Rabbi Daniel J. Swartz has a new contract that will keep him here as spiritual leader through 5784 (2024). It was one of three items approved overwhelmingly by congregation members.

The e-mailed vote stood in place of the annual congregational meeting. In-person meetings were not permitted due to state regulations stemming from the COVID-19 virus pandemic.

The rabbi’s new 48-month employment agreement begins Sept. 1, 2020 and runs through Aug. 31, 2024. The contract also provides for a review of the rabbi’s performance at the end of 36 months to determine if he will be offered a renewal of his agreement once this pact expires.

Temple Hesed members also approved a new budget that runs from Sept. 1, 2020 to Aug. 31, 2021. The budget notes that membership is declining at an average of five membership units per year. Our membership for 2020 is at 110 units.

The congregation also okayed a policy of ‘total return’ as it applies to draw downs from the endowment funds.

The co-presidency of the Temple will now be in the hands of a trio instead of a duo. Cheryl Friedman will be the third co-president, joining Esther Adelman and Steven Seitchik in heading up the Temple’s board of directors.

Board members are unchanged: Natalie Gelb, Paula Kane, Carol Leventhal, Judith Golden, Donna Kostiak and Loren Selznick will serve until Aug. 31, 2021. Serving until 8/31/22 are Kenneth Ganz, Robert Hersh and Josh Levine. Jane Oppenheim remains honorary life director.

Also, Larry Milliken will stay on as vice president, Jeffery Leventhal will keep the treasurer’s post, Jennifer Novak and Joan Davis will hold the secretary’s and assistant secretary’s posts respectively.

With Lackawanna County now in “green” status, we will be returning to in-person services in July.

We will be practicing social distancing, with people wearing masks and chairs at least six feet apart.

For the time being, we also will forego having an Oneg Shabbat after the service.

We understand that people may still be uncomfortable coming to in-person events, so we will also be experimenting with streaming the services online.

We will start by streaming through Facebook and see how that goes.

To watch, just head over to the Temple Hesed Facebook page, https://www.facebook.com/TempleHesed/ at the time of the service (6 pm on July 3rd and 8 pm on the 10th, 17th, 24th, and 31st.

We’ll evaluate how Facebook streaming is working during the month, and if we need to find an alternative way to stream, we will send that information out on the weekly Temple email. The email will also be used to let you know what is planned for August.

The next Messenger is scheduled for September.
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.

**BUILDING FUND**

In Honor of the Yahrzeits of Gertrude and Isaac Sobel  
Sylvan and Joan Sobel

In Memory of Randi Alderson’s Mother  
Steve and Ellen Seitchik

In Memory of Fred Levy’s Mother  
Steve and Ellen Seitchik

Get Well Wishes to Phil Rosenstein  
Steve and Ellen Seitchik

In Memory of Jimmie Ellenbogen  
Paula Wasser  
Esther Friedmann

**RABBI’S DISCRETIONARY FUND**

In Memory of Jimmie Ellenbogen  
Cheryl and Mike Friedman

**LINDA LEE LEVENTHAL TOY FUND**

In Memory of Jimmie Ellenbogen  
Lindsay Leventhal

**TORAH RESTORATION FUND**

In Memory of Norman Gevanthor’s Sister, Ellen  
Esther Adelman

**MARK HAHN MEMORIAL MUSIC FUND**

Without my always and forever friend Jimmie with me, the operas will never be the same  
Audrey Harrell

**MEMORIES**

**The Boys (& Girls) of Summer**

Yes, I’m referring to a baseball team, a Temple Hesed baseball team! I was culling my drawer of tee shirts collected over the years from various venues, including the Race for the Cure, Bath & Body Works (my fun job for 14 years), JCC events that I’ve chaired, several cruises, botanical gardens, a Neil Diamond concert, etc. I’m sure that you all have similar drawers.

