

# Messenger

The Temple of Loving - Kindness



שליח

**Temple Hesed, 1 Knox Road, Scranton, PA 18505**



## Temple Hesed/Temple Israel Joint Tu B'Shevat Seder

This year, our joint Temple Hesed/ Temple Israel Tu B'Shevat Seder will be held Jan. 20 at 6 pm at Temple Israel.

While details are still being planned as this issue of the Messenger goes to press, we know that it will continue to be a fruit-filled, fun-filled evening, as Rabbi Daniel, Rabbi Marjorie, and Rabbi Moshe lead us through the mystical inner meanings of trees and their fruit.

We'll scour the region for the most unusual, interesting, and tasty fruits we can find, savor them in savory combinations, and be inspired by the natural world.

More details to come – but let the Temple office know if you are interested in attending.

Email: [temple-hesed@comcast.net](mailto:temple-hesed@comcast.net)

Call; 570-344-7201



**Special points of interest:**

- Chanting Circle

**Inside this issue:**

|                          |                  |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Donations                | 2                |
| Rabbinical Reflections   | 3                |
| Co-President's column    |                  |
| Calendar                 | 4                |
| Yahrzeits                | 5                |
| URJ/RAC News             | 6                |
| Congregation Information | <b>Back Page</b> |

### **Three Community Leaders Receive the Governor Casey Medal for a Lifetime of Service**



Left to right: Rabbi Daniel Swartz; Rev. Herbert B. Keller, S.J.; Jack Tighe; Mrs. Ellen Casey; and Jesse Ergott, NWNEPA President & CEO

This year's event to honor the recipients of the Governor Robert P. Casey Medal for a Lifetime of Service was a massive success! The event, initially postponed due to an early snow storm in November, took place on Tuesday, December 11,. This year's honorees were: Rev. Herbert B. Keller, S.J.. Rabbi Daniel Swartz and Jack Tighe

Each individual has faithfully invested their time and talents to improve the quality of life of residents in Northeastern Pennsylvania. The award acknowledges their efforts and, most importantly, allows the rest of us to learn from their service. The awards were sponsored by NeighborWorks Northeastern Pennsylvania.

## Donations to Temple Hesed



Donations will  
resume next  
month.

**Call the Temple  
office at (570)  
344-7201 to  
donate or for  
more  
Information.  
The minimum  
donation that  
can be  
acknowledged  
by mail and in  
the Messenger is  
\$10.  
Major credit or  
debit cards  
accepted.**

## Purim's coming – Wanna help?

Temple Hesed's annual Purim Celebration will be on Saturday, March 16<sup>th</sup>. Even though that seems far away, now's the time to start planning and organizing.

We need help on three different fronts: with the mini-carnival, the dinner, and the Shpiel – and we'd love to have you volunteer to participate in one or more!

At the mini-carnival, our volunteers help set up, run games, distribute prizes, and clean up.

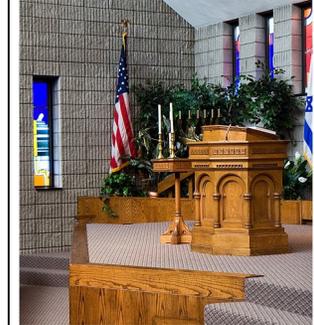
The dinner – which has been a pasta and salad dinner, but of course that could change if you want – needs some cooks, additional helpers to set up, and a clean up crew.

We also need volunteers to make Hamentashen for dessert after the Shpiel.

The Shpiel itself is a chance to let out your inner Kosher Ham – everyone is welcome and there are no tryouts!

This year, our theme is "TV Re-runs," so here's your chance to become your favorite TV character.

All potential volunteers should either call (570-344-7201) or email ([templehesed@comcast.net](mailto:templehesed@comcast.net)) the Temple office.



## Rabbinical Reflections

**Jewish Identity(ies)**

It's pretty common for Jewish programs ranging from Birthright Israel (which enables Jews 18-32 to take a free trip to Israel) to Jewish summer camps to Hebrew School programs to have as a core objective "strengthening Jewish identity." But what does that mean? What is "Jewish identity," and why is it always phrased in the singular?

These are not rhetorical questions. The more I've studied Jewish history, the more I've realized that questions about "Jewish identity" are pretty complicated, with answers that are murky at best. What is clear, however, is that what was seen as a core part of a Jewish identity in one era is often completely absent in another. Much of the Torah is concerned with animal sacrifices. Much of the rest of the Bible focuses on the establishment and continuing travails of the monarchy of Israel. Neither exist today, nor are there many who mourn their absence. To speak of Jewish identity in the singular is to ignore history.

