



# Time

## FROM RABBI ZEMEL

### MAKE MICAH THE PLACE TO BECOME OUR BEST SELVES

DEAR FRIENDS,

Nietzsche first told us God was dead in 1882. That was only the beginning. In his brilliant 1999 book, *The Hungry Soul*, Leon Kass captured more than 100 years of modernity when he declared, "The Gods have all disappeared." Now, Terry Eagleton writes in *Culture and the Death of God* that "the latter days of the twentieth century will be seen as the time when the deity was finally put to death." We might say that it took about 130 years for God to fully pass from the scene.



For many moderns, the death of God strips us of the ability to believe in a deity who issues commands (mitzvot), responds to prayer, enters history and does real things that we experience. In other words, for most of us living in the post-Enlightenment West, God parts no waters, sends no floods and causes no suns to stand still.

But Nietzsche, Kass, Eagleton and many other thinkers are on to much more than this when they say that God is dead. Kass and Eagleton, for example, are referring to the loss of the ability to believe in anything, to commit to anything, to hand oneself over to anything and live one's life bound by something greater than the self. There is no sacred canopy under which to live.

Eagleton writes, "It is not so much that there is no redemption as that there is nothing to be redeemed.... with the emergence of postmodernism, human history arrives...at an authentic atheism...renouncing depth." He sees

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## Beraha's goals for Machon Micah: Ask big questions, build passion for Jewish learning

BY DORIAN FRIEDMAN

IN HIS COMFORTABLE new office lined from floor to ceiling with books, family photos, mementoes from world travels, and his beloved Martin guitar, Rabbi Josh Beraha keeps an important reminder taped to his desk. He rattles it off: "Machon Micah creates and sustains a shared quest for Jewish identity through experience and study for all members of Temple Micah. Participation in the Machon builds knowledge of Jewish identity and practice through innovation in teaching and learning..." These words, from the mission statement of Machon Micah (Micah's Institute for Jewish Learning), have helped Beraha focus his considerable energy and passion since joining the temple as its new Director of Congregational Learning in June.

In his early weeks on the job, Beraha plunged headlong into the life of the congregation. He has led a festive Shabbat service-and-blueberry-picking outing with temple members at Butler's Orchard, Shabbat sing-alongs at a Young Family Shabbat brunch at a congregant's home, and the congregation's regular Kabbalat Shabbat services. And he has nearly achieved his goal of "sharing 100 cups of coffee with 100 congregants"—all in an effort to meet members, and hear their hopes and dreams for Machon Micah. Beraha's mantra—"how to develop a culture of radical passion for Jewish learning at Temple Micah"—keeps him very busy.

An immediate priority, however, is overhauling the Machon Micah

curriculum for the nearly 200 young students who regularly attend its weekly classes and learning activities. He's been working closely with Rabbis Zemel and Lederman and his growing education staff (Shula Cooper, Vanessa Harper and Caitlin Brazner), to revise the teaching curriculum for the Machon's school-age and adult learners.

### Asking the Big Questions

"Being Jewish is about asking the biggest questions of all," Beraha reflected recently. "About how to be in community, about how to experience the sacred, about why life is worth living." But while this deep introspection is a central part of our faith, he notes, too many Jews lose sight of its importance, distracted by daily concerns and busy schedules.

The updated curriculum will be designed to help students start to ask—and begin to answer—these big questions. In fact, "we plan to ask the kinds of questions that I think a first or second grader can answer more profoundly than most adults," he said, speaking like an educator who has seen the passion in a child's eyes—or a father who marvels at the boundless curiosity of his own young children. (Josh's son, Raphael, is about two-and-a-half years old, and daughter, Maya, is six months.)

The new Machon curriculum will be framed symbolically around the six "gates of learning" inspired in part by the 11th-century Jewish philosopher

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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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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

# MICAH'S ROLE IN MEMBERS' LIVES AND STORIES

BY JODI ENDA



August marked the 75th anniversary of my mother's hasty and fortuitous departure from Budapest, the place of her birth, a few short weeks before the start of World War II. It also marked the first

time the two of us had been there together.

It was an emotional week. Along with my stepfather, my husband and my daughter, we visited: my grandparents' and mother's villa (now broken up into several apartments) in Pest; the

village of Jobbágyi, where my grandfather's grandfather presided over acres of farmland from a house known as "the castle"; the town of Godöllő, in which my then-young great-grandmother caught a glimpse of the Hapsburg queen; and the tiny Jewish cemeteries in which our ancestors were buried until the early 20th century. (One really isn't a cemetery at all, just a handful of worn headstones hidden beneath a heavy growth of trees and bushes and marked by a crucifix—yes, a crucifix!—placed at the side of the road by well-meaning villagers who knew nothing of Judaism. We're grateful for that marker, for without it, the graves would be lost to us.)

Both my mother and I have visited Hungary numerous times since the late 1970s because, unlike most American Jews, we still have relatives in the Old Country. Two of my grandfather's first cousins who survived the Holocaust—one endured two concentration camps and escaped during a death march, the other lived in a cramped cellar—have since passed away. But my mother has two cousins who remain, and one of them has two daughters who are about my age. One of my cousins has two children who are contemporaries of my daughter, Ilana.

