listening. All are welcome.

**WHEN and WHERE:** Saturday mornings from 9 to 10 am, usually in the downstairs library.

**WHO:** Mort Goren is keeper of the list of session leaders and refreshment providers, announcement maker and general coordinator. Contact him at [torah-study@templemicah.org](mailto:torah-study@templemicah.org), call the office, 202-342-9175 or just show up.

**WHY:** "Torah Study Group is an informal, non-threatening setting for people of all backgrounds to gain insights into our ancient texts," Goren said. "It's also a good way for newcomers to meet Micah members and engage with the temple community." Remarkd another enthusiastic regular, "It's the highlight of my week."

### President's Column FROM PAGE 2 ►

pulpit. The new title, which the congregation will vote on March 22, better reflects his dual roles.

**More change:** For the first time, the temple is looking at how to recognize and honor members while keeping faith with the egalitarianism that has served us well throughout our history. Don't worry—we still won't have plaques and we won't recognize people simply because they make large financial donations. However, we are pondering how best to tell our story, and central to that story are the people who founded and nurtured Micah from its early days in a church in Southwest to today and into the future.

"At 52 years old, Temple Micah is in danger of losing some of its memories and of failing to capture an account of its history," the Member Recognition Task Force wrote in a report to the board. "Most of the founders are dead and those who remember them and the exciting decades following the temple's beginnings are aging rapidly. But nowhere is there official documentation of the people who created Micah and who continue to build the congregation today."

The idea is to remember all congregants who have died and to honor those, living and dead, who have contributed—not money, but ideas and energy, time and commitment—to develop, enhance

and strengthen Micah.

In January, the 12-person task force, co-chaired by Mary Beth Schiffman and Shelley Grossman, presented the board with detailed recommendations:

- To create a permanent, public memorial that records the names of every Temple Micah member who has passed away since the congregation's founding, and to continue to add names in perpetuity. The names would be etched on crystal panels that would be attached to the glass-block columns in the corners of the sanctuary. The task force has ordered a sample panel to display to the congregation.
- To design a memorial book to store the texts of members' reminiscences of loved ones, including remarks made during Shabbat services on their *yahrzeits*.
- To produce a living history that would tell the temple's ongoing story and recognize the people and events that are a part of it. The project would include any number of members, such as *b'nai mitzvah* students, lay leaders and the many congregants who do so much to augment temple life.

Again, none of these projects would have anything to do with wealth or fame. In the case of the memorial, for instance, every member who dies would be listed on a crystal panel, at no cost to the family. This represents a departure from

the more traditional practice of selling plaques and lights on memorial walls. And it does something much more important than raise money. It honors our predecessors and keeps them alive in our hearts. It makes their lives matter, always.

As Rabbi Zemel wrote in a chapter of *May God Remember: Memory and Memorializing in Judaism—Yizkor*, "Forget the names and they are more than dead: they are extinguished—blotted out."

The board voted to approve the member recognition concept, but to seek congregational feedback before taking further action.

The first step is to prepare the memorial panels. Task force members have worked hard to collect the names of every congregant who has passed away. But we want to make sure no one is missing. In the coming months, the task force will circulate the list of names and publish it on the temple website. Please report any omissions or mistakes by emailing [yizkorlist@templemicah.org](mailto:yizkorlist@templemicah.org).

Later this spring, we will display the sample crystal panel on glass blocks at the rear of the sanctuary. Let us know what you think. You will have a chance to discuss all the member recognition proposals at our annual meeting June 7.

And, please, plan to attend the special meeting March 22 to vote on the two rabbis. I hope you will participate fully as we write Temple Micah's next chapter.

