



Vine

FROM RABBI ZEMEL

ON THE PATH TO A SUMMER OF CHANGE AND GROWTH

DEAR FRIENDS,

As I write these words, I am preparing to celebrate the Passover seder. The secret of Jewish life can be found in the details of this holiday's observance.



The seder is about home, family and food. It is about preparation and celebration, ritual and story, song and conversation, freedom and redemption. It is about the mega answer to the question that encompasses all other questions: "Why is this night different?" It is different because we have cleaned, shopped, cooked, prepared and, ultimately, participated in an evening that is unlike any other evening of the entire year. If it's true that God is in the details, then this holiday is sacred like no other, because its details—from the inherited charoset recipe to finding that three-layered matzoh cover—are like those of no other holiday.

Liturgically, we know Passover as "Zman Cheruteinu—The Season of Our Freedom." Passover celebrates our redemption from Egyptian servitude to glorious freedom. God wrought the miracles. We crossed the parted sea and celebrated our deliverance at God's mighty hand.

Passover need not only celebrate great miracles. And redemption and freedom need not only apply to nations, peoples or social movements. I like to think that redemption is also personal. Redemption is about a second, third and fourth chance in life. Redemption comes in individual-size portions as well as societal ones.

Chametz, those forbidden Passover

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NEW BEGINNINGS

Micah Welcomes Rabbi Susan Landau

BY DORIAN FRIEDMAN

NEW BEGINNINGS ARE exalted in Judaism, celebrated by their own holidays, rituals and blessings such as the Shehechiyanu. Temple Micah marks a new beginning of its own as the congregation welcomes Susan Landau as assistant rabbi. Rabbi Landau, who was scheduled to be ordained at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York on May 3, plans to join the congregation later in June.

The Micah leadership and a search committee chose Rabbi Landau after a wide-ranging national search. Members of the congregation affirmed her appointment on March 22.

For her part, Rabbi Landau chose Temple Micah over many impressive alternatives. Key to her decision, she said, was the human dimension. "I felt a real chemistry with Rabbi Zemel and [president] Jodi [Enda] when we first met in Cincinnati this winter," she recalled. Despite the intense pressure during those initial job interviews for nearly every graduating rabbinical student in the country, "I felt immediately at ease and comfortable with them."

Rabbi Zemel echoed the sentiment. "I was deeply taken by her from our very first interview," he writes in his column on this page. Enda agreed, calling Rabbi Landau a "sharp, creative and thoughtful" young woman "who appears destined to become a great rabbi."

Micah's "incredible reputation" was another selling point, Rabbi Landau

said. "Aside from everything I'd already heard about the Micah community, everything I learned about Micah confirmed that its approach is so different and thoughtful, and that really stood out to me." (For another perspective on Temple Micah's national reputation, see Enda's column, page 2.)

The proximity of Washington to her tight-knit family in New York and New England was an added bonus, Rabbi Landau said. Her parents live in Providence, RI (also the hometown of Rabbi Beraha) where she was born and raised. Her sister resides in Brooklyn. She looks forward to regular visits from them and other family members, she said.

Rabbi Landau's route to the pulpit was fairly direct. She enrolled in rabbinical school upon graduation from Brandeis University, where her studies in Sociology, Judaic Studies, and Hebrew Language & Literature helped her decide that "the rabbinate was the right path for me." Before that, she considered becoming a psychologist like her mother and grandfather, or a social worker, or pursuing a nonprofit career. "In the end, being a rabbi is the best of all those things," she said, encompassing "everything that's most important to me about Judaism."

Rabbi Landau's impressive résumé features a deep commitment to supporting aging members of the Jewish community. During her graduate studies, she spent two years working with

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

Vine

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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
vine@templemicah.org
Web: www.templemicah.org

Daniel G. Zemel
RABBI

Esther Lederman
ASSOCIATE RABBI

Josh Beraha
ASSISTANT RABBI, DIRECTOR OF
CONGREGATIONAL LEARNING

Susan Landau
ASSISTANT RABBI

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HOW TEMPLE MICAH BECAME MY JEWISH HOME

By JODI ENDA

The first time I went to Temple Micah, I was pregnant.

Like so many American Jews, I was not involved with organized religion for much of my adult life.



I was too busy with work, with friends—with life.

Mine was a textbook story, the kind you read about in surveys about growing numbers of unaffiliated Jews.

But it didn't start out that way. As a kid, my family was very active in Anshai Emeth, the Reform congregation in Peoria, Ill. My father was on the board for 30 years, including a stint as president. I was president of the temple youth group and spent my high school years traveling to regional conclaves and, eventually, to Israel with NFTY, in those years called the National Federation of Temple Youth.

Then I fell in love with journalism. As a newspaper reporter, I moved from city to city, worked long, unpredictable hours and traveled a fair amount of the time. Although I still treasured Judaism—attending High Holy Day services and seders, sampling various temples and having a Jewish wedding—I never found a spiritual home. Truth be told, I didn't look very hard. I was too busy running down scoops and chasing deadlines.

With a baby on the way, I wanted more. I wanted my daughter to develop strong Jewish roots, to be part of a community and a story that was bigger than herself. I wanted to give her the gift of Judaism.

One Friday night, I wandered into Micah. It was different. Too different, perhaps? I wasn't sure I could get my head around it.

Then I came back. Again. And again. I brought my husband and, a few months later, our baby girl. I recalibrated. I began to realize that different was what I wanted, that, in fact, too much sameness had turned me off.

That wasn't the whole story, of course.

Because it soon became clear to me, as it has to so many of you, that Micah was not only different. It was special.

We joined.

I thought we'd come occasionally. I certainly never dreamed I'd be writing in this space.