Ilana was the real reason for our trip. This was her bat mitzvah present from her grandparents, her opportunity to connect to one part of her history

through the eyes of a grandmother who lived it. This was my daughter's chance to learn her story—and my mother's chance to pass along hers.

At Temple Micah, we talk a lot about stories. Our stories—individual and collective—inform and influence our lives. Whether we are rabbis or board members or new members, our stories have brought us together.

In June, members of the temple board gathered for our third annual retreat, an intense, five-hour exercise in which we step away from the regular business of running a synagogue and challenge ourselves to consider the big picture, to explore what really matters to Micah now and in the future. This year, we started with show-and-tell; each of us shared a treasured Jewish item from home. What was striking was how many of us brought symbols of our families' pasts, such as grandparents' Shabbat candlesticks or photos of family members who crossed the ocean in order to start new lives in America.

We talked about our stories, the stories that we share with our children and that they will share with their children. We wondered what role Temple Micah would play. Will it be a place people pass through on the way to b'nai mitzvah or weddings or funerals, or will it be a Jewish home, a home that helps root us to our stories, past and present, that helps guide us as we live in 21st-century America?

In other words, will Temple Micah matter?

Clearly, to many of us, Temple Micah matters a great deal. We might join to attend services or to enroll our children in Machon Micah or to engage in social action, but we expand our involvement by participating in Lunch & Learn or acting in the Purimspiel or joining a study group or a B'nai Torah class. We sing in the choir or become involved in a parenting group. We volunteer to serve on a committee or help in the office. We sponsor onegs and host diners for Shabbat Shalom Around Town.

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# Micah's Aging Together Group Plans October Event, New "Wise Aging" Initiative

BY JEFFREY P. COHN

TEMPLE MICAH's Aging Together group, perhaps best known for its hugely popular Lunch & Learn program, is making future plans for a group of members often thought of as focused on their past. The group's busy agenda for 2014-2015 begins with a workshop, "Sukkot: Exploring Your Personal Harvest," scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 12, in the middle of that seven-day harvest holiday.

After attending the program, "You won't think of Sukkot the same way again," predicted Harriette

Kinberg, a coordinator of the workshop, and chairperson of the new Wise Aging program of the Aging Together team.

The idea behind the workshop is "to engage participants in discussions that promote self-reflection and interpersonal connections," Kinberg explained. Workshop leaders will ask a series of questions designed to elicit personal reflections on participants' past, present and future life "harvests," referring to one's experiences over a lifetime. The Forging Micah Connections team is co-sponsoring the event with Aging Together.

The Micah team is also working with the New York-based Institute for Jewish Spirituality to offer Micah members a comprehensive program also called "Wise Aging." The Institute developed the program, a planning paper explained, because so many seniors can anticipate living longer and in better health than previous generations. "These healthy years of aging are not the caboose at the end of the train," the paper says. "Rather, these years are a whole new car added... for learning and growth."

The Institute's Wise Aging program, Kinberg said, seeks to take advantage of these longer lifespans to explore the aging phase of life that previous generations too often did not experience, and includes discussions with intriguing titles such as changing relationships, body and soul, living with loss and change, and wisdom and legacy.

Micah members Jane Kerschner, a certified well-being coach and facilitator with a master's degree in education, and Francie Schwartz, author and co-author of several books on Judaism with a master's degree in Judaic studies, will serve as Micah's Wise Aging facilitators once they complete the training.

Kinberg said she hopes participants in the Sukkot workshop and the broader Wise Aging program will come away with a new understanding of their lives and, perhaps, replace a fear

**"Old age is not a defeat, but a victory, not a punishment but a privilege. The test of a people is how it behaves toward the old."**

**— Abraham Joshua Heschel**

At a planning meeting hosted by Micah in September, the group will hear first-hand from the Institute's Wise Aging program creator and program director about the program and the training planned for facilitators. If there is sufficient interest, the Institute will offer training in the DC area for facilitators who will lead Wise Aging groups in their own synagogues and organizations.

of aging with a new sense of possibilities. The workshops are open to Micah members of all ages.

To learn more about Wise Aging at Temple Micah, please visit the temple's website (under "Groups") or contact Harriette Kinberg at [wisearing@templemicah.org](mailto:wisearing@templemicah.org). And for more on Aging Together, contact Barbara Diskin at [agingtogether@templemicah.org](mailto:agingtogether@templemicah.org). ●

## SEEKING VINE CONTRIBUTORS!

Do you love to find out what's really going on—and tell others about it? Get a kick out of writing? Seeing your name in print? *The Vine* is looking for contributing reporters like you! Only requirements: an interest in news about the Temple Micah community, and a little spare time a few months during the year. If you'd like to learn more, please contact Dorian Friedman or Shelley Grossman at [vine@templemicah.org](mailto:vine@templemicah.org) or leave word in the temple office.

## COMING ATTRACTIONS

For the full High Holy Day schedule, see page 8 or visit [www.templemicah.org](http://www.templemicah.org).