## TZEDAKAH

## 50TH ANNIVERSARY FUND

IN MEMORY OF  
Lillian Pose, by William  
and Marilyn Paul  
Ted Schuchat, by Sid and Elka  
Booth, Dan and Else Moskowitz  
Victims of the Paris kosher  
grocery shootings, by  
William and Marilyn Paul

ASSOCIATE RABBI'S  
DISCRETIONARY FUND

IN HONOR OF  
Rabbi Lederman for her support and  
patience, by Norman Blumenfeld

IN MEMORY OF  
Pearl Lazar, by Learita Scott

## BUILDING FUND

Ed and Shelley Grossman  
Fred and Judy Horowitz

IN MEMORY OF  
Daniel Berke, by Debra Berke  
Josie Lipman, by Robert  
Weinstein and Judith Capen  
Ted Schuchat, by Burton Greenstein,  
Beverly and Harlan Sherwat, Robert  
Weinstein and Judith Capen

## ENDOWMENT FUND

IN MEMORY OF  
Richard Levenson, by  
Brenda Levenson  
Ellen Passel, Toby Passel,  
by Jeffrey Passel  
David Queller, by Harriet  
and Randy Tritell  
Samuel Paper, Dorothy Schreck,  
and Rebecca Socolar, by  
Milton and Marlyn Socolar  
Stanton Sender, James Sender,  
Molly Mann, and Minnie  
Tapper, by Michelle Sender  
Ted Schuchat, by Susie and  
Harvey Blumenthal  
Estelle Rogers Weiss, by  
Laurie and Dan Brumberg

## GENERAL FUND

Stuart Brown  
Nancy Piness

IN HONOR OF  
A happy Hanukkah to Gregg and  
Stefanie Rothschild, and their  
children Dylan, Molly, and Carly,  
by Herbert and Marie Rothschild  
Teddy Klaus, by Craig Yokum

IN MEMORY OF  
Dora Apple, by Harriette Kinberg  
Corinne Asher, by David Asher  
Jack Fenton, by Lesley Fenton  
and Jonathan Moreno  
Dr. James D. Finkelstein,  
by Barbara Finkelstein  
Rubin From, by Ginger and Al From

Martha Bradway Fletcher,  
Michael Goodman, by David and  
Johanna Mendelson Forman  
Alfred Goldeen, by David  
and Livia Bardin  
Bill Kupferberg, by David Asher  
Raymond E. Lang, by Patricia Kent  
Josie Lipman, by David Asher,  
Susie and Harvey Blumenthal, Lora  
Ferguson, Seymour and Judy Tabak,  
Edward and Bobbie Wendel  
Shigemitsu Nakashima, by Ellen  
Nakashima and Alan Sipress  
Ted Schuchat, by David Asher,  
Cindy Musoff, Sam Schuchat

## HINENI FUND

IN HONOR OF  
Robin Stein, by Susie and  
Harvey Blumenthal

IN MEMORY OF  
Kirby Capen, by Kit Wheatley  
and Tom Sahagian  
Lee and Ted Cron, by Liz Koozman  
David Queller, by Susie Blumenthal,  
Ed and Shelley Grossman, Eric  
Rosenberg and Jennifer Gruber,  
Learita Scott, Ellen Sommer

KALLEK ADULT EDUCATION  
FUND

IN MEMORY OF  
Max Bender, by Carole Hirschmann

## LIBRARY FUND

IN MEMORY OF  
Benjamin Rigberg, by Katherine Hoyt  
Charlotte Ross, by Robert Ross

## MACHON MICAH FUND

IN HONOR OF  
Dana Herrnstadt, by Harriet  
and Randy Tritell

IN MEMORY OF  
Estelle Rogers Weiss, by  
Sid and Elka Booth

## MICAH COOKS

IN HONOR OF  
Adrienne Umansky, by  
Jeffrey and Bette Doranz

## MICAH HOUSE

Martha and David Adler, Roberta  
Aronson, Diane August, Chris Baden  
Mayer and Joe Mayer, Peggy Banks,  
Evalyn and Joseph Basloe, Tal and  
Irene Basloe Saraf, Iris Barnett,  
Susan Benda, Amy and Joshua  
Berman, Jill and Howard Berman,  
Malcolm Bernhardt, Debbie Billet-  
Roumell, Norman Blumenfeld, Judith  
Bonderman, Sid and Elka Booth, Ted  
Bornstein and Lesley Weiss, Helene  
Boroch, Shellie and Andy Bressler,  
Marcia Brod, Lynn Christensen,  
Robert and Lynn Coffman,