So what happened?

I started going to Shabbat services regularly, and taking my baby. I joined Kol Isha, and made friends. I served on a committee and on the Micah House board, then edited the *Vine*.

The place I had joined in order to give my daughter a Jewish home became my Jewish home as well. It gave me something I never even knew I needed and that I'm still not sure I can put into words.

In so many ways, Temple Micah is extraordinary. It is inspiring and joyful, spiritual and intellectual, welcoming, comforting, supportive and—to me, this one is critical—fun.

None of that happens by accident. Fifty-two years ago, Micah's founders fashioned an environment that allowed for experimentation and innovation. Twenty years after that, the temple's leaders came upon just the right person to take the congregation to new heights. In the more than three decades since, Rabbi Zemel has led Micah on a journey that would make it a model for synagogues across the nation. From our worship services to our machon to programs for seniors and young adults, we are forging new paths for 21st-century American Jews.

I've known that for years. But when Rabbi Zemel and I traveled to Cincinnati in February in search of a new assistant rabbi, it smacked me in the face. At the Central Conference of American Rabbis' version of a job fair, I was stunned and very gratified to realize that we really do have a national reputation. Everyone I met—rabbis, temple presidents, rabbinical students—knew of, and marveled at, Temple Micah.

I take pride in being a member of this unusual, special place, and I know many of you do as well. I can't imagine feeling

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Adult B'nai Torah Class Prepares for May Milestone

Editor's Note: This article was submitted by the members of the 2015 B'nai Torah class. They are: Lindsey Bailet, Elizabeth Forgotson Goldberg, Peako Jenkins, Paul Judson, Stephanie Kaufman, Adam Napora, Yolanda Savage-Narva, Linda Schultz, and Paula Wolfson Stevenson. A hearty "mazel tov" to each of them!

CANTOR MERYL WEINER promised us this day would come when our B'nai Torah class gathered for the first time in the fall of 2013. At the time, Saturday, May 16, 2015, seemed a long way off. With most of us learning the aleph bet for the first time, this two-year window was a luxury. But now, as we prepare to stand on the bimah before the congregation this month, we reflect on what a truly inspirational and unexpected journey this class has been for all of us.

In Hebrew, the term "havruta" refers to a "friendship" as well as to the traditional approach to studying Jewish text in pairs. When our class began,

we were largely strangers and many of us were new to the synagogue. Over weekly snacks, we dedicated as much time to our studying as we did to sharing our personal struggles and successes. Looking back, our class organically developed a system of havruta that made reading Hebrew letters, learning how to chant Torah, and dissecting lessons from the Torah a true pleasure.

Our class is quite diverse in terms of age, religious background, and professions. We were attracted to the B'nai Torah class for a number of reasons: some of us converted, others were raised in interfaith homes, while others grew up in a time when women were not invited to the bimah. Our reasons for working toward this milestone at this time were equally varied: some of our classmates wanted to read from the Torah before asking their children to do the same, others wanted to become more involved in the synagogue, and still others wanted their aging relatives

to see them chant Torah.

As the second year of the class picked up momentum, former students would routinely pop their heads in and promise that we would master the trope, the system of cantillation for chanting Torah verses. These words of encouragement, echoed by Weiner's unshaking confidence, were hugely helpful as we struggled to master the many tunes and sing without hesitation in front of our peers.

Beyond the classroom, we have deepened our commitment to our shared community through various mitzvah projects. We provided landscaping and gardening to Micah House, sponsored the Hanukkah oneg, and purchased new High Holy Day machzorim for the congregation. Giving back to the temple and our larger community has added another meaningful dimension to our experience in the B'nai Torah class.

Our class will chant from Leviticus

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MICAH COOKS 20 YEARS FOR TEMPLE MICAH

Micah Cooks would be justified in throwing itself a big birthday party. The temple's in-house catering service turned 20-years-old in April and has a lot to show for those years of cooking. Not only does it cater elegant B'nai Mitzvah luncheons, weddings, dinners and special parties like the B'nai Torah luncheon on May 16, it also does mitzvah projects for the temple.

"These 20 years have been extremely rewarding for us," said Adrienne Umansky, the Cooks chair. "We share our spirituality in the kitchen. We have made many new friends and have intensified our bond with Micah's family and community."

Micah Cooks was born with the building, which opened in 1995 without a kitchen. So Umansky and Judith Capen, a member and one of the building's architects, formed the catering service to raise enough money to install one. Members who liked to cook joined the effort, doing the shopping, cooking, baking, food-styling, flower arranging, decorating, and (yes) cleaning up. When the kitchen was complete the Cooks kept going, funding special projects as well as the relocation and expansion of the kitchen into the building's new addition.

The Cooks will cater one event a month for at least

75 people in the building. It charges market rates, but because this is a temple fundraiser, customers can deduct a portion of the price from their income taxes. Not only do clients get a delicious meal attractively presented for a reasonable price, but they also support the temple and do a mitzvah. And because the Cooks themselves donate most of the food, the group averages an 80 percent "profit" on each event—money which is plowed back into the temple for such items as furniture, the Judaica shop cabinet and mill-work throughout the building.

Currently, Micah Cooks counts 56 members in its



cohort—men and women, married and single, youngsters and not-so-young-sters—and more people are always welcome. Throughout it all, Umansky said, "most Cooks keep volunteering year after year because we enjoy being together, doing a mitzvah and having fun!"

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.

SUNDAY, MAY 3 • 9:30 AM–4:30 PM

Sukkot in Spring

Sukkot in Spring is a volunteer housing rehabilitation program for needy DC residents. Help rehab a house in Southeast Washington, DC. No special skills required. Come for the morning (9:30 am–12:30 pm) or afternoon (1 pm–4:30 pm) or both. Lunch provided. Please RSVP to: sukkotinspring@templemicah.org.

