

# Messenger

Volume 159, Issue 8

Nissan-Iyar 5778 / April 2018

## Baskin to Speak at Oppenheim Service

### Also In the Messenger:

- ✧ *Earth Day*
- ✧ *Chai Mitzvah*
- ✧ *Drone fillm*

April Baskin, the Union for Reform Judaism's Vice President for "Audacious Hospitality" will deliver the talk at our annual Oppenheim Institute Social Justice Sabbath on June 1.



April Baskin, URJ V.P.

Before joining URJ nearly three years ago, Baskin "spent 10 years advocating for Jewish diversity inclusion locally and nationally in a variety of ways, includ-

young adults of color in American Judaism," according to the URJ website.

A graduate of Tufts University, Baskin is the immediate past President of the Jewish Multiracial Network and was named as one of 12 Faith Leaders to Watch in 2017 by the Centers for American Progress.

ing facilitating LGBT educational trainings as a Keshet facilitator and writing a thesis about the experiences and identities of Jewish

## 'Night of Comedy' Moved to June 9

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The Night of Comedy has been re-scheduled for June 9 at 7:30 p.m. You should save this date.

Two comics have been decided upon although contracts are not finalized.

Joe DeVito, who has appeared on NBC's "Last Comic Standing," Comedy Central and the Fox News Channel's "Red Eye," is a former journalist and ad writer. He will headline the show. A very funny co-



Joe DeVito

medienne is expected to be signed as the featured performer.

Ticket prices and other details about the Night of Comedy are still being worked out and will be available in the next edition of the Messenger.

The fundraising committee is working on other details for the night and is selling advertisements in the program book.

Jennifer Rosen Novak, fundraising chair, also announced that recipes for the new Temple Hesed cookbook will be accepted through April.

# Donations

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Lauscher*

**In Honor of the Yahr-  
zeit of Max Slawitsky**

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man, beloved father  
and grandfather**

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**In Memory of my son-  
in-law, Morris Wilson  
Commander**

*Janet Slawitsky*

Jacob Ganz  
*Bar Mitzvah*



Jacob Charles Ganz, son of Kenny and Nicole Ganz, Clarks Summit, will be Bar Mitzvah at the Temple on Saturday morning, April 21st.

Jacob, a seventh grade student at Abington Heights Middle School has been working closely with Rabbi Swartz for the past several years preparing for his big day.

Jacob, whose interests include architecture, photography, running and online gaming league along with a passion for history has led him to volunteer at Steamtown National Historic Site for several seasons.

Temple Hesed now  
accepts these  
credit/debit cards for  
most payments or  
donations



Rabbinical Reflections — Rabbi Daniel J. Swartz

# Flowering Trees and a Once-a-year Blessing



**M**indfulness is a big thing nowadays. Newspapers run articles about it, health researchers study it, self-help gurus write and speak about it – the App Store even has hundreds, perhaps even thousands of mindfulness apps, and one of them, Calm, won the App of the Year award for 2017. So you'd be excused for thinking this was all something new – but it isn't. In fact, Judaism has been promoting mindfulness for thousands of years.

## Some Examples

One can certainly find recent developments in Judaism that emphasize mindfulness, such as Temple Hesed's monthly Chanting Circle, which draws a diverse group of Jews and non-Jews interested in exploring such practices. But you don't have to delve very far into ancient Jewish traditions to find just as much of an emphasis. Take, for example, the most common, multi-purpose of all Jewish blessings, the Shehecheyanu. It goes: Praised are you, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe (as a side note, the word *Olam*, typically translated as "universe" in blessings, actually refers both to all space and all time, so it would be more accurate to say, Who rules through time and space), for keeping us alive, and sustaining us, and bringing us to this moment. As I remind couples and their families at a wedding, it's telling us: don't focus on the hassles of getting to today. Don't even focus on your dreams for the future. Right now, focus on right now, on being fully present for this moment of your marriage beginning.