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ►

### Lederman FROM PAGE 6 ►

fit for Micah,” Enda adding that some great rabbis may not be a good fit. Rabbi Lederman was a perfect fit. “The behind-the-curtain Esther was as great as the front-of-the curtain Esther,” Rabbi Zemel said. “Her talents as a worship leader [are well known to the membership] but she is also a great confidante and the chief morale officer on the staff. Our loss is URJ’s gain.”

“Esther made a huge difference in Temple Micah in just the six years she was here,” Enda said. “She accomplished so much—the Listening Campaign and everything that came out of it, for example.”

In 2011, Rabbi Lederman launched the Listening Campaign—one-on-one conversations between members of a leadership group and 180 congregants—to elicit common concerns among members and figure out ways to tackle them. Four common topics emerged: aging, transforming members into a community, interfaith issues and social justice in the wider Washington community.

“The Listening Campaign spawned the Aging Together Team,” said Barbara Diskin, leader of the team. In turn, Aging Together created the popular Lunch & Learn program, among others. “Esther has gone to bat for us on several occasions to make sure our programs could move ahead,” Diskin continued. “She has indeed been a valuable asset. I hope her example of building from the grass roots level can be modeled for years to come at Temple Micah.”

She also took action to make interfaith families feel more at home in the temple community, spurred new social justice efforts and undertook a major outreach program to the 20s-30s generation through the Next Dor program.

“She was unbelievable,” Enda said. “She reached out to a whole new set of people to give them an entry to the temple and Judaism, to get them involved early in their adult lives.”

How did Micah stack up in Rabbi Lederman’s estimation? “Micah surpassed my expectations,” she said. “Micah was true to itself in the

interview process and it has lived up to” the image it presented.

She continued, “We have a beautiful building but it’s not on Park Avenue. We don’t have a lot of money. But we make up for it in vision, in chutzpa. We figure out what needs to be done and we work on it—in social justice, in rethinking religious education for adults and kids.”

The job she’s taking at the URJ will mean leaving the pulpit. “But I’m not done with congregational life,” she said. While her children are small, she needs a job that allows her more time with them, “but I expect to go back to congregational life.”

And she’s not giving up Micah. She and her family will remain temple members. “While I feel very sad about leaving this job, it is tempered by not leaving DC. I will miss working with the staff on a day-to-day basis. They are amazing people to work with.” And of the Micah community: “I will miss being peoples’ rabbi, but I will continue to be their friend.” ●