SUNDAY, MAY 10 • 1:30–3 PM

Shiva: Meaning and Practice

Louise Zemel, presenter. Come learn and ask all of your questions at this forum sponsored by the Aging Together Committee and Hineni. Temple Social Hall.

SUNDAY, MAY 17 • 10 AM–12:30 PM

"People of the Book" Fair

See page 12 for details

SATURDAY, MAY 23 • 6:30 PM

Erev Shavuot: A Festival of Dangerous Ideas

Cheesecake oneg at 6:30 pm; service at 7 pm. See page 9 for details.

FRIDAY, JUNE 5 • 6 PM

Kabbalat Shabbat Service in honor of Teddy Klaus

Join us to thank Klaus for his 30 years as Music Director at Temple Micah. With the Youth Choir. Oneg at 6 pm; service at 6:30 pm.

SUNDAY, JUNE 7 • 10 AM

Temple Micah Annual Membership Meeting

Agenda includes remarks from the rabbis and the president, the treasurer's report, followed by the election of new board members. See the temple website for all the details.

FRIDAY, JUNE 12 • 6 PM

Kabbalat Shabbat Service in honor of Rabbi Esther Lederman

Join us at a special service to thank and bid shalom to Rabbi Lederman. Oneg at 6 pm; service at 6:30 pm.

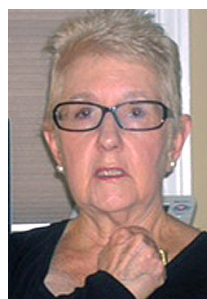
INTERESTING SPEAKERS!

Temple Micah features two monthly lecture series—on Sunday morning and Wednesday noon. The Sunday series is in summer recess and resumes in the fall; Wednesday's Lunch & Learn program continues this summer. 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 Nancy Raskin, lunchandlearn@templemicah.org, or call the temple office, 202-342-9175, for details.



May 13 – Leslie Sewell, on "Government Girls of World War II."

During a long career as a journalist, temple member Leslie Sewell realized the short shrift given to women's contributions to important historical events. When Sewell left NBC News a decade ago, she formed a film production company called The History Project. One of her films was the documentary "Government Girls of World War II," which explores the contributions women made to the war effort. Sewell will describe the making of the film and show a portion of it.



June 10 – Cindy Aron, on "American Art/American History."

A longtime professor of history at the University of Virginia, Micah member Cindy Aron now serves as a docent at the Smithsonian American Art Museum. In this presentation she will combine her longstanding professional interest in American history with her new-found passion for American art. Paintings and sculpture can be just as revealing as diaries, letters, and official papers. The group will look at key works of art—produced between the late eighteenth and the late twentieth century—from the Smithsonian's collection. By unpacking these works we can uncover the multitude of stories that comprise our history.

THANKS TO THE SPRING AUCTION TEAM!

The 2015 Spring Auction was a great success, raising nearly \$80,000 to support programs for children and adults at Temple Micah and in the larger Jewish community, as well as our charitable activities serving needy families in the DC area.

A heartfelt "thank you" to the many volunteers who solicited and donated gifts, set up, cleaned up, checked in, checked out, and otherwise helped make this year's event possible.

The Lesson of Asking for Help

When Rabbi Lynne Landsberg, a temple member, fell into a coma following a devastating car accident 16 years ago, volunteers from Hineni, the temple's helping group, delivered weekly Shabbat meals to her family. The meals continued for the six weeks Rabbi Landsberg remained in the coma, the four months she remained in the hospital and for weeks after she returned home.

Rabbi Landsberg reflected with gratitude on that period of assistance, but she expressed concern that other Micah members do not receive similar loving help due to a misunderstanding that often gets in the way. "People think you have to be in a coma to receive help," she said. Bringing perspective to the perceived hurdles, she explained, "Micah members who are seriously ill may not be able to ask for help. Others who are less seriously ill don't want to ask for help because they don't want to appear needy and lacking in independence. It is up to family members, neighbors and temple members to let

Hineni know as soon as possible when a member of the Temple Micah family needs assistance."

As a result of her accident, Rabbi Landsberg had to re-learn the tasks of everyday life. Among all the lessons, she discovered, "asking for help was one of the most important things I learned." She found that receiving help proved to be a win-win. "It introduced me to people I never would have met," she said, adding, "One of the best things I learned was to give other people the chance to show their humanity."

Hineni (Hebrew for "here I am") offers temple members the same opportunities. Volunteers stand ready to assist with meals following injuries, surgery, or during illness, rides to the doctor and to temple services or events, or just a friendly phone call or visit, among other services. Don't hesitate to allow others the mitzvah of helping you, a friend, or a family member.

Please contact hineni@templemicah.org, or call the temple office to connect with Hineni.

Another Micah Student Goes to Israel: Sarah Goldberg

BY DIANA SEASONWEIN

"YOU'RE CRAZY TO be going to Israel!" Sarah Goldberg's friends exclaimed last summer when rockets from Gaza were falling on the country. In late August, Sarah, an 11th-grader and a Micah member, went to Israel for a semester with the NFTY Eisendrath International Exchange High School in Israel program. She returned to Washington in December.

The program for 10th to 12th-graders was based at Kibbutz Tzuba, not far from Jerusalem in the Judean Hills. Sarah hung out with Israeli kids on the kibbutz, where she was able to use the Hebrew that she was learning through the program. Taking Hebrew was fun, but she

was told that she was speaking too politely rather than adopting the assertive style of native Israelis.