## The Blessing

In the Hebrew months that match up with April this year, Nisan and Iyar, we have a once-a-year opportunity to say a blessing that helps us be mindful of one very particular moment – and at the same time, to reflect on how, when we are fully mindful of the import of that moment, the lessons of this blessing show us so much about what's truly important in life. And just what is the blessing? It is to be said on the first occasion you see trees, especially fruit trees, in flower. Not only that, but you are supposed to see at least two trees in flower as you recite the blessing, which goes: *Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam shelo chisar ba'olamo k'lum*

*uvara' vo briyot tovot v'ilanot tovim l'hanot bahem b'nei Adam* – Praised are you, Adonai our God, who rules through all space and time, who left nothing lacking in this world and who created in it goodly creatures and goodly trees, giving pleasure through them to human-kind.

## What to be Mindful of

So just what are we supposed to be mindful of through this prayer? The words of the prayer help us to bring to mind just how wondrous and full of abundance this world is and how, through that abundance, our lives are full of joy and blessing. By focusing on the first flowering trees we see, we tune in as well to the cycle of the seasons, filled with joy at the overflowing, exuberant beauty of spring – and more fundamentally, because we are supposed to recite the blessing the very first time we see the flowering trees each year, we are present at the moment that spring is beginning. By emphasizing fruit trees, we come to see the direct connections between the well-being of the world and our own well-being. Furthermore, because most fruit trees that we would see would be planted by humans, we are also reminded that we can be in harmony with the rest of creation, that in fact we have a positive role to play in nature. Why two trees? Because most fruit trees are more fruitful when they are in a community – which is not a bad lesson for the human community as well.

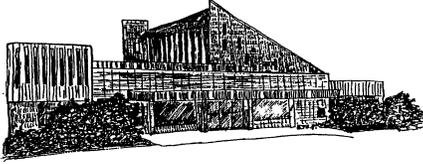
## Time is Limited

Finally, since this blessing can only be said during the month of Nisan and the first part of Iyar, we are to be urgent about completing this task of mindfulness. We aren't supposed to be wandering about, not paying attention to the little signs of the changing of the seasons, until it's midsummer and we finally are aware that it's no longer winter. Rather, we are to eagerly pay attention, searching out for signs of spring in a fashion that connects us to the great flow of life that surrounds us at all times.

So, pay attention! Greet spring with enthusiasm and mindfulness – and I predict you will find that your own lives are more filled with blessing, that your years are more fruitful.

—*Rabbi Daniel J. Swartz*

# Yahrzeits and Personal Notes



## *Get Well Wishes*

Jane Knobel  
 Jim Mates  
 Rich Mates  
 Charlene Ostro  
 Joel Ostro  
 Emily Trunzo  
 Janet Slawitsky  
 Edward Snitko,  
 Sr.

## B'Nai Mitzvah 5778

Jacob Ganz — April 21  
 Reece Weinberg — July 28  
 Zachary Cahn — August 18

### Week Ending April 7 (Service April 6)

\*Ida Richman, \*Samuel N. Kramer, \*Hattie Levi, \*Elsie Schneider, \*Abraham Cornfield, Fred A. Ellenbogen, \*Hannah Joseph, \*Meyer Slavitz, Edward Bernstein, \*Myer Kabatchnick, \*Israel Linder

### Week Ending April 14 (Service April 13)

\*Joan Alperin, Florence Brown, \*Arnold L. Apfelbaum, \*Paul William Weinstock, \*Daniel H. Stone, \*Dr. Gladys Ball, Jerome I. Karnoff, \*Harlan Ackerman, \*Rose Swartz, Nellie Wooden, \*Edith Leventhal, Dr. Carl Strauss, \*Gertrude Diener, \*Al Dolinger

### Week Ending April 21 (Service April 20)

Jennie Newman, \*Jack M. Yanover, Aaron Pashkow, \*Shirley Mitteldorf, \*Frances Ehrlich Joseph, Lena Cohen, \*Elsa Stein Ehrlich, \*Alice L. Goldsmith, \*Fred Mark Seagaard, \*Elizabeth R. Levi, \*Rae Epstein, \*Ralph L. Levy, \*Selma Stein, \*Aaron H. Vogel, Harold Kaplan, \*Rebecca Weinberg

### Week Ending April 28 (Service April 27)

\*Harry Ackerson, \*Emma Kramer Freeman, Dr. Jacob S. Kominz, \*Lena Rosenberg, \*Joyce Kroll, \*Fred B. Levi, \*Grace Pawlan, Hannah Feinberg, \*Samuel Morris, \*Elias Strauss

There will be a Yom HaShoah commemoration at the JCC on Thursday, April 12 at 7 p.m.