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 • 6 PM

**Special Service for Josh Beraha**  
Congregation welcomes new director of congregational learning at Kabbalat Shabbat service. Guest speaker, Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 • 5 PM

**Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman Speaks about Selichot**  
All-Community Machon Micah Selichot celebration followed by Selichot services at 6:30 pm.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 • 10 AM

**Annual Cemetery Service**  
Moving service under the trees at Micah's cemetery in Mt. Lebanon Cemetery. Everyone welcome.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12 • 2 PM–4:15 PM

**Workshop on Sukkot: Exploring Your Personal Harvest**  
Join a conversation that promotes self-reflection and interpersonal connections. (See details on page 3.)

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19 • 9:30 AM–12:30 PM

**Try a Taste of Micah**  
Learn about the many opportunities for fun and enrichment through temple activities for both new and old members. For more information, please email [taste-of-micah-fair@templemicah.org](mailto:taste-of-micah-fair@templemicah.org).

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21 • 7–9 PM (and subsequent Tuesday evenings)

**The Mothers Circle**  
New to Micah, the Mothers Circle provides free education and support for women of other religious backgrounds who are raising Jewish children. Classes, meeting most Tuesday evenings, will focus on Jewish rituals, ethics, and the how-to's of creating a Jewish home. Come be a part of this warm and nurturing environment. For details and schedule, please contact Kelley Kidd in the temple office.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26 • 10:15 AM–12:15 PM

**New Members Brunch**  
The Micah Board of Directors invites all new members who joined the temple this year for brunch and an orientation. To RSVP, please contact Kelley Kidd in the temple office.

## 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*

**October 12 – Sunday Morning with Elizabeth Drew:**

“Washington Journal: Reporting Watergate and Richard Nixon’s Downfall”

**November 2 – Sunday Morning with Ari Shavit:**

“My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel”

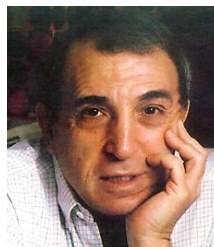
### LUNCH & LEARN

*Wednesdays from noon to 2 pm*

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



**September 10 – Michael Feuer**, on “E Pluribus Unum: The Contemporary Crisis in American Education.” Micah member Feuer, the Dean of the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at The George Washington University, will offer his thoughts on the origins, meaning and characteristics of the debate about public education in America, providing a historical context for the standards movement, the role of testing, the evaluation of teachers and teaching, and the rhetoric of American decline compared to other countries.



**October 8 – Milton Viorst**, on “Jews on the Eve of Zionism.” Viorst, journalist, scholar, and Micah member, is the author of six books on the Middle East. He is currently finishing a book on the evolution of the vision of Zionism from Theodor Herzl to our own times. His presentation, based on the book’s prologue, will explore how the Jews lived in

the early centuries of exile, how their hopes for equality were exalted by the promises of the enlightenment, how the failure to keep these promises was accompanied by a rise of anti-Semitism, and how both secular and religious thinkers, sensing the doom that lay ahead for Europe’s Jews, set the stage for Herzl.

## MEMBER REFLECTIONS

## Betty Ustun: The 'Precious Surprises' of Life

BY SHELLEY GROSSMAN

AS RABBI JOSH BERAHA's title, Director of Congregational Learning, and the plans for enhancing Machon Micah (see story, page 1) illustrate, education and learning are paramount at Temple Micah. So it is fitting that religious education sparked the creation of the congregation 51 years ago in Southwest DC, as Betty Ustun, who participated in the birth, recalls.

"It started out as a group of families that thought they should have religious education for their children. There were four families," including the Ustuns and Ted Schuchat, who would become the first president of the congregation, Ustun told Micah member Louise Wides, who interviewed her over several months for the oral history project of the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston in South Carolina. The quotes here are all excerpted from those interviews. "And we hired a religious school teacher. That was how we got started," Ustun said.

Ustun, 82, the sole remaining resident member of that original group,

grew up in Columbia, SC. She came to Washington in 1955 to work for the Voice of America, where she had her own two-hour program on education and youth every Saturday. One day, in the crowded cafeteria, she shared a table with a young man from Turkey, named Semih. They got to talking and not long after, married and moved to the newly redeveloped Southwest DC, where they met the core of what was to become Temple Micah. Two sons followed, Jonathan—a Micah member with his wife, Carrie, and two daughters, Emily and Anna—and Jeffrey—who now lives in Denver with his family, including Ustun's first great grandchild.

Couples, families and singles joined the group which began to meet every other Friday evening for Kabbalat Shabbat services in various area churches. One Pentecostal preacher asked them to "accept Jesus," Ustun said. "We never went back there." High Holy Day services were held in a bowling alley one year, she remembers, and



**Betty Ustun, a founding Micah member, remembers the beginning.**

then at Arena Stage.

Rabbis in town for Shabbat officiated at the services. "But we decided that the traveling rabbis didn't give very good sermons, so we invited [Rabbi] Dick Hirsch, who was head of [the Union of Reform Judaism's Religious Action Center], to be our part-time rabbi," she said.

By that time, people from Capitol Hill, Northwest DC and Northern Virginia had joined the nascent congregation, which was called Southwest Hebrew Congregation. "We began to be pretty organized," she continued. Rabbi Hirsch "kept telling us we had to affiliate with either the Conservative or Reform movement in order to grow. He was right about that."