Two or three times a week her class took field trips all over Israel to learn about the nation's history. They hiked, rode bicycles and camels, and did their homework on the bus back to the kibbutz. In addition to Jewish history, they learned about Christianity and Islam.

One highlight of the trip for Sarah was attending the first Bat Mitzvah ceremony since the 1980s at the Western Wall, led by the organization Women of the Wall. Women haven't been allowed to read from the Torah at the Wall, but the

organization smuggled in a very small Torah scroll for the Bat Mitzvah, an Israeli girl, to read.

Sarah's mother, Kirsten Goldberg, visited during the program's "Parents' Pilgrimage." The teens and their parents went to Jerusalem several times, Tel Aviv and the first established kibbutz near Lake Kinneret. Parents also attended a Hebrew class, Israeli history classes, and religious services led by the students.

Other experiences enjoyed by the students included visits to Warsaw, Cracow and Lublin and retracing the route to the Warsaw Ghetto. After the trip to Poland, the class spent a week in Gadna,

an Israel Defense Forces orientation, which Israeli high school students are required to take. The American students donned Israeli military uniforms. Alongside the Israeli students, they crawled in the dirt, participated in army training games, ate army food, and learned how to shoot an M-16 rifle in target practice.

Sarah often gets asked how the trip has changed her. She says that before the trip she felt less independent, just doing what her friends were doing. She wanted to do something different and went on this trip without knowing anyone.

The entire experience

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 ►

Joshua Fixler Joins Micah for Summer

By JEFFREY P. COHN

TEMPLE MICAH MEMBERS, please welcome Joshua Fixler! Fixler joins the congregation on June 1 as this summer's rabbinical intern. For the next seven weeks, he will assist Rabbis Zemel, Beraha and Landau in leading services and shadow them to learn what their typical day is like.

Fixler, 30, has just completed his third year as a rabbinical student at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York. A 2007 graduate of the University of Maryland, Fixler has served previously as a rabbinical intern at synagogues in High Point, N.C. and Denver, Colo., his home town. He also worked as an

assistant director for education and for youth at Temple B'nai Shalom in Fairfax Station, Va.

Beyond his studies and synagogue duties, Fixler has worked actively on behalf of Judaism and social justice. He spent two years with the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, an interfaith social justice organization in Washington, DC. He has also volunteered

at Rabbis without Borders and the Jewish Organizing Institute. And rounding out

his impressive resume, Fixler has participated in several leadership training programs, including the Wexner Graduate Fellowship program, the Tisch Rabbinical Fellowship

and the Be Wise Fellowship in Jewish Entrepreneurship. Of all the Reform

synagogues in this country, why was Fixler interested in Temple Micah? "I had heard a lot about how innovative Micah was," he replied. "I wanted to be a part of that. I wanted to see for myself why Micah is perceived as a special place. I wanted to see what daily life was like in a forward-thinking synagogue."

Fixler describes himself as an enthusiastic Jew who grew up in an enthusiastically Jewish home. Two other family members had gone to rabbinical school. "Being a rabbi combines everything I was ever interested in doing," he concludes. "I'm excited to get started." ●



Landau FROM PAGE 1 ►

Jewish Home Lifecare, a network of three nursing homes in Manhattan, the Bronx and Mamaroneck, NY, which offer a complete spectrum of elder care services. In weekly chaplaincy visits, she socialized with and counseled the residents, led Shabbat services and holiday gatherings, and more. "I've always felt a special connection to this population, and this was a really powerful part of my rabbinical training," she said.

What else does Rabbi Landau want Micah members to know about her? "I

have a musical theater and gospel choir background, which is kind of different for a rabbi!" She also said she loves to bake, adores virtually any flavor of ice cream, and is learning to play guitar. Asked the requisite Micah question about team sports allegiances, she confessed "that I'm somewhat sports illiterate." Pressed further, she admitted that she "learned the Duke University fight song before my ABC's" from her parents, both loyal alumni. (Apologies to Rabbi Beraha, Caitlin Brazner, and any other loyal Wisconsin Badgers on the Micah staff!)

More than anything, however, Rabbi Landau wanted members to know "how honored and excited I am to become a part of the Micah community. From the start, Temple Micah stood out to me as a first choice. Since then, I've enjoyed getting to know the community in a more personal way. Even the way in which we have been planning for the future together has already felt so warm and respectful—it has only made me more excited to join you soon!" She concluded, "I am so excited to join your vibrant community and to start my rabbinic in DC." ●

B'nai Torah FROM PAGE 3 ►

chapter 25 (Parshat B'har). This portion provides clear instructions on when to give the land and yourself a year of rest. It delineates responsibility for assisting kin and the wider community experiencing financial difficulty and lays down rules for treating the land and your peers with respect. In line with the tradition of havruta, we taught each other the meaning behind

our Torah verses, referencing Torah commentary and modern day laws with roots based in this portion. We are proud to chant Parshat B'har for the congregation.

We hope you will join us in celebration on this important Saturday morning as we are called to the Torah. As usual, Shabbat services begin at 10:15 a.m. and will be followed by a Kiddush luncheon catered by Micah Cooks.

The service will also be live streamed and can be accessed from the Micah homepage.

Lastly, we encourage any adults interested in learning to read from the Torah to consider enrolling in the new B'nai Torah class, starting this fall. We promise to assure the next class that under Meryl's excellent tutelage, it is more than possible to learn how to chant Torah. ●

REMEMBERING DEPARTED LOVED ONES—YOU CAN HELP

Temple Micah has posted on the website a Yizkor list of those who were members on the date of their death by the year of their death.

Making this list accurate is very important. Please examine

the list at www.templemicah.org and send any corrections—missing names, incorrect spelling or usage (i.e., middle name or initial), missing or incorrect year of death—to yizkorlist@templemicah.org.