But it's also clear that whenever we have a rich, multi-sourced picture of the history of a given era, we see that at any given time, multiple Jewish identities co-existed, though not always comfortably. Long before the modern era of Jewish "movements," such as Reform, Orthodox, Conservative and Reconstructionist, there were divisions between Saducees and Pharisees, between Karaites and those who followed the Talmud, and so on. Hanukkah, usually taught as a war between Jews and outside invaders, was as much an internal conflict between different views about what Jewish identity was as throwing off an oppressing army.

With the benefit of hindsight, it's easy to judge these past conflicts as petty, to wonder why Jews, even when faced with external enemies, couldn't figure out

ways to unite. But that problem is at least as prevalent today as at any other time in Jewish history. I understand the wishful thinking behind the phrase "Jewish identity" – a desire to proclaim "We are one" even if we often aren't, a fear of outsiders exploiting internal divisions, or a sincere belief that there are important missions for us to fulfill that can only be fulfilled if we are united.

But pretending that a problem doesn't exist is not a good strategy for actually solving that problem. And we are divided: Israel vs. the Diaspora (itself a pretty loaded term, I realize); Orthodox vs. non-orthodox; Jews focused on social justice vs. those focused on ritual; ethnic Jews vs. faith-based Jews... and the list could go on and on. Even in an area with as limited a Jewish population as NEPA, it's pretty darn hard to get Luzerne County and Lackawanna County Jews to work together, or to run joint programs with another synagogue or other Jewish organization. That doesn't mean we shouldn't keep trying – just that we should admit what the real situation is.

Rabbi Marjorie is currently teaching an adult ed class on Jewish identities to two different groups in Philadelphia. Not surprisingly, even the discussions in the two classes are pretty different from each other! But one thing many of those in either class have in common is that their own Jewish identity has been labeled as "inauthentic" or not a "real Jew" by some other Jew. Too often they've heard a sentence that begins "you can't be a real Jew if..." I admit that I, too, have in the past uttered such sentences, and I have always regretted it. If nothing else, one of the core parts of the Reform Jewish identity should be that we understand that there are many ways of being Jewish! I certainly hope that at Temple Hesed your Jewish identity (or identities!) are welcome!

By Rabbi  
Daniel J.  
Swartz,  
Spiritual  
Leader,  
Temple  
Hesed,




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"I've realized that questions about "Jewish identity" are pretty complicated..."

*Rabbi Daniel J. Swartz*

# JANUARY 2019

| Sun                          | Mon | Tue | Wed                | Thu | Fri              | Sat                          |
|------------------------------|-----|-----|--------------------|-----|------------------|------------------------------|
|                              |     | 1   | 2                  | 3   | 4 Services 6 pm  | 5                            |
| 6                            | 7   | 8   | 9                  | 10  | 11 Services 8 pm | 12 chanting circle @10:30 am |
| 13                           | 14  | 15  | 16 Board Mtg. 6 pm | 17  | 18 Services 8 pm | 19                           |
| 20 Tu B'Shvat seder @6pm @TI | 21  | 22  | 23                 | 24  | 25 Services 8 pm | 26                           |
| 27                           | 28  | 29  | 30                 | 31  |                  |                              |

## Holidays 5779 (2018–2019)

Rosh Hashanah—  
Sept. 9–10, 2018

Yom Kippur —  
Sept. 18–19, 2018

Sukkot—  
Sept. 23–30, 2018

Sh'mini Atzaret—Simchat  
Torah —Sept. 30–Oct. 1,  
2018

Hanukkah —  
Dec. 2–10, 2018

Tu B'Shvat —Jan.20–21,  
2019

Purim—  
March.20-21, 2019

Passover—  
Apr. 19–26, 2019

Yom HaShoah—  
May 1–2, 2019

Yom HaZikaron  
May. 7–8, 2019

Yom HaAtzmaut May 8–9,  
2019

Lag B'Omer — May 22–23,  
2019

Shavuot—  
June 8-9, 2019

Tisha B'Av—  
Aug. 10–11, 2019

Selichot —Sept. 21, 2019

Jewish Holidays begin at sunset.  
Dates specified are for evenings.  
Yhat means they run from sundown  
until dusk on the last day if the  
Holiday.