Anyway, I came upon the pictured shirt, which took me back many years ago to several summers when Temple Hesed’s baseball team was active. Both men and women participated, encompassing all levels of expertise, as you may guess. Anyone who knows me soon realizes that I’m much more cerebral than physical, so I was mainly part of the rooting section, unless team desperation set in or we were short players. We did get together for practices and actually played some games against (Are you ready?) a similar team from Temple Israel.

The team shirts meant that we were a part of something special, a social gathering with members of both Temples just getting together for fun. I don’t remember where we played, but I do remember that of course (It was a Jewish occasion, after all.) there was food involved afterwards, usually at Abe’s.

I miss the “Good Old Days”, even more now that we are in the throes of social distancing. I’m hoping that some day, we can again all come together (not on Zoom) and have some real fun!

Esther Adelman
**Why “All Lives Matter” is Inadequate**

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

Before I dive into the question of “Black Lives Matter” vs. “All Lives Matter,” let me begin with “a word from our sponsor” (as they used to say): Jewish tradition. Why should we bother paying attention to what a more-than-3500-year-old tradition says, when we are in a completely different world than even a few decades ago? Because our tradition addresses what underlies our world, despite the changes: basic societal dynamics and profound insights into the human psyche. To these constant parameters that are behind ever-changing problems, our tradition brings to bear timeless values. That combination is incredible valuable, especially when we understand “Jewish tradition” to mean something even broader than the teachings of Torah or lessons from sages who have been in dialogue with Torah for countless generations. For me, “Jewish tradition” also encompasses our shared historical experiences.

With that in mind, let’s look at a very up-to-date issue through the lens of this ancient tradition. Namely, how do we respond to those who say, “shouldn’t it be ‘all lives matter’ and not ‘black lives matter’”? Two very different parts of our tradition both make it clear that “all lives matter,” while obviously on the surface a good theme, is inadequate. Thus, at this moment, we need to join in saying “Black Lives Matter.”

The first lesson from our tradition has to do with the most oft-repeated commandment in the whole Torah. No, it isn’t about believing in God, or not worshipping idols, or any of the myriad Jewish rituals our tradition describes. Instead, it is one of the more than three dozen variations on this statement from Deuteronomy 24:17: “You shall not subvert the rights/justice due to a stranger or an orphan and you shall not seize the widow’s garment as collateral.” Over and over again, the Torah calls for protecting, even loving, the stranger, the orphan and the widow. Do these repeated calls mean that only the stranger, widow, and orphan are deserving of such protection? Of course not — and there are times (though not as many) when the Torah uses language closer to the “all lives matter” end of the spectrum, calling on us to love our neighbors as ourselves. (More on the term “neighbor” in just a moment.) But the authors of the Torah recognized that you don’t need to call for special protections for, let’s say, the wealthy and powerful. First, they have the resources to protect themselves. And second, societies tend to favor them in any case — they are almost always given rights and protection, even when others are not. But if we protect the least powerful, the most vulnerable, those on the fringes of society, those who are often overlooked or even despised, then we end up protecting everybody.

Applying those same criteria to our present situation, it becomes clear that “Black Lives Matter” is a modern restatement of “value the lives of the stranger, widow, and orphan.” The slogan doesn’t say “Non-black lives don’t matter.” Rather, it recognizes that America has a long history of racism, a history that continues to impact the present in countless ways (a subject worthy of its own column in the future). Furthermore, there is still active racism today, a variety of attitudes and institutions that don’t value Black lives and that sometimes put them in mortal danger. That doesn’t mean that other groups aren’t also put down sometimes — but we do have to recognize that “driving while Jewish” isn’t the equivalent of “driving while Black.” If we really take racism seriously, if we change the institutions and attitudes that devalue Black lives, not only will we be doing the moral thing, we will also be fashioning a world that is better for us as well.