Rabbi's Message FROM PAGE 1 ►

leavened foods, can also refer to the chametz of our souls. It holds us back from being the individuals we wish to be. Passover, the season of redemption, can be the time we turn things around and forge a new trail.

As you read these words, we will be walking the path of that very trail, the counting of the omer. Counting days is our Jewish way of traveling from the sea of redemption toward Sinai's new vision of possibility. We know that real redemption cannot happen overnight. The omer brings us from Passover to Shavuot, zman matan Torateinu, the season in which we received the Torah and Sinai's revelation of new, previously undreamt, horizons and possibilities.

Shavuot brings purpose to Passover's freedom. We rejoiced that we had not only freedom, but also mitzvot—obligations to each other, to the world, to God. Similarly, personal redemption can require finding a new direction, new sources of meaning and new Torah by which to live.

At Micah, we celebrate Shavuot with

our Festival of Dangerous Ideas at services Saturday evening, May 23 (see page 9). Our ancestors' revelation that there is an invisible God served through the moral deed—was the most radical idea of the ancient world. It changed all of human history. Shavuot gives us an opportunity to learn from their ancient example and push the limit on new ways to recreate our lives, our communities and our world.

After Sinai, Israel wandered in the wilderness. Temple Micah has no wilderness-wandering in our future plan. We eagerly anticipate getting to know Rabbi Susan Landau, who is joining us as an assistant rabbi this summer. I was deeply taken by her from our very first interview. With her, we will continue to learn and grow as she begins her rabbinic career and shapes her own dangerous ideas for the American Jewish future. I am very excited about the days ahead.

We also must pause for a very difficult goodbye. Even as this season has us celebrating Torah, we are saying "shalom" to Rabbi Lederman, who embodies the rabbinic aspiration to be a living Torah. She has been an outstanding teacher and leader—and more—for us these last six years, an

inspiring role model. Rabbi Lederman has shared with us her moral conscience, passion for justice, prayer charisma, supportive wisdom and so much more.

I am fond of saying that any synagogue has two parts, the front of the curtain and what lies behind. There is the public role that the community sees and the day-to-day work of the office and staff—the planning, thinking and doing. Backstage, Rabbi Lederman has been my right arm, my trusted friend, my confidant and my very supportive, wise counsel. To say that she will be missed does not begin to capture who and what she has given us behind the curtain.

I am truly grateful that we are only saying goodbye in one sense. Rabbi Lederman and her family will remain in Washington, so she will shift into a new role at Micah—a trusted, valued member of our community. Finally, we wish her much success in her new position as director of Communities of Practice with the Union for Reform Judaism.

Israel travels on. Micah travels on. We all enter a summer of change and growth. Shalom,
Rabbi Daniel G. Zemel

President's Column FROM PAGE 2 ►

this way about another synagogue. I can't imagine belonging to another synagogue.

Sometimes it feels as if all the fantastic things that take place at Micah occur almost magically. In reality, they are the result of an inordinate amount of planning, thinking, creating and very hard work by a most amazing staff. Rabbi Zemel is a visionary thinker, for sure, but he has a lot of help both contemplating and implementing new ideas. Rabbi Lederman has been his sounding board for six years, and has invigorated Micah with listening campaigns and Next Dor. In less than a year, Rabbi Beraha has breathed new life into the machon, our groundbreaking education system, and brought even more energy to our already lively services.

Together, Cantor Meryl Weiner and Music Director Teddy Klaus lead us in

songs that are both uplifting and soulful and that add beauty and depth to our worship experience.

Those are the faces you see on the bimah. There also are many people behind the scenes, dedicated staffers who simply make the temple work. Executive Director Rachel Gross is an administrator extraordinaire who somehow manages to organize a temple that prides itself on being messy. Shula Cooper oversees Hebrew education, Vanessa Harper helps run the machon and Caitlin Brazner works with our teens. Jeannelle D'Isa, Kelley Kidd and Rhiannon Walsh round out the office staff, helping with administration, communications and bookkeeping, respectively. Josue Portillo makes sure our building is clean and that every room and event is set up well and on time. And then there are our teachers, who are too numerous to name.

Running the temple is a team activity.

It requires not only top-notch clergy and other staff, but thoughtful, imaginative, active members who generate ideas and work hard to see them through. Micah wouldn't be Micah without you.

All this great stuff is expensive. So I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your help, both in terms of annual pledges and other financial gifts to the temple. Without the generosity of our members, Temple Micah would not be the innovative, forward-looking place that has attracted each one of us.

Perhaps it wouldn't be different from anyplace else. In which case, it likely wouldn't be my Jewish home. Maybe it wouldn't be yours, either.

Editor's Note: In the March/April issue of the Vine, we misspelled the name of Elias Benda, a Micah teen who is active in Operation Underground. We regret the error.

Wise Aging: "New Possibilities," Interesting Classes Debut in Fall

By JEFFREY P. COHN



TEMPLE MICAH'S WISE AGING program has earned enthusiastic reviews in its first year. Now, it is poised to reach a broader audience, thanks in part to a \$2,500 grant received recently from the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington. The funds will help pay for instructors from the Institute for Jewish Spirituality in New York—which developed the Wise Aging curriculum—to come to Washington and train local facilitators, who will then be qualified to lead future Wise Aging classes.

The first training session will be held May 3 and 4 at the Washington Hebrew Congregation, and is expected to draw some 36 participants from area synagogues and Jewish organizations. The five

Micah members attending are Jane Kerschner, Francie Schwartz, Herb Schwartz, Harriett Stonehill and Peg Blechman. They will then lead Wise Aging groups of 10-12 participants each at Temple Micah starting in the fall.