The speaker will be Polish Holocaust survivor Mark Schonwetter. His story has been told in *Together-a Journey for Survival*, a fascinating book written by his daughter, Ann Arnold.

# April 2018



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6 SERVICES 6 p.m.	7 <i>Pesach ends</i>
8	9	10	11	12 <i>Yom HaShoah</i>	13 SERVICES 8 p.m.	14 Chanting Circle 10:30 am
15	16	17	18 <i>Yom HaZikaron</i>	19 <i>Yom HaAtzmaut</i>	20 SERVICES 8 p.m.	21 10 a.m. Jacob Ganz Bar Mitzvah
22 <i>Earth Day 9:30—Brunch &amp; Film</i>	23	24	25	26	27 SERVICES 8 p.m.	28
29 <i>Chai Mitz- vah 12 noon</i>	30					

## Holidays 5778

*Rosh Hashanah*— *Yom HaShoah*—  
Sept. 21, 2017 Apr. 12, 2018

*Yom Kippur* — *Yom HaZikaron*  
Sept. 30, 2017 Apr. 18, 2018

*Sukkot*— *Yom HaAtzmaut*  
Oct. 5-11, 2017 Apr. 19, 2018

*Simchat Torah* — *Lag B'Omer* —  
Oct. 13, 2017 May 3, 2018

*Hanukkah* — *Shavuot*—  
Dec. 13-20, 2017 May 20-21, 2018

*Tu B'Shvat* — *Tisha B'Av*—  
Jan. 31, 2018 July 22, 2018

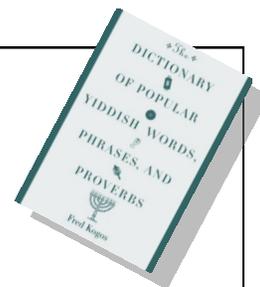
*Purim*— *Selichot* —Sept. 1  
Mar. 1, 2018

*Passover*—  
Mar. 31-Apr. 7, 2018

(Holidays begin at sundown the night before)

### YIDDISH SAYING OF THE MONTH

“Don’t be scared when you have no other choice.”



Yiddish Proverb from a book by Fred Kogos



### Torah Portions

Name	Civil Date	Hebrew Date
Chul HaMo'ed	April 7, 2018	22.Nisan.5778
Shemini	April 14, 2018	29.Nisan.5778
Tasria-Metzora	April 21, 2018	6.Iyar.5778
Achaeri-Kedoshim	April 28, 2018	13.Iyar.5778

## April Chanting Circle: April 14th at 10:30 – From Drought to Flow!

Winter has definitely overstayed its welcome this year. But, as we go to press, signs of spring are finally showing up. Our inner lives mirror the cycle of seasons around us.

We all have periods of winter or drought, where we feel frozen in place, or as if all our creative juices have temporarily dried up.

Sometimes, we convince ourselves that the drought will never end – but there are gateways that can open for us,

gateways that help us return to spring and to flow.

Our April chanting circle, April 14 at 10:30 a.m. at the Temple, will help us navigate as we shift from winter to spring, as we seek to replenish our inner flow and end the drought of disconnection.

As always, our circle is open to everyone and no prior experience is needed.

## EARTH DAY TO BE MARKED WITH A BRUNCH AND PROGRAM

Temple Hesed will celebrate Earth Day on Sunday April 22nd @ 9:30 a.m. with a very special program, open to the public.

After we share a potluck brunch, we'll present a new, as yet, unreleased PBS P.O.V. documentary: "Bill Nye: Science Guy," which depicts Nye's struggles to get real science acknowledged in policy and societal debates on issues ranging from climate to evolution.



Bill Nye, Science Guy

After the documentary, one of our own scientists, Mark Davis, will join with Rabbi Daniel to discuss how science and faith can come together to guide us in our treatment of the planet and each other.

Everyone is welcome to come, eat wonderful brunch food, and join in the discussion.

There is no cost, but please make sure to RSVP to the Temple Office, 570-344-7201 or by email at [templehesed@comcast.net](mailto:templehesed@comcast.net), so we can arrange the different potluck dishes people will be bringing.

## Chai Mitzvah Class April 29th: Tzedakah, Philanthropy, and Taxes

For some, April is a month of spring flowers. For others, it's the time to pay taxes.