But first they had to decide which movement to join. One contingent leaned heavily to Conservative, but Ustun and another early member, Aaron Altschul, "were very strong for affiliating with Reform. Others were involved, but Aaron and I helped pull it into Reform."

Later, the synagogue decided to change its name. Temple tradition attributes the choice of Micah, a prophet of peace, to the desire for peace during the Vietnam war, which was raging at the time. That was an element in the decision, but Ustun recalls a more

## HINENI: A FRIENDSHIP FORGED

The collaboration of Betty Ustun and Louise Wides on Ustun's oral history—and much more—came about through Hineni, a Micah volunteer group. Hineni (the Biblical Hebrew, "here I am") matches congregants who want to help with members who, for example, need a ride to the doctor or the temple, or require other assistance because of illness, or would just enjoy a call or visit. The idea, however, is not only to provide a service, although that is fundamental, but to make mutually satisfying matches, often across generational lines.

So it was that a call went out that wheelchair-bound Ustun would like to receive visitors. Wides answered the call. The two met and Wides learned that Ustun was born in South Carolina. Coincidentally, she discovered the Jewish oral history project at the College of Charleston. The project invited Ustun to participate and the two began recording Ustun's memories of growing up Jewish in South Carolina. It is now more than a year later, and they are still going strong, developing a friendship while they record reminiscences about all manner of topics.

**Machon FROM PAGE 1** ▶

Bahya Ibn Paquda, whose book *Duties of the Heart* detailed several gates one must pass through in order to achieve union with God. Micah students will traverse the gates of Ichud (unity), Binah (wisdom), Kavod (honor), Chesed (compassion), Emunah (faith) and Chazon (vision) to attempt to “move the Human Project forward by becoming their best selves,” Beraha said. A set of relevant texts and a series of “essential learning questions” will accompany each gate. In language and approach appropriate for kindergartners through teens, teachers will discuss, explore and reinforce the gate through the lenses of Torah, L’dor V’dor (history), Tzedek (justice), Israel and the American Jewish experience.

And, importantly, parents will be encouraged and supported in an effort to continue the conversation at home, reinforcing the current theme with questions that will be emailed to parents the day of the lesson. After all, a key tenet of the Machon—and a central belief of modern Judaism—is that learning should take place in the home and together with family, Beraha said.

To come up with a curriculum that Beraha and his education team believe best fits the model and mission of Machon Micah, they researched a broad range of existing Jewish education curricula and assembled the most relevant and innovative ideas they could find. Micah is a unique community “so this curriculum really had to come from us,” Beraha said.

“We are very excited

about what Josh is bringing to the table,” says Rabbi Lederman. “The renewed emphasis on big questions ties in with what we try to encourage all of us to do here at Micah—ask ourselves the questions that make life worth living.”

### Beyond Curriculum

After expounding on the exciting curriculum changes planned for this year, Beraha offered a surprising qualification. In a strange way, “I feel like the curriculum is the least important thing we do,” he said. He and his colleagues are thinking much more holistically about the full experience of a Micah learner. When students walk through the front doors, are they greeted warmly, as if entering a home? Are teachers smiling at them? Does the staff have their spiritual growth in mind?

Beraha uses the metaphor of a beautiful still life painting. To him, the curriculum is like the bowl which holds colorful fruit, representing youngsters in different grades. Teachers and staff are the painters, and their

choice of artistic medium—oil, watercolor, and so on—represents their individual expression and teaching style. “But the most important element is the frame, which provides structure and represents what we’re doing for the whole child rather than just filling them with facts,” he said.

Beraha brings an interesting perspective and rich experience to his new post. His undergraduate degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison was in history and Hebrew literature, and he received a master’s in education through the New York City Teaching Fellows Program. For five years, he taught music and literacy to children with special needs on Manhattan’s Lower East Side. And he’s no stranger to Temple Micah: He joined the congregation in the summer of 2012 as a Tisch Rabbinical Fellow and remained as student rabbi into 2014. (See the January/February 2014 issue of the *Vine*.)

In particular, Beraha’s background in special education has helped shape his approach to teaching.

## WELCOME SERVICES FOR RABBI BERAHA, FEATURING RABBI LARRY HOFFMAN

Please save the weekend of September 19–20 to officially welcome Rabbi Josh Beraha to Temple Micah in his new position as Director of Congregational Learning. Rabbi Beraha will be honored during Kabbalat Shabbat services on Friday evening, Sept. 19, with a special sermon by Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman, a professor at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and mentor to all three of our rabbis.

Rabbi Hoffman, a charismatic, humorous and down-to-earth speaker, will be featured again on Sept. 20 at an All-Community Selichot celebration, beginning at 5 pm. He will help kick off our most spiritual time of year with a talk entitled “High Holy Day Ritual According to Freud and According to Us.” There will be age-appropriate activities for children in Machon Micah. The afternoon will end with a Selichot service starting at 6:30 pm.

“We’re all unique learners,” regardless of our aptitude. “We learn at our own pace and have different learning styles,” he said, and this notion of educational “differentiation” will inform the work in Micah’s classrooms.