The Wise Aging program in the Washington, DC area is a collaboration between Temple Micah, Temple Shalom, Adas Israel, Adat Shalom, Temple Beth Ami, Temple Rodef Shalom and Washington Hebrew, plus the Jewish Social Services Agency. It cuts across Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist and other denominational lines, notes Harriette Kinberg, who leads the effort. "It is unusual [among Jewish groups] to have so many working

together," she said. "We are eager to share concepts, find out what works and support one another's Wise Aging programs."

At Micah, the initiative is part of the temple's larger Aging Together program chaired by Barbara Diskin. Aging Together sponsors Micah's popular Lunch & Learn sessions, and other events throughout the year, offering diverse programming to the estimated one-third of Micah members who are now age 60 or older. One upcoming event of interest to many: A conversation about "The Meaning and Practice of Shiva," with Louise Zemel, from 1:30 to 3 p.m. on May 10.

The goal of Wise Aging, says Kinberg, is "to guide participants through

reflective work that enables them to come to new understandings about their lives, their selves, and their values." Topics in the Wise Aging curriculum include exploring this stage of life; becoming one's authentic self; a life review; relationship to one's body; revitalizing and nourishing healthy relationships, cultivating qualities of soul; practicing forgiveness; learning to live with loss, change, and death; creating relevant rituals; cultivating wisdom; and leaving a legacy. The aim is to help participants replace a fear of aging with a new sense of possibilities.

To learn more about Wise Aging at Temple Micah, please visit the temple's website (under "Groups") or contact Harriette Kinberg at wiseaging@templemicah.org. ●

Goldberg FROM PAGE 5 ►

was wonderful, and at the airport, it was painful to part and to say goodbye to the Israeli counselors. Since she returned home, some of Sarah's peers have come to Washington to lobby at the Religious Action Center, and she has been able to reunite with them.

The program showed Sarah what she's truly capable of, said Sarah's mom. "Sarah approached the idea of spending a semester in Israel with a great sense of adventure, and that spirit carried her through the tough times of missing her friends and her school in D.C. She participated in everything, made wonderful friends, learned more than she probably expected, and came back with a broader understanding of the world than when she left."

The NFTY-EIE program staff in New York and Israel, and the teachers and counselors were terrific to work with, and kept in close communication

with parents, including weekly emails from the head of the school, Baruch Kraus. "We had no concerns about Sarah's safety, because they took great care with the students, particularly when they went on field trips," Kirsten Goldberg said.

Both Sarah and her mother highly recommend this program, and both of

them would be happy to speak with other teens and their parents. ●

Editor's Note: In the March/April edition of the Vine, we profiled another Micah student's recent adventures in Israel. The story on Piper Spindle incorrectly identified the name of her program. It is the Israel Lacrosse Association.

REMINDERS!

► **TEMPLE MICAH 2015 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**
SUNDAY, JUNE 7, 2015 at 10 am in the Social Hall

► **TWO SPECIAL SHABBAT SERVICES**

Join us to honor two of Temple Micah's all-time favorite people!

FRIDAY, JUNE 5

Honoring 30 Years of Music Director Teddy Klaus

Oneg at 6 pm; service at 6:30 pm

FRIDAY, JUNE 12

Honoring and Thanking Rabbi Esther Lederman

Oneg at 6 pm; service at 6:30 pm

Shavuot: Dangerous Ideas II

At Micah, Shavuot is a lot more than cheesecake (the favorite treat to comply with the tradition to eat dairy foods on the holiday).

For the second year, the erev Shavuot service on Saturday, May 23, at 6:30 pm, will be devoted to a Festival of Dangerous Ideas. Dangerous ideas are those that break new ground, shake up the world and take us out of our comfort zone. As Rabbi Zemel has said, “the Jewish world today is sorely in need of ideas.”

Why Shavuot? Shavuot celebrates the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai, the introduction of one of the most dangerous ideas of all time—one God who is served through dedication and adherence to a moral code.

Like last year, three speakers will explain

their dangerous ideas. All three are temple members and active Jewishly, but they represent different generations and different perspectives. Sarah Feuer, who grew up at Micah, has a PhD in Mideast Studies and works as a fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. She is an expert on secularization in the Muslim world. David Ebenbach, a relatively new member, is an essayist, poet and writer of fiction. He and his wife, Rabbi Rachel Gartner, are the parents of a young son. Harold Sharlin, a long-time member, is a retired professor of the history of science, the impetus behind Micah's Bagels and Tefillin group for seniors, and, as Rabbi Zemel said, “the world champion of dangerous ideas.”

P.S. There will be cheesecake, too.

TZEDAKAH

50TH ANNIVERSARY FUND

Jeffrey Cohn

IN MEMORY OF

Walter B. Bogart, by Martin and Deborah Zoltick

ASSOCIATE RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

IN MEMORY OF

Betsy Kanarek, Russel Scott, by Learita Scott

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IN HONOR OF

Meryl Weiner's new grandson, Menachem Yisrael, by Betsy Broder and David Wentworth

IN MEMORY OF

Rose Herschkovitz, by Brenda Levenson
Dorothy Umansky, by Michelle Sender

GENERAL FUND

IN HONOR OF

Ella Chotiner becoming Bat Mitzvah, by Alan and Jannet Carpien

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Isaac Green, by Judith Capen and Robert Weinstein
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HINENI FUND

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Jonah and Sallie Gitlitz' great-granddaughter, Madison Elizabeth Dattaro, by Kathy Spiegel and Richard Fitz