**Tzedakah FROM PREVIOUS PAGE**

Larry Cooley and Marina Fanning, Alan Cooperman, Sheryl Coppenger, Tina and Michael Coplan, Judith Daniel, Stacy and Rich Davis, Diane Dodge, David Doniger, Robert Dorfman and Celia Shapiro, Samuel Dyer, Miriam Eisenstein, Helen Epps, Lora Ferguson, Andrea Ferster, Dr. Barbara Finkelstein, Roger Friedman, Al and Ginger From, Stanley Frye, Lee Futrovsky and Yael Traum, Roberta and Peter Gluck, Mel Goldberg, Greer and Gerald Goldman, Michael Goldstein and Susan Bales, Roberta and Morton Goren, Todd Goren, Helene and Gene Granof, Burton Greenstein, Genie Grohman, Rachel Gross, Stacey Grundman and Owen Herrnstadt, Jack and Judith Hadley, Skip and Barbara Halpern, Andrea and James Hamos, Ken and Monika Harris, Jacqueline Harwood, Tamar Hendel, Lothar Hennighausen, Herb and Carol Horowitz, Margaret and Paul Isenman, Wendy Jennis and Doug Mishkin, Jessica Kaplan and Joe Youcha, Gladys Kessler, Annette and Bob Klayman, Marilyn Klein, David Kobrin and Diane Berreth, Joel Korn and Susan Bandler, Stephen Kurzman and Patricia Goldman, Ellen Laipson, Andrea LaRue, Michael Leibman, Marc Levy and Valerie Strauss, Hannah and Michael Matthews, Barbara and Al McConagha, Ellen Messer, Harlan Messinger, Judy and Jim Miller, Russell Misheloff, Else and Dan Moskowitz, Ann Nachbar, Bill and Susan Nussbaum, Rob Orwin, Jeff Passel, Sara Puro, Dena Puskin, Clem Rastatter, Arlyn and Jonathan Riskind, Marcus Rosenbaum and Lynn Ingersoll, Eric Rosenberg and Jennifer Gruber, Susan Rubin, Lisa Saks, Trudy and John Saracco, Amy Schussheim, Diana and Robert Seasonwein, Joshua Seidman and Jocelyn Guyer, Katie Sellers, Paul Shapiro, Roger and Marian Sherman, Beverly and Harlan Sherwat, Kenneth Simon, Cathy Sinsheimer, Melinda and Douglas Soffer, Harriett Stonehill, Philip Tabas and Helen Hooper, Seth and Gail Warner, Judy and Doug Warshof, Linda Watts and Debbi Rich, Mark and Cecelia Weinheimer, Bobbie and Ed Wendel, David Wentworth, Kit Wheatley, Bayla White, Louise and Burt Wides, Sheri Zaitz-Blotner and David Blotner, Marjorie Zapruder, Louise and Danny Zemel

## IN HONOR OF

Marvin and Lois Broder, by Ariel Wentworth  
Dana Herrnstadt becoming Bat Mitzvah, by Marsha Semmel  
Our grandkids Sadie Hughes, Hazel and Thea Lutzker, Lucy Rich and Teddy Hughes, by Arnold and Susan Lutzker  
Kate Michel Judson, by Jan Chester and Michael Judson  
The Kessler family, by Edward and Victoria Jaycox  
Jerry Liebenau, by Betsi and Harold Closter

Ann Sablosky, by Richard and Susan Lahne  
Ann Sablosky and Steve Rockower, by Adrienne and David Umansky  
Joshua Seidman and Jocelyn Guyer, by Aaron Seidman  
Dana Slone, for still being a great wife, by Daniel Schwartz  
Janet Steinberg for Hanukkah, by Dan Steinberg  
Betty Ustun, by Jonathan Ustun  
Emily Warheit, Marion Lee McClure and Cora McClure, by Amy Schade  
Louise Wides's birthday, by Susan Steinberg  
Rabbi Danny and Louise Zemel for their friendship and kindness, by Dr. Richard M. Katz and Martha Lessman Katz  
Danny Zemel, rabbi extraordinaire, by Jeffrey and Bette Doranz  
Danny and Louise Zemel, by Pam and Tom Green  
Rabbi Zemel, Rabbi Lederman, Teddy Klaus and Meryl Weiner for what they do for the quality of our services, by Nancy Lang  
Rabbis Zemel, Lederman and Beraha, by Michelle Sender  
Rabbi Zemel's debut in the New York Times magazine, by Ron and Susie Wolfson  
To support Micah House and Temple Micah, by Jon Kaplan  
Our great Micah House Board and all we have accomplished this year, by Ann Sablosky  
The Micah House Board, by Sue Baum  
The important work and mission of Micah House, by Felicia and Louis Kolodner

## IN MEMORY OF

Phyllis Appel Bell, by Harriette Kinberg  
Maggie Dennigen, by Russell and Maggie Kirsch  
Adele Fell, by Milton Socolar  
Harry Gitlitz, by Jonah Gitlitz  
Samuel R. Iker, by Jean M. Iker  
My parents, Pearl and Gene Kaplan, by Jon Kaplan  
Fannie and Moses Kinstein, by Sharon and Joseph Salus  
Minnette Knopman, by Debra Knopman  
Annabelle Kutcher, by Rochelle Green  
Bill Kupferberg, by Jan Greenberg  
David Lerman, by Liz Lerman  
Bob Lewis, by Learita Scott  
Josie Lipman, by Clem Rastatter  
Hortense and Edward Platoff, by Sheila Platoff  
Rhea Rockower, by Betsy and Gene Rockower  
Donald Rothberg, by Lynn Rothberg  
Dr. and Mrs. Simon Russi, by Rosemarie R. Howe  
Richard Wolf, by Muriel Wolf