### Engaging Adult Learners

While the younger students of Machon Micah have occupied Beraha’s early attention, he is committed to the needs and interests of all Micah members. “If we expect our kids to embrace learning, we have to model Jewish learning for them,” he said. With the goal of engaging a cross-section of continuing learners, he intends to launch Micah Reads, a community-wide book circle modeled on popular city reading programs designed to deepen engagement in literature and current ideas. Planning is still underway, but Beraha hopes to cover four books in 2014–2015, and use them to spark a series of community conversations about their universal themes. The first book will be Ari Shavit’s *My Promised Land: The Triumph*



**Berry picking and Shabbat:** Rabbi Beraha leads a joyous musical Shabbat service in July at Butler's Orchard in Germantown, MD.



**Machon FROM PREVIOUS PAGE ►**

and *Tragedy of Israel*. (Shavit is scheduled to speak at Temple Micah on Sunday, Nov. 2.) Also on the reading list: Philip Roth's classic, *Goodbye, Columbus*.

Plans are also on tap to expand educational programming for adults on Tuesday evenings, and to better integrate the wide array of current adult educational offerings—including Lunch & Learn speakers, Torah, Hebrew and Hebrew poetry study groups, the “Jewish Thinkers” series, and the downtown and Monday morning discussion groups. “My hope is to create an umbrella to bring all of those things in... so all members see themselves as continuing learners within Machon Micah,” said Beraha.

The commitment to continuous learning extends to temple staff. With Beraha's

arrival, the rabbis are bringing back “all-staff learning days” one Thursday morning each month, and Beraha himself has begun leading a brief “Shabbat learning” study session with his education staff on Friday mornings.

Reflecting on the many changes he contemplates, Beraha sounded both optimistic and determined. “But everything—all of this—is a work in progress,” he cautioned, and will need to evolve as we find the most effective ways to excite Jewish learning. For a congregation that prides itself on innovation, experimentation, and being “unafraid to break the mold,” his approach seems fitting indeed.

To learn more about the evolving vision for congregational learning or to share your thoughts with Rabbi Beraha, please reach out to him directly at [education@templemicah.org](mailto:education@templemicah.org). ●

## MACHON MICAH MISSION STATEMENT

Machon Micah creates and sustains a shared quest for Jewish identity through experience and study for all members of Temple Micah. Participation in the Machon builds knowledge of Jewish identity and practice through innovation in teaching and learning; social activism and outreach; and the integration of different age groups, backgrounds and experiences into a lively educational community. An ongoing experiment in Jewish education, Machon Micah holds these guiding tenets:

- Jewish learning should take place within Jewish real time
- History is an important anchor
- Jewish identity is forward looking, dynamic and creative
- Tradition comes to life through shared practice
- Judaism's future is as vibrant as its past

With its emphasis on Judaism in practice, Jewish peoplehood, tikkun olam and the inclusion of all members of our diverse community, Machon Micah is central to the life of Temple Micah.

# Listen Up: Temple Acquires New Hearing-Assistive System

BY SHELLEY GROSSMAN

“SPEAK LOUDER, and more clearly! I can’t hear you,” no longer need be a recurring refrain at committee meetings, classes, study groups and other temple activities outside the sanctuary. New portable listening devices, donated by last year’s B’nai Torah class and put into operation over the summer, are making it a lot easier for many people to participate in the full range of Micah programming.

The idea for the devices came to Russ Misheloff last year, when he had difficulty hearing speakers at Micah events. Working with Barbara Diskin, he got in touch with a provider of hearing assistive systems, researched available devices and helped demonstrate the most promising one at a Lunch & Learn session. The plan was approved, the devices purchased and the learning curve begun. The set includes two transmitters, four handheld mikes, two lapel mikes, three receivers

and headsets, and two neck loops. Speakers need to talk clearly into the mikes and users need to wear a headset, or, for those who have them, turn on the telecoil in their hearing aids. (For more information on telecoils, talk to Misheloff.) Two separate events can use the devices simultaneously.

Over the summer, Lunch & Learn, Torah Study Group and the Aging Together committee began using the devices routinely. “The people that use them seem to like them,” Misheloff said. And one Saturday morning when the devices weren’t activated, a member of Torah Study Group loudly demanded, “Where are the headsets? I need my headset!” ●



## President’s Column FROM PAGE 2 ►

We grow as Jews and as people. We make friends, friends who are a second family—because so many of our families are far away.

But members of the board realize this is not the case for everyone. Some people simply don’t view Micah as a central part of their lives. Others don’t know how to make it one. Either way, we are working to make it easier for you to become as integrated in the Micah community as you would like to be. We hope to help “thicken” relationships within the con-

gregation and to create a uniquely Jewish space for each of us to live full, meaningful Jewish lives.

From a personal standpoint, simply being able to be in a Jewish space is a gift. It all comes back to my story.

I love my Hungarian cousins and am proud of the lives they have made for themselves. Their parents survived the Holocaust and they were raised behind the Iron Curtain. For decades, they dared not practice Judaism, even in the privacy of their home. Now, as anti-Semitism has re-emerged in Hungary and throughout much

of Europe, they are on guard once again.