IN MEMORY OF

Donald Miller, by Miriam Miller

LANDSCAPE FUND

IN MEMORY OF

Minnie Bloom Odoroff and Jerry Bloom, by Elizabeth Odoroff

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Dorothy Umansky, by Kathy Spiegel and Richard Fitz, Bob Dorfman and Celia Shapiro

MICAH HOUSE

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Todd Goren
Mary Hollis
Nancy Piness
Stan and Kathy Soloway
Gail Zweibel

IN HONOR OF

Sarah Margalit LaRue Schwartz becoming Bat Mitzvah, by Marsha Semmel

IN MEMORY OF

Bob Nielsen, by Geri Nielsen
Leon Passel, by Holly Hexter

MUSIC FUND

IN HONOR OF

Meryl Weiner's new grandson, Menachem Yisrael, by Trish Kent, Ellen Sommer, Kathy Spiegel and Richard Fitz

IN MEMORY OF

Abe Schwartz, by Rabbi Herbert Schwartz
Frederic Sugarman, by Carole Sugarman

PRAYERBOOK FUND

IN MEMORY OF

Dorothy Umansky, by Beverly and Harlan Sherwat

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

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Lillie Page, by Bill Page

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Isaac Green, by Learita Scott
Ruth Halpern, by Barbara and Skip Halpern
Milton Levy, by Diane Levy
Dorothy Umansky, by Susie and Harvey Blumenthal, Arlene Brown and Gene Bialek, Bruce Rinaldi and Karen Zizmor

RABBI BERAHA'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

IN HONOR OF

Roberta and Peter Gluck's new granddaughter, Emma, by Ronna and Stan Foster

SOCIAL ACTION FUND

Florence and Morton Bahr

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Bobbie Landsberg, by Rabbi Lynne Landsberg and Dennis Ward
Dorothy Umansky, by Larry Bachorik and Gail Povar

THE RABBI DANIEL GOLDMAN ZEMEL FUND FOR ISRAEL

IN MEMORY OF

Dorothy Umansky, by Cecelia and Mark Weinheimer

B'NAI MITZVAH



GRAHAM WILDER

MAY 2 / 13 IYYAR

PARENTS: Aurie Hall and Marcy Wilder

TORAH PORTION: Emor

MITZVAH PROJECT: Graham is working with City Dogs Rescue, which saves dogs from overcrowded and kill shelters and provides them with loving homes. Graham is volunteering at adoption events, helping connect dogs with new owners and happy homes. He's hoping to accompany staff on a rescue mission, as well.



LOUISA SPECTOR

MAY 9 / 20 IYYAR

PARENTS: Jeffrey Spector, Molly Spector

TORAH PORTION: B'har

MITZVAH PROJECT: Louisa's love of preserving the environment and her Torah portion, which is focused on sharing the earth's resources, guided her mitzvah project. She has organized several grassroots cleanup efforts with classmates in and around her urban neighborhood. They are collecting litter from sidewalks and streets and recycling what they can.



BENJAMIN MORAN

MAY 30 / 12 SIVAN

PARENTS: Heather and Sean Moran

TORAH PORTION: Nasso

MITZVAH PROJECT: Ben is helping organize GIGS Givers, a concert series for youth-oriented community organizations around Washington, DC, with the aim of spreading a love of music to kids at an early age.



SAMANTHA STRAUSS

JUNE 6 / 19 SIVAN

PARENTS: Kathy and Paul Strauss

TORAH PORTION: Beha'alotcha

MITZVAH PROJECT: To be decided



AVIVA ROSENBAUM

JUNE 13 / 26 SIVAN

PARENTS: Benjamin Rosenbaum and Esther Bieri

TORAH PORTION: Sh'lach L'cha

MITZVAH PROJECT: To be decided

Editor's Note: In the March/April edition of the Vine, we congratulated Kaleo Goldstein on becoming a bar mitzvah on April 18. Kaleo's full last name is Goldstein-Coloretti. We regret the error.

MAZAL TOV!

Emily Aronson, daughter of Roberta Aronson and Joel Aronson, on her acceptance to rabbinical school

Rabbi Josh and Nani Beraha on the birth of their nephews, Samson and Levi

Roberta and Peter Gluck on the birth of their granddaughter, Emma Olivia Gluck

Rachel Gross and Doug Taphouse on their engagement

Wayne and Karen Saxe on the naming of their daughter, Adele Saxe

Jeanne Mallett on the birth of her great nephew, Jacob Stanley Orlin

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Rebekah and Ian Douglas
Lynda Mulhauser

CONDOLENCES

The Temple Micah community extends its deepest condolences to:

DEBBY KANTER AND TEDDY KLAUS, on the passing of their brother-in-law, Bo Cehelyk

DANIEL MACH, on the passing of his mother, Louise Mach

PETER MAIER, on the passing of his sister, Marion Maier Galant

DENNIS WARD, on the passing of his mother, Dorothy Ward

EVELYN SAHR AND DAVID SAHR, on the passing of their father, Morris Gallup Sahr

ROB SUGAR, on the passing of his mother, Thelma Sugar

May their memories be for a blessing.

BERAHA'S BLACKBOARD

HOW TENSION MOVES US FORWARD

BY RABBI JOSH BERAHA

If there is one word I would choose to describe the Jewish experience, from our desert-wandering days to the present, it is tension. Every period of Jewish history can be seen through the lens of tension, various forces pulling us in multiple directions. To name but a few examples: The Pharisees and Sadducees, Hillel and Shamai, the Karaites and Anti-Karaites, Ashkenaz and Sephard, Cultural Zionism and Religious Zionism (and all the other Zionisms in between), Reform and Orthodox (and all the other Jewish denominations), religiosity and secularism, tradition and modernity. The list is lengthy and complicated, and there are always more than two mechanisms at play.