## MUSIC FUND

Gene and Helene Granof

## IN HONOR OF

Bob Effros' birthday, by Stan and Ronna Foster

Meryl Weiner, Teddy Klaus, the choir and the band, for enhancing services with beautiful music, by Norman Blumenfeld  
Mort and Roberta Goren, by Jeffrey and Bette Doranz  
Teddy Klaus, by Richard Fisch and Susan Alpern Fisch

## IN MEMORY OF

Laurel Bergold, by Eric Rosenberg and Jennifer Gruber  
Chip Broder, by Betsy Broder and David Wentworth  
Bill Kupferberg, by Susie Blumenthal, Sid and Elka Booth, David Diskin, Eric Rosenberg and Jennifer Gruber, Ellen Sommer  
Josie Lipman, by Sid and Elka Booth, Arthur and Carol Freeman, Ed and Shelley Grossman, Joan and Jack Schwarz, Ellen Sommer

## NEXT DOR FUND

Dan Barrie and Lauren Bregman

## PRAYERBOOK FUND

## IN HONOR OF

In thanks to Temple Micah, by Janice Meer

## RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Thomas C. Green  
Melanie Nussdorf  
Anonymous

## IN HONOR OF

Don and Nancy Elisburg, by Jeffrey and Bette Doranz

Rabbi Zemel, with thanks, by Frances Dauth  
Rabbi Zemel, for his advice, by Norman Blumenfeld

## IN MEMORY OF

Ted Schuchat, by Robert B. Rackleff  
Etta S. Weisman, by Steven Weisman  
Estelle Rogers Weiss, by David and Barbara Diskin  
Harry and Doris Zemel, by Stuart and Cinda Zemel

## RELIGIOUS OBJECTS FUND

## IN MEMORY OF

Ted Schuchat, by Paul Greenberg and Rick Billingsley

## SOCIAL ACTION FUND

## IN HONOR OF

Thomas C. Green, by Catherine Hirsch

## IN MEMORY OF

Ellen Passel, by Jeffrey Passel

## THE RABBI DANIEL GOLDMAN ZEMEL FUND FOR ISRAEL

## IN HONOR OF

Rabbi Danny and Louise Zemel's leadership of the 2014 Israel trip, by Stan and Ronna Foster

## IN MEMORY OF

Gloria W. Appel, by Betsy Broder and David Wentworth  
Erwin Lehmann, by Richard Lehmann  
Ted Schuchat, by Michelle Sender

**SATURDAY MARCH 21, 2015 6 PM-9:30 PM**  
**To make this event a success, we need you!**  
 Enjoy the social event of the season and help raise much-needed funds for Temple Micah!  
**TICKETS** are \$36 in advance, \$40 at the door  
**for more information visit [templemicah.org](http://templemicah.org)**

# B'NAI MITZVAH



**WESLEY COOPER**  
**MARCH 14 / 23 ADAR**  
**PARENTS:** Debby and Bob Cooper  
**TORAH PORTION:** Vayachel/P'kudei  
**MITZVAH PROJECT:** Wes is collecting gently used sporting equipment to distribute to Washington-area children in need. He welcomes donations of soccer balls, baseball gloves, basketballs or any other sports equipment you no longer need (collection box in the temple lobby until April 1). Wes is working with the organization "Level the Playing Field," which distributes equipment and sponsors sports training for underprivileged children in the metro area.