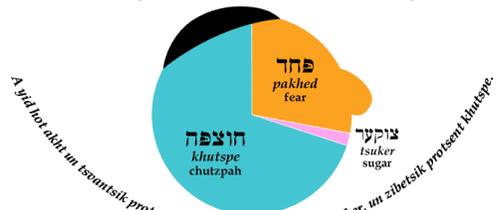
## Torah Portions



| Name      | Civil Date    | Hebrew Date    |
|-----------|---------------|----------------|
| Va'eira   | Jan. 5, 2019  | 28.Tivet.5779  |
| Bo        | Jan. 12, 2019 | 6.Shevat.5779  |
| Beshalach | Jan. 19, 2019 | 13.Shevat.5779 |
| Yitro     | Jan. 26, 2019 | 20.Shevat.5779 |

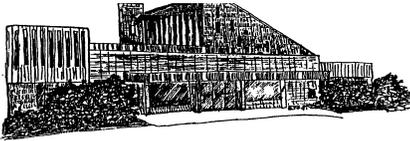
More information is available from [www.reformjudaism.org](http://www.reformjudaism.org)

א ייד האט אכט און צוואנציק פראצענט פחד,  
צוויי פראצענט צוקער און זיבעציק פראצענט חוצפה.



A Jew is twenty-eight percent fear, two percent sugar, and seventy percent chutzpah.

# Yahrzeits and Personal Notes



## Get Wells

Larry Golden  
Ellen Kline  
Jane Knobel  
Rich Mates  
Charlotte Milliken  
Charlene Ostro

Joel Ostro  
Janet Slawitsky  
Edward Snitko,  
Sr.  
Emily Trunzo

### Week Ending January 5 (Service January 4)

\*Jessica Parker Mannoff, \*Isaac Ziegler, \*Janet Phillips, Robert Lerner, \*Jennie Bakaley, Grace E. Davis, \*Louis Kleeman, \*Olga Adelman, \*Blanche Silverstein, \*Isadore Levine, \*Bernice Lenchner, \*Alvin Ziegler, \*Herman Schneider, \*Freda Ball, \*Henrietta Jacobs

### Week Ending January 12 (Service January 11)

Jessie Samter Ellenbogen, \*Frederick L. Wormser, \*George Phillips, \*Samuel Feldman, \*George Bauer, \*Mabelle Druck, \*Minnie Harris, \*Tillie Lauer Marks, \*Gertrude Ziegler, \*George Joel, \*Faye Bernstein, \*Eric S. Gardner, \*Edward Denis, Nancy Jackman, \*Marvine L. Dinner, \*Ophelia H. Hefter, \*Hattie Ross Lauer, \*Anna Fragin

### Week Ending January 19 (Service January 18)

\*Shirley Troy Cornfield, \*Edna Kabatchnick, \*Abraham Wolf, \*Jack Friedman, \*Abe Newman, \*Mary Freeman, \*Ethel Friedmann, Emily Kominz, \*Michael R. Graham, \*Simon Lauer, \*Herman Goodman, \*Leonard Saltzman

### Week Ending January 26 (Service January 25)

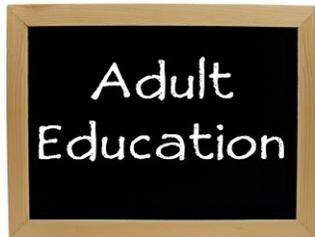
Anne Marie Heilbrunn, \*Sadie R. Lichtman, \*Morris Whitman, \*Ruth Livingston, \*Sarah Bloch, \*Arthur L. Goldsmith, \*Abraham Leventhal, \*Dr. Morton Hodes, \*Solomon Schudmack, \*Professor Anita Appleton, \*Carl Goldman, \*Alice Goldsmith, Barbara Ballot, Saul Kaplan, Theodore Kaplan, Frimi Gromer, \*Rebecca Levy, \*Barbara Sapsowitz, Robert Sundheim, \*Monroe R. Smith, \*Milton Aronsohn, \*Carl Davis, \*Lillian Goldfarb, \*Madeline Goldsmith, \*Jacob Sydansk, \*Charles Noe

### Week Ending February 2 (Service February 1)

\*Jennie Lehman, \*Sadie W. Young, \*Sol Davidow, \*Frances Kaufman, \*Dorothy Rosenberg, \*Pamela Tigrett, Jacob Newman, Blanche Anspacher, Mindy Gromer, \*Aaron Cooperman, \*Emma L. Sarlin, Fred Friedmann, \*Stephen M. Simon, \*Maxwell M. Neumann, \*Lena Weinberger

## Sheloshim

**Former Temple member, Linda Weinstock died in December.. We wish to extend our deepest sympathy to Linda's brother and sister-in-law, Bob and Dale Hersh as well as their entire family.**



### Interfaith Chanting Circle: Connecting with the Tree of Life,

In the heart of winter, a casual observer might think that trees are completely dormant.