We could not go into my mother’s old house, the one that she fled at age five. We gazed at it through a fence. I asked Mom if going there made her sad. No, she responded, just the opposite. Of course, Mom and her children and grandchildren are grateful that she left when she did. But it’s more than that, more than survival alone.

Mom and I have mirror images of ourselves in Hungary. Our cousins’ lives are not terrible. But we’re thankful that our lives are here.

## TEMPLE MICAH HIGH HOLY DAYS — WHERE AND WHEN

Again this year, most of the High Holy Day services will take place at Temple Micah’s home away from home, the Metropolitan Memorial United Methodist Church (MMUMC), 3401 Nebraska Ave., NW, at the corner of New Mexico Ave., NW. Unlike previous years, however, parking is likely to be a headache as the convenient parking lot across the street from the church is now a construction project. Alternatives are being pursued. Check the website, [www.templemicah.org](http://www.templemicah.org), for updates.

### Annual Cemetery Service at Micah Cemetery • Sunday, September 21

- Mt. Lebanon Cemetery, Adelphi, MD at 10 am

### Erev Rosh Hashanah • Wednesday, September 24

- Main Service at 8 pm, followed by Oneg (MMUMC)
- Next Dor 20s/30s service at 7 pm (Temple Micah)

### Rosh Hashanah • Thursday, September 25

- Main Service at 10:15 am (MMUMC)
- For Children
  - Young Family Service (tots through grade 1) 9:15–9:45 am
  - Children’s Service (grades 2-6) 10:30–11:45 am

### Kol Nidre • Friday, October 3

- Main Service at 8 pm (MMUMC)
- Next Dor 20s/30s service at 7:30 pm (Temple Micah)

### Yom Kippur • Saturday, October 4

- Main Service at 10:15 am (MMUMC)
- For Children
  - Young Family service (tots through grade 1) 9:15–9:45 am
  - Children’s Service (grades 2-6) 10:30–11:45 am
- Ask the Rabbis at 1:30 pm
- Afternoon Break and 25 Year Club Readings at 2:45 pm
- Afternoon services including Yiskor and Neilah at 3:30 pm
- Break the Fast following Neilah service (MMUMC)



# PLEASE SUPPORT TEMPLE MICAH'S 15TH ANNUAL FALL UNDERWEAR DRIVE

JOIN MACHON MICAH'S 6th graders this High Holy Day season in one of Temple Micah's most important mitzvah projects: Providing dignity to our homeless neighbors at Friendship Place.

## What is Friendship Place?

Community Council for the Homeless at Friendship Place, a local community-based organization, provides counseling, job training, temporary shelter and other social services to our homeless and mentally ill neighbors in Northwest D.C.

## Why Underwear?

Many people donate used clothing such as coats, hats, or pants to Friendship Place, but underwear is often in short supply. Our homeless neighbors are in need of new undergarments.

## How Can I Contribute?

Look for one of our many helpful 6th graders when you leave services on Rosh Hashanah morning. They will be passing out shopping bags for you to fill with your contributions. A list of suggested items will be attached to the bag to make shopping easier. The 6th graders will collect your contributions as you come into services on Yom Kippur morning. You can also leave donations in the temple lobby through November 2. Please help

this year's 6th graders beat the previous record of 8,159 donated items!



## What Kind of Underwear?

Priority items are **in bold**, but all are needed and appreciated.

### MEN'S ITEMS

- Briefs—Sizes **32, 34**, 36-40, **42+** or **2X**
- Boxers—All sizes
- T-shirts (white)—**S, M, L, XL, 2X, 3X**
- Socks (white)—**Crew size 6-12**; Ankle size 6-12;
- Thermal underwear

### WOMEN'S ITEMS

- Underpants—Sizes 6, 7, **8, 9, 10**
- Bras—**L, XL**
- Thermal underwear

Please note: For online shoppers: Kmart and HisRoom.com have larger sizes.

For more details, please see [www.templemicah.org/tikkunolam/underweardrive](http://www.templemicah.org/tikkunolam/underweardrive).

## Rabbi's Message FROM PAGE 1 ►

a value-free, totally relativistic world. A world with no depth is for him a world with no meaning—everything is the same as everything else. The Western world, Eagleton says, has been “philosophically disarmed,” guided not by principle but by convenience.

I find these depressing words to be powerfully descriptive of the world that surrounds me. In 2000, Steven Cohen and Arnie Eisen, writing in *The Jew Within* about the condition of American Jews, gave us the expression “sovereign self” to describe the god to whom the authors felt American Jews pledged loyalty. This pagan god seems to supplant all else. This is the god of a consumer culture—of life “on demand.”

All of this captures a world that seems to engulf us. It is a world in which tradition means very little and the supposedly much sought-after “community” is the

one that I create for myself according to my own standards and tastes. I can “de-friend” anyone at anytime.

This represents an enormous challenge to our understanding of Judaism, wherein life is lived in covenant with a universal and commanding God and as part of the people of Israel. We are bound and obligated in covenant and we are defined as part of a collective—two very radical notions for those who seek to live life in a Sovereign Self-Facebook society.