Jewish traditions around Tzedakah, often translated as "charity" but with a meaning far closer to "justice," stand part way between philanthropy and taxes.

Join us for our April Chai Mitzvah class as we explore just what Tzedakah is, what we're supposed to do about it, and delve into some of the ethical conundrums around giving, such as: what do you do about street beggars?

How much giving is enough? How do I set priorities about who to give to first, since I can't give to everyone? Should Jewish causes come first?

We'll discuss both traditional sources and our own life experiences from noon to 1:30 on Sunday April 29.

RSVP to the Temple office if you'd like to attend, and we'll let you know as soon as a location is confirmed.



# Ms. Goldenziel Goes to Washington

As part of her confirmation studies, Alicia Goldenziel has learned about Midrash, Mishnah, Talmud and other classical Jewish texts. She's studied Jewish sources on issues ranging from relationships and consent to education. And over the weekend of March 16-19th, she had a chance to put it all into action, as she and Rabbi Daniel participated in one of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism's L'taken Teen Social Justice Seminars.

There, she took part in a simulation about lobbying and campaign finance as the teens debated about bail reform. She heard from a woman who turned her life around from homeless and now is a social worker. She discussed minority rights in Israel and started an ongoing program on leadership.

But most of all, she chose one of the many issues she had learned about, church-state separation, and on Monday, went to Capitol Hill to present her views on vouchers, their effects on public education and the church-state concerns they raise.



Rabbi and Alicia on Mall



A simulated negotiation session on food assistance.

Along with a group of teens from a synagogue in King of Prussia, she presented her views to staff members from Senator Pat Toomey's and Senator Bob Casey's staff. Then she travelled across the Hill to Representative Matt Cartwright's office, where she had a long meeting with Elizabeth Smith (see picture).

All the offices were impressed with her presentation, and the RAC staff was so impressed that they chose her speech over all the other speeches they reviewed that weekend to put up on their blog (this is the second time that a Temple Hessed student has been chosen for this honor, despite our small size!).

Alicia will share her presentation and more of what she learned when she becomes confirmed later this year.

We hope you'll come to see what a fine young woman she has become, a leader in her school and an active part of the Reform movement.



Alicia Goldenziel, Rabbi DJ Swartz and Atty. Elizabeth Smith, an aide to US Rep. Matt Cartwright

**TEMPLE HESED  
"SCRANTON'S FIRST SYNAGOGUE"**

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**ABOUT TEMPLE HESED:**

Temple Hesed, a Reform Synagogue founded Aug. 20, 1860, is Scranton's first and oldest Jewish congregation. It is one of the earliest congregations to join the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, now the Union for Reform Judaism. It has been a member since Dec. 12, 1874.

The synagogue serves the needs of individuals and families in Lackawanna County and surrounding areas. Situated on Knox Road, off Lake Scranton Road in the East Mountain section of Scranton, the current building opened in 1973. Temple Hesed operates a cemetery on West Warren Street in Dunmore.

The office is open Tuesday-Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and Friday 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Rabbi Swartz is happy to set appointments at any convenient time. Contact him to set a time. The rabbi also has "drop-in" hours every Tuesday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Friday from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. The Rabbi holds these times open for visits or calls for which an appointment was not or could not be made.

The Temple Hesed Cemetery is open for visitation six days a week. Visitation hours are: Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday 8 a.m. till dusk and it is closed for Shabbat on Saturday. For more information, call the office.



**The Rabbi Won't Drone on and on...**

At our April "Informal Shabbat," April 20th, instead of a Torah discussion, Rabbi Daniel will present a 15-minute clip from a recent video about drone warfare and the ethical questions it raises.

This video is directly addressed to religious communities, and it asks us to think deeply and carefully about this subject before it becomes even more commonplace than it already rapidly is becoming.

Everyone is welcome to take part in the service and add your voice to the questions raised by the film.

**Eco-Tip:**

🚗 **Transportation:** 10 seconds of idling uses more fuel than turning the engine on and off (NJDEP). Turn your engine off when you are sitting for more than 10 seconds, especially near children and in urban areas where pollution levels are already high.

Eco-tip provided by GreenFaith: [www.greenfaith.org](http://www.greenfaith.org)