**SASHA ROSENBAUM**  
**APRIL 11 / 22 NISAN**  
**PARENTS:** Wendy Meltzer and Josh Rosenbaum  
**TORAH PORTION:** Shmini  
**MITZVAH PROJECT:** To be decided



**REBECCA STERN**  
**MARCH 21 / 1 NISAN**  
**PARENTS:** Jamie Gardner and Jonathan Stern  
**TORAH PORTION:** Vayikra  
**MITZVAH PROJECT:** Rebecca will be helping with the challenger division of Northwest Little League. The challenger division allows kids and adults with physical, emotional and intellectual challenges to enjoy playing baseball as much as Rebecca does. Before baseball season starts, Rebecca will help organize the team. Once the season starts, she will serve as a buddy and play baseball with the participants during their Sunday afternoon games.



**KALEO GOLDSTEIN**  
**APRIL 18 / 29 NISAN**  
**PARENTS:** Nani Coloretti and David Goldstein  
**TORAH PORTION:** Tazria/Metzora  
**MITZVAH PROJECT:** Kaleo is collecting gently used toys and books for distribution to local charities. He knows how toys and books can inspire children, and hopes to make a small difference in the lives of youngsters who don't otherwise have access to them.



**BEN SEIDMAN AND LEO SEIDMAN**  
**MARCH 28 / 8 NISAN**  
**PARENTS:** Jocelyn Guyer and Josh Seidman  
**TORAH PORTION:** Tzav  
**MITZVAH PROJECT(S):** To be decided



**ISABELLA ZIV**  
**APRIL 25 / 6 IYYAR**  
**PARENTS:** Blanche and Gil Ziv  
**TORAH PORTION:** Acharei Mot/Kedoshim  
**MITZVAH PROJECT:** Isabella loves helping animal shelters by bringing needed items and playing with the animals, especially the cats. For her Bat Mitzvah year, she also chose to support Martha's Table and will be assisting customers and helping organize merchandise at its retail store.

## CONDOLENCES

The Temple Micah community extends its deepest condolences to:

**JAN GREENBERG** on the passing of her stepfather, Bill Kupferberg

**DAVID FEINMAN** on the passing of his uncle, Morton Feinman

**RUTH SIMON** on the passing of her mother, Josie J. Lipman

**HARRIET TRITELL**, on the passing of her father, David Queller

**DAVID UMANSKY** on the passing of his mother, Dorothy Umansky

**MARTHA WEISS** on the passing of her mother, Estelle Rogers Weiss

**KATHY STRAUSS** on the passing of her mother, Martha Ann La Fleur

**ALAN BURCH** on the passing of his father, George Howard Burch

**BARBARA GREEN** on the passing of her husband, Isaac Green

May their memories be for a blessing.

## MAZAL TOV!

Jocelyn Roberts and Joey Sima on their marriage, December 20

Jonah and Sallie Gitlitz on the birth of their great-granddaughter, Madison Elizabeth Dattaro, January 15

Jessica Jones and Evan Sills on their marriage

Martha and Richard Katz on the birth of their granddaughter, Brynn Hyelin Choi, January 29

TEMPLE MICAH WISHES EVERYONE  
 A HAPPY PASSOVER...

*CHAG SAMEACH!*

## BERAHA'S BLACKBOARD

## WHY I BECAME A RABBI

BY RABBI JOSH BERAHA

It was seven years ago this March that I was accepted to rabbinical school, and since then I have been asked the same question time and time again: "How did you decide you wanted to become a rabbi?" My answer, like my understanding of and relationship to Judaism, develops over time, never resting on one fixed point or mindset, changing shape each time I give it. Right now I'm thinking about my childhood and my first job out of college, and how they shaped my views about the tension between the particular and the universal in Jewish life.

The Lower East Side of my great-grandparents was not the LES of my 20's. The same streets where for a generation Jews wielded pushcarts, made shoes, and mended clothing, and lived, full of hope, in squalid tenement housing, had been replaced by project housing and bodegas where loosie cigarettes

were easy to come by when I started teaching at PS94, a public school on Avenue D for special needs students with behavior problems. Though every once in a while I found myself looking up at the buildings only to find the façade of an old synagogue, there was nothing particularly Jewish about the neighborhood anymore except, of course, its history.