The second lesson is playing out right now in the election campaign in Poland, as that country addresses — or stays in denial about — its role in the Holocaust. The incumbent president, Andrzej Duda, has seen his overwhelming lead in the polls vanish. And so, not too surprisingly, he is turning to Antisemitism — and doing so in a way that teaches another lesson about the inadequacy of “all lives matter.” (For an excellent article that goes into much greater depth on this, see Joel Swanson’s June 22 article on the Polish elections in the Forward.) Duda’s campaign claims that his opponent will take money from “the pockets of Polish families” to provide financial compensation to Jewish families for property looted during the Holocaust (Poland is the only former Soviet-bloc country that hasn’t already done so). Duda says that the question of wartime restitution is not about Jews at all, but “concerns all those who lost property, irrespective of their nationality.” In other words, everyone suffered, all lives matter, so no “special rights” for Jews.

Duda’s argument misses a number of key points. First of all, 90% of Poland’s Jews were wiped out by the Holocaust — a percentage vastly different from the casualties of the rest of the nation. There’s just no comparison. Second, Duda deliberately ignores Polish collaboration in the Holocaust. Over and over again, he paints Poles as victims only, and has even passed laws against mentioning various forms of Polish responsibility. So when he says “all those who lost property,” he isn’t really showing how much he cares about anyone who suffered. He’s trying to erase Polish responsibility and ignore targeted Jewish persecution.

Similarly, Joel Swanson points out, many who say “all lives matter” aren’t actually talking “about affirming the universal value of human life, but about denying that the United States has a long history of anti-Blackness, institutionalized through federal government policy, which requires specifically pro-Black policies to address its effects today.” I’d add that what they’re really saying is “all* lives matter,” with the * being understood to mean, “all except for the people who aren’t like us and don’t really count.” When Hitler spoke and wrote that Nazi ideology “would make Germany great again,” he meant Germany* — and the * excluded Jews, communists, Roma, lesbians, gays etc. All of which hearkens back to why the Torah specifically includes those who would be otherwise ignored — and why we today should join in saying, “Black Lives Matter.”

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**SEE RELATED STORY ON PAGE 9**

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**Rabbinical Reflections**

By Rabbi Daniel J. Swartz
THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES

Every aspect of our lives is in turmoil. Will we and our families survive this pandemic? What emotional scars will it leave, especially on our children, both young and adult? Will we still have our jobs tomorrow, and will we be safe at our jobs? When will we be able to celebrate a family simcha? When will we be able to attend a service, enjoy a concert, a movie, a museum, a zoo, a ballgame? When will we go to school, go to the market or the bank, get our hair cut, have friends over, treat ourselves to a shopping spree, go on vacation, board an airplane or ship—without being fearful? In other words, when will our lives be “normal” again?

We realize now how much that we had taken for granted when we could come and go as we pleased. If we look at our lives today, we realize that we have given up much of our personal freedom for the survival of humankind itself. By keeping ourselves safe, we are keeping others safe.

Those of us in leadership positions at Temple Hesed, including your Officers, Board of Directors, and Rabbi Swartz, have been continually assessing what is good for the Temple and its members. Marlene (Gianzanti, Temple Administrator) has been a jewel—keeping an eye on the building itself and holding us all together by taking care of all the details involved in running the congregation from afar.

Even though the building itself is closed, life goes on. There are still bills to pay and many decisions to be made, just as at home. Our first concern is always for the comfort and safety of our members. To that end, we are following the guidelines of Governor Wolf and the CDC, plus suggestions from the URJ and the CCAR.

We have been managing as best we can via the use of Zoom and email, but they obviously have their limitations. By necessity, the personal touch has been all but lost. We figured out how to get through the annual meeting, which worked out as well as could be expected, thanks to the input of our members. The question that is looming large now is what to do about the High Holy Days. With Pennsylvania in the green stage of recovery, we will have to wait to see what happens in the next month or so. We will look at all of our options, and have more than one plan in place. We will do our best, always with everyone’s safety in mind, to have the best possible outcome, but please keep in mind that we may have to conduct High Holy Day services this year by streaming them or by using Zoom. We will keep our members informed as to our progress.

Let’s enjoy our beautiful summer weather, always keeping ourselves and our loved ones safe.