Tension defines our people—today as well as in the past—so it should not have surprised me, although it did, that my first year at Temple Micah was full of tension.

The late psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankel argues that tension gives our lives significance. "I consider it a dangerous misconception of mental hygiene," he writes in his famous memoir *Man's Search for Meaning*, "to assume that

what man needs in the first place is equilibrium... What man actually needs is not a tensionless state but rather the striving and struggling for a worthwhile goal, a freely chosen task. What he needs is not the discharge of tension at any cost but the call of a potential meaning waiting to be fulfilled by him."

Frankel's claim is similar to new research on what has become known as the study of "optimal experience." Studies in this field attempt to describe what is at play when people are their happiest. Research shows that we are happiest in a state of flow, which psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (good luck pronouncing that!) describes as "the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it." Taken together, Frankel's and Csikszentmihalyi's ideas suggest that our lives gain meaning to the extent that we fully immerse ourselves in complex endeavors.

As I've struggled to find my rhythm this year as a new rabbi, as a newly minted

professional Jewish educator and as a new resident of Washington, D.C., these perspectives, as well as the Jewish experience of living with binary forces pulling in opposite directions, ring loudly. Our lives as Jews—our lives as humans—are complicated because we often find ourselves stuck in situations in which there are no obvious solutions. But as I'm coming to learn, it is exactly that tension that makes life worth living—that gives meaning and purpose to our everyday.

As I look ahead to my second year in the rabbinate and at Temple Micah, part of me desires a simpler year than the first. Often times on my walk home from work I think to myself, "Next year it'll be less complicated! Next year I'll understand how all this is supposed to work!" But at the same moment those feelings enter my mind I try to remind myself of the words of one of my teachers, Rabbi Sheila Peltz Weinberg: "Moments of constrictions are not separate from moments of expansion. Down is revealed as a ramp for up." I should pray not for "a tensionless state," as Frankel would put it, but "for a worthwhile goal," for through struggle I



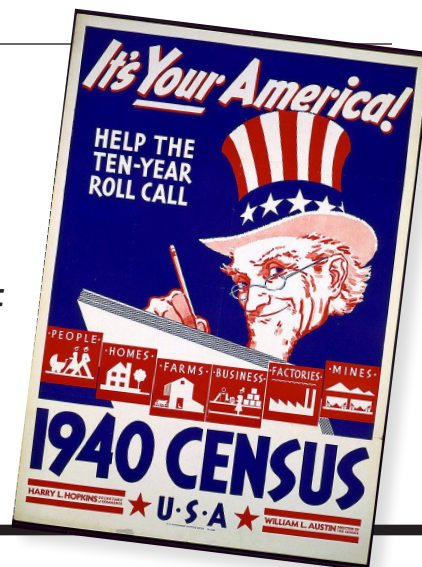
will find flow.

This is the wisdom we find in the end of the Passover seder when we declare, "Next Year in Jerusalem," or at the end of a service when in the Aleinu prayer we sing, "On that day, Adonai will be one, and God's Name will be one." We openly make these declarations fully knowing that next year we will probably not be in Jerusalem and that the world is far from being united in worshipping one God. Through the ages, Jews have managed to hold conflicting ideas simultaneously. This heritage enables us to overcome the seeming conflict and find relevance in our lives and in our religion.

The holiday of Shavuot is upon us. As we prepare to engage in the study of Torah, may we remember that life is lived to its fullest when tensions are highest. God never intended for this to be easy. Surround yourself with complex ideas, with difficult tasks, for as Frankel teaches, tension offers "potential meaning waiting to be fulfilled."

BORN IN 1940? STEP RIGHT UP!

Micah's 1940 cohort—members who were born in 1940—will celebrate their Diamond Jubilee by leading the Shabbat morning service on Saturday, Aug. 8. To read a prayer, recite a poem, chant Haftara, give a drash, or take an active part of any kind, please contact the organizers at 1940@templemicah.org. If you wish to remain anonymous, please come anyway. We won't tell.



ANNUAL MICAH PEOPLE OF THE BOOK FAIR

Celebrate our love of books and the last day of the Machon Micah year at the *People of the Book* Fair on Sunday, May 17, from 10 am to 12:30 pm. The celebrated featured speakers are:

- Jake Tapper, CNN's chief Washington correspondent, anchor of "The Lead with Jake Tapper" and Micah member, shares his bestselling book, *The Outpost: An Untold Story of American Valor*
- Katy Kelly, author of the popular *Lucy Rose* and *Melonhead* series
- Laura Krauss Melmed, author of many beloved books for young children, including *I Love You As Much...* and *The Rainbabies*

Plus book exchange, moon bounce and food trucks! And lots of fun.

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 are some recent acquisitions, including many classic texts generously donated by Micah member Gerald Liebenau.

Two Types of Faith, by Martin Buber

The Jewish Expression, by Judah Goldin (editor)

Studies in Judaism, by Solomon Schechter

Great Jewish Thinkers of the Twentieth Century, by Simon Noveck (editor)

The Living Talmud: The Wisdom of the Fathers, by Judah Goldin

Paths to Jewish Belief, by Emil Fackenheim

After Auschwitz: Radical Theology and Contemporary Judaism, by Richard Rubenstein

Aspects of Rabbinic Theology, by Solomon Schechter

The People of the Book, by Samuel Heilman

Explaining Reform Judaism, by Eugene Borowitz and Naomi Patz

The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism, by Martin Buber

When Night Fell: An Anthology of Holocaust Short Stories, by Linda and Marc Raphael (editors)

A Holocaust Reader, by Lucy Dawidowicz

Israel: State of Hope, by Kurt Schubert

Flight into Egypt, by Amos Elon



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