But as we approach Tu B'Shevat, the full moon of the month of Shevat and the Jewish New Year of the Tree (see also our Tu B'Shevat Seder!), something mysterious is happening deep

below the ground - the sap is rising, as trees begin their long preparation for spring.

How do we connect to our own "deep underground" energies? What can we learn from trees? From the Tree of Life itself? We'll explore our connection to trees and the Tree of Life in our January meeting of

our interfaith Chanting Circle. on Jan.12 at 10:30 am.

## A Little Tu Bishvat from URJ

Tu Bishvat or the "New Year of the Trees" is Jewish Arbor Day. The holiday is observed on the 15th (tu) of the Hebrew month of Shvat. Scholars believe that originally Tu Bishvat was an agricultural festival, marking the emergence of spring. In the 17th century, Kabbalists created a ritual for Tu Bishvat that is similar to a Passover seder. Today, many Jews hold a modern version of the Tu Bishvat seder each year. The holiday also has become a tree-planting festival in Israel, in which Israelis and Jews around the world plant trees in honor or in memory of loved ones and friends.

Tu Bishvat is not mentioned in the Torah. According to scholars, the holiday was originally an agricultural festival, corre-

sponding to the beginning of spring in Israel. As in the case with many Jewish observances, a critical historical event served as a catalyst. After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E. and the exile that followed, many Jews felt a need to bind themselves symbolically to their former homeland. Tu Bishvat served in part to fill that spiritual need. As it was no longer possible to bring tithes to the Temple, Jews used this time each year to eat a variety of fruits and nuts that could be obtained from Palestine. The practice, a sort of physical association with the land, continued for many centuries.

The sixteenth and seventeenth century kabbalists (mystics) of Palestine elaborated on the exilic customs, creating a ritu-

al for Tu Bishvat somewhat similar to the Passover seder. On Erev Tu Bishvat, they would gather in their homes for a fifteen-course meal, each course being one of the foods associated with the land. Between courses, they would read from an anthology called P'ri Eitz Hadar (Citrus Fruit), a compilation of passages on trees drawn from the Bible, the Talmud, and the mystical Zohar.

Today in modern Israel, Tu Bishvat has become a national holiday, a tree planting festival for both Israelis and Jews throughout the world. Much of the credit for the great joy and spirit of the holiday is a direct result of the important work of the Jewish National Fund.

## National and International News



## URJ Reacts to ACA Decision

WASHINGTON – In response to Texas District Court Judge Reed O'Connor's decision striking down the Affordable Care Act, Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner, Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, issued the following statement on behalf of the Union for Reform Judaism, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and the wider Reform Movement institutions:

"By all accounts, Judge O'Connor's decision has no sound basis in law, yet threatens access to quality, affordable health insurance for millions of Americans and puts the U.S.

health care system in peril. For eight years, the Affordable Care Act has protected people with pre-existing conditions, offered insurance through competitive exchanges, and provided Medicaid for low-income Americans who went without insurance for too long. This latest legal challenge is yet another attempt by ACA opponents to sow confusion and undermine a law the Supreme Court has already upheld.

"It is imperative that all Americans understand that the ACA and their coverage remains in place as this case is appealed. Our Jewish values teach us to

act as partners with God to heal those in need. The ACA has proven to be an essential tool in that effort and we will continue to advocate for it and other policies that allow all people to access their right to health care."

Temple Hesed Phone: 570-344-7201  
1 Knox Road Fax: 570-344-4514  
Scranton, PA 18505

#### 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.

Our Partners Include;

#### "The Temple of Loving Kindness" On the Web at: [templehesed.org](http://templehesed.org)

#### Temple personnel and officers

##### SPIRITUAL LEADER

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570-877-3454 (cell)  
570-344-7201 (office)  
([rabbidaniel@comcast.net](mailto:rabbidaniel@comcast.net))

##### OFFICERS

**Esther Adelman and Steven Seitchik** - Co-Presidents  
**Larry Milliken** - 1st Vice President  
**Cheryl Friedman** - 2nd Vice President  
**Jeffrey Leventhal** - Treasurer  
**Joan Davis** - Secretary  
**Jennifer Novak** - Assistant Secretary

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**Honorary Life Board Member: Jane Oppenheim**

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