The Jewish calendar, which daily beckons us towards redemption, provides us one great time of year to take it all in, put the world on hold and our lives under a glass to consider who we are. The High Holy Days bring us an echo of the incessant drum beat of the God of our ancestors, the God of Abraham and Sarah, the God of Sinai. We ask ourselves, for what have we aimed? Where have we erred? We

might even extend these questions: In the year 5775, what does loyalty mean? Does the past mean anything or are our lives only about today? What is worth remembering? What is worth preserving? What needs to change?

We each have a role to play. Each one of us needs to determine whether the sound we hear is a nostalgic echo or an urgent call to make this the year that we engage in the most serious kind of *cheshbon* (self examination) both individually and as a people.

Temple Micah can be a place where we come to hear God's voice. We can make the ancient eternal. We can renew the old even as we sanctify the new. Bring your best self to Temple Micah this year. Let Temple Micah be the place where we all become our best selves and live lives that are ever renewed.

Shannah Tovah!

Rabbi Daniel G. Zemel

# TZEDAKAH

## 50TH ANNIVERSARY FUND

IN MEMORY OF  
Suzanne Blotner, by Ellen Sommer

## ASSOCIATE RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

IN HONOR OF  
Barbara Green, by Richard Fitz and Kathy Spiegel

IN MEMORY OF  
Fred Jaretzki; Minette Knopman; Hallene Marks and Ethel Fargotstein; Robert Morgenstein, by Sid and Elka Booth

## AUCTION FUND

IN HONOR OF  
Adrienne and David Umansky and Judith Capen and Robert Weinstein, by Janice Meer, Robert Bodo, and Kade Howard

## BUILDING FUND

IN MEMORY OF  
Suzanne Blotner, by Bobbie and Ed Wendel

## ENDOWMENT FUND

IN HONOR OF  
Lynn Bonde, by Sidney and Elka Booth  
Asher Hayden Abramowitz, by Michelle Sender

IN MEMORY OF  
Suzanne Blotner, by Elise Arena, Mary Haber  
Howard Shea Grob, by Douglas Grob

## GENERAL FUND

Abioye Oyewole  
IN HONOR OF  
Mia Goodman, by Elaine and Wallace Goodman  
Jordan Roumell, by Richard Fitz and Kathy Spiegel

IN MEMORY OF  
Suzanne Blotner; Florence Dickelman, by Judith Capen and Robert Weinstein, Skip and Barbara Halpern, Judy Hurvitz  
Hannah Cohen, by Miriam Cohen Miller  
David Green, by Barbara and Isaac Green  
Dorothy R. Haber, by Mary Haber  
James R. Howe, by Benno Mark Gerson  
Minette Knopman, by Steve Agresta and Ellen Heiman, Judith Capen and Robert Weinstein, Richard Fitz and Kathy Spiegel, Skip and Barbara Halpern  
Robert Morgenstein, by John Barkanic, The CPR Group at Morgan Stanley: Brian, Michele, and Dave  
Diane Sager, by Nancy Raskin

## HINENI FUND

IN MEMORY OF  
Minette Knopman; Ingrid Meyer, by Lawrence Lynn and Lisa Saks

## KALLEK ADULT EDUCATION FUND

Herbert and Sharon Schwartz  
IN HONOR OF  
Asher Hayden Abramowitz, by Kit Wheatley  
IN MEMORY OF  
Dr. Alan Bornstein, by Sheila Platoff

## LIBRARY FUND

IN HONOR OF  
Barbara Diskin and Geri Nielsen, by Richard Fitz and Kathy Spiegel  
IN MEMORY OF  
James R. Howe, by Peggy Morrison

## MACHON MICAH FUND

IN HONOR OF  
Marilyn and Irwin Scher's 50th anniversary, by Marilyn Paul  
IN MEMORY OF  
James R. Howe, by Jill and Radoslav Shipkoff  
Robert Morgenstein, by the family of Joan and Jack Schwarz

## MICAH HOUSE

Todd Goren  
Theodor Schuchat  
IN HONOR OF  
Jordan Roumell's becoming Bar Mitzvah, by Judy and Doug Warshoff  
John and Marisha Sherry on the birth of their son, Bennett Elisha Sherry, by Nora Brennan, Roberta and David Benor, Josh Korr, Estelle Schwartz, Ellen Sommer  
Lee McClure and Emily Warheit on the occasion of their wedding, by Catalan Conlon, Matthew Wilson  
Rob Sugar, by the Micah House Board  
Judy Warshoff's special birthday, by Ronna and Stan Foster  
IN MEMORY OF  
Robert Morgenstein, by Daniel Schwartz, Nancy and Ken Schwartz

## MITY FUND

IN MEMORY OF  
Suzanne Blotner, by Roberta and Peter Gluck

## MUSIC FUND

IN HONOR OF  
Barbara and David Diskin, by Richard Fitz and Kathy Spiegel  
Mia Goodman, by Janet and Alan Carpien  
Teddy and Meryl's kayaking adventure, by Karen Zizmor and Bruce Rinaldi  
IN MEMORY OF  
Suzanne Blotner, by Ronna and Stan Foster  
Florence Dickelman, by Ellen Sommer, Bobbie and Ed Wendel  
Robert Sugarman, by Carole Sugarman

## RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Debra S. Knopman  
IN HONOR OF  
Asher Hayden Abramowitz, by Eugene Bialek and Arlene Brown, Susie and Harvey Blumenthal, Tina Coplan, Richard Fitz and Kathy Spiegel, Mark and Myra Kovey, Milton and Marlyn Socolar, Adrienne and David Umansky  
Richard Just and Adrian Alvarez, by Sara and Steven Just  
IN MEMORY OF  
Suzanne Blotner, by Roberta Aronson and Paul Goldberg, Mark and Myra Kovey  
Fred Jaretzki; Minette Knopman; Robert Morgenstein, by Sid and Elka Booth

## SOCIAL ACTION FUND

IN HONOR OF  
Jordan Roumell, by Gail Povar and Larry Bachorik  
IN MEMORY OF  
Suzanne Blotner, by Ann Sablosky and Steve Rockower  
David Micah Booth, by Sid and Elka Booth  
Herbert Brand, by Ellen and Stanley Brand  
Irvin Brook Rinaldi; Robert Morgenstein, by Bobbie and Ed Wendel  
Alvin Meyer, by Lawrence Lynn and Lisa Saks

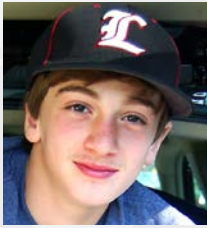
## TEMPLE MICAH COOKS

IN HONOR OF  
Mary Haber, Adrienne Umansky and Peggy Banks, by Richard Fitz and Kathy Spiegel

## THE RABBI DANIEL GOLDMAN ZEMEL FUND FOR ISRAEL

Myra and Mark Kovey

# BAR MITZVAH



**NOAH FREEDMAN**  
**OCTOBER 25 / 1 CHESHVAN**  
**PARENTS:** Andrew Freedman and Mimi Laver  
**TORAH PORTION:** Noach  
**MITZVAH PROJECT:** To be decided

# CONDOLENCES

THE TEMPLE MICAH community extends its deepest condolences to:

**ROB MAGGIN** on the passing of his mother, Lue Maggin

**ELIZA MCGRAW** on the passing of her stepfather, James R. Howe, M.D.

**BARBARA FINKELSTEIN** on the passing of her husband, James Finkelstein, M.D.

**ANN COHEN** on the passing of her stepdaughter, Sophie Elana Dorot

May their memories be for a blessing.

## THE CONGREGATION WISHES A HEARTY MAZAL TOV TO:

**Marisha Goldhamer, John and Ethan Sherry** on the birth of their son and brother, Bennett Elisha Sherry

**Richard Just and Adrian Alvarez** on their marriage

**Jane and Chaz Kerschner** on the births of their grandsons, Logan Monroe and Silas James

**Mia Goodman and Chloe Kristensen** on becoming B'not Mitzvah

**Margaret and Jeff Grotte** on the birth of their granddaughter Marie Matilda, daughter of Kristen and Nat Grotte

**Ustun FROM PAGE 5** ▶

down-to-earth reason: one of the members had a son name Micah. “The name came from the Bible—so we decided to be Temple Micah,” she said.

Early on, Ustun and a few other members who had good voices and liked to sing formed a choir, which has continued to grow and thrive and now is one of Micah’s major attractions. She remained a prominent member of the choir until three years ago, when she suffered a debilitating stroke.

As a result of the stroke, Ustun is confined to a wheelchair and says she has a lot of time to look out the windows of her apartment on Pennsylvania Ave., NW. (Over the years, many of the Southwest residents moved to other parts of the city or suburbs. The Ustuns moved to Northwest DC, as did Temple Micah.) She likes to look at the

trees and flowers. When she does, her thoughts often dwell on the intricacy of nature, and that, she says, makes her think about God.

Ustun has a Christmas cactus that was in full bloom during one of the interviews. “The idea of God comes to me because, when it [the cactus] blooms, it is spectacular. It’s a cactus, so you don’t expect that. A lot that happens you don’t expect, like the fantastic tulip bulbs that were buried last year and are blooming right now.” She often admires a particular tree outside her window. When the wind blows the leaves, “I consider that ballet. I don’t get to the ballet at all now and I’m missing it,” she said. “So I find a way I can find goodness in my life.”

The complexity of the human body and brain also evokes thoughts of God. “I had a stroke and I’m watching myself

work very hard to try to improve,” she continued. “They say that as I improve, new connections in my brain will grow. That’s evidence that the planning is there.”

Now she spends a lot of time at home, but “I used to move a lot. I was a member of all kinds of groups and going to meetings and I was out all the time,” she said. Ustun was deeply involved in many local arts and cultural institutions, including the Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Smithsonian and the National Museum of Women in the Arts. “Now I have a lot of good friends who call me and send me notes and we communicate on the Internet. That’s also magic, developed by a human body’s brain...All of that is a precious, precious surprise for me at this time. I relish these precious surprises.” ●

# לשנה טובה מנוחה



*We wish you a happy and healthy new year in a world at peace.*



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