The same was true of my life.

Growing up on the East Side of Providence, RI, everything about my identity was Jewish. All my friends were Jews. All my parents' friends were Jews. And it seemed so easy for us to live as Jews, unquestioningly, in our lovely, insulated community. My family belonged to and regularly attended a Conservative synagogue, and I went to a Jewish day school where I learned *chumash*, *navi* and even a little *pirkei avot*.

When I graduated from college, I believed education was the great equalizer and the means by which good citizens would be created, and I applied to the New York City Teaching Fellows Program, which landed me back in the same neighborhood where so many Jews had started out in the United States—only I was in the middle of a high needs community of largely Hispanic and African American children.

It took me five years of teaching to realize that my universal notions of good citizenship were off, and that it was the particular that brought me strength and meaning. Though I'd spent those five years largely neglecting the practice of religion, I came to realize that it was in fact Judaism that had been grounding me all along, and that the work I was doing was as disconnected from my roots as the Spanish bodega next to the synagogue facade. The calling of the par-



ticular led me to apply to rabbinical school so that I might help create a community that emphasizes the importance of the Jewish particular and the significance of defining oneself in religious terms.

So, what made me decide to be a rabbi? Everything! And right now I seek to bring to my community the sense of majesty I found and continue to find in Judaism. I seek to help find ways for Judaism to define and give shape, meaning and relevance to the lives of Micah members. Heschel wrote about "the inconceivable surprise of living." I traveled far from the comforts of my Conservative Jewish upbringing only to realize that the deepest meaning to be found in this world, that "inconceivable surprise," is to be found in Judaism.

## Micah's Piper Spindle teaches lacrosse to Israeli kids

BY DIANA SEASONWEIN

PIPER SPINDLE LOVES to play lacrosse and to spread that love by teaching it to others. Over winter break, the 13-year-old middle-school student got the chance to do both—in Israel.

The youngest member of the Sticks for Kids program, Spindle joined 20 other girls and 40 boys from across the country for a 10-day trip to Israel to teach lacrosse to 6- to 17-year-old Israeli youth. Each member carried a 50-pound bag of donated lacrosse gear.

In Israel, Spindle taught in Hebrew. Although not initially conversant in Hebrew, she said she picked it up quickly, and found it easy to teach the Israelis the basics.

At the end of the ten days, the American group, wearing Israeli lacrosse uniforms, and the Israeli group went to Belgium where they beat the Belgian National Team!!

Lacrosse is a very demanding and complex sport. One of the requirements for team eligibility is to run a mile in less

than seven minutes. Piper practices all year round, while also playing soccer and maintaining a straight A average. She celebrated her Bat Mitzvah at Temple Micah a year ago.

Spindle has been playing lacrosse since third grade when she was introduced to the sport by her mom, Lindsey, who played the game in high school. She is on the Montgomery County Elite lacrosse team, which played in the regional competition in North Carolina, and placed 4th.

The trip had another important benefit. Lindsey Spindle said she and her husband, David, want Piper to enjoy international experiences, as they have done. (The Spindles met in Japan.) But, she said if she had told Piper she

wanted her to go to Israel to study and learn more about her Jewish heritage, it would have been a non-starter. This program gave Piper a view of Jewish culture in Israel without it being forced on her. ●



# MICAH YOUTH DO MITZVAHS, HELP OUT AND JUST HAVE FUN



Top left: Elias Bender, a Micah teen who participated in Operation Understanding, and Kajuan Willis spoke about the program at a Kabbalat Shabbat service in January.

Above: Machon students worked with the Micah Cooks to bake hundreds of cookies for Hanukkah.

Left: Members of MiTY (the Micah youth group) relax for a group picture during an ice skating party.



2829 WISCONSIN AVENUE, NW  
WASHINGTON, DC 20007-4702

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

DATED MATERIAL

TIME-SENSITIVE MATERIAL

Non-Profit  
Organization  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Washington, DC  
Permit No. 9803