In Hesed,

— Esther
WASHINGTON — In response to the Supreme Court’s rulings in *Bostock v. Clayton County, GA* affirming anti-discrimination protections for LGBTQ workers, Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner, Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, released the following statement on behalf of the Union for Reform Judaism, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and the wider Reform Movement institutions:

“We celebrate the Supreme Court’s historic decision protecting the LGBTQ community from workplace discrimination. By ruling that Title VII prohibits sex discrimination including discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, the Court has affirmed the right of all Americans to work free from the threat of these types of prejudice. Even as the Trump administration took steps over the weekend to harm LGBTQ people by rolling back civil rights protections in the ACA, today’s Supreme Court decision makes clear that those who promote or allow such discrimination are on the wrong side of history.

“Judaism teaches that we are all made in the image of the Divine, deserving of dignity and just treatment. It is our responsibility to ensure that we live up to that ideal. The US government has previously failed to adequately protect vulnerable members of the LGBTQ community. We are hopeful that this landmark decision represents a new chapter of tolerance, acceptance, and justice.

RAC LAUDS SCOTUS Decision on LGBTQ Employment

Shabbat Under the Stars — Take 2. On July 17

*If at first you don’t succeed...*

Our first attempt at a Service Under the Stars in June was thwarted by COVID-19 concerns, lightning strikes and a fierce plague of gnats.

One might think that would be enough to scare us off from a second attempt, but we at Temple Hesed don’t scare easily!

So we’re giving it another try on July 17th, at 8 p.m. again with the musical stylings of Harry Adelman leading the way, and Rabbi Daniel sharing a Shabbat story.

We will practice social distancing, we’ll figure out a gnat prevention program, and we’ll see how the weather holds up.

Everyone is welcome to join us for this fun and lively occasion.
**Torah Portions**

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

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“In a beautiful apple you sometimes find a worm.”

From [www.yiddishwit.com](http://www.yiddishwit.com)
August 2020

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* attend via Zoom Video Conferencing

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<td>August 29, 2020</td>
<td>9.Elul.5780</td>
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More information is available from www.reformjudaism.org

“If you put a shtreimel on a pig, would it make him a rabbi?”

From www.yiddishwit.com
Week Ending July 4 (Service July 3)

Week Ending July 11 (Service July 10)

Week Ending July 18 (Service July 17)

Week Ending July 25 (Service July 24)

Week Ending August 1 (Service July 31)

Week Ending August 8 (Service August 7)

Week Ending August 15 (Service August 14)

Week Ending August 22 (Service August 21)

Week Ending August 29 (Service August 28)
July Chanting Circles: Zeal — July 11, 18, and 25

In July, we will have one in-person chanting circle, for an hour on July 11th, and two chanting circles on Zoom, each for a half hour, on the 18th and 25th. The July 11th circle will also be viewable on Zoom.

In all three cases, the chanting circle will begin at 11:30 a.m. and will explore the theme of “Zeal” through the story of the zealot-archetype Pinchas.

This story shows both the power and danger of zeal — how it lifts us from powerlessness but can also give rise to conflict and self-righteousness. We see these various aspects of zeal and zealotry all around us at the present moment, but we rarely try to understand what is going on beneath the surface. Through chant, study, and sharing, we will do just that — giving voice to our inner power while finding a healthy context that leads away from the potential pitfalls of zeal. Everyone is welcome to join us.

To join by Zoom, click on: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/262786448?pwd=bEZnSnF2dy1RZz5Q2pm8VRCVjBwZz09
Or through the Zoom app, enter Meeting ID: 262 786 448 and Password: Gratitude

Black Lives Matter to URJ

Throughout the past 400 years, Black people in America have been enslaved, subjugated, disenfranchised, murdered, and discriminated against. From generation to generation, white Americans, including white Jews, have failed to own and end the systemic racial injustices on which the nation was founded, and instead have actively or passively perpetuated these injustices.

Our Jewish tradition is replete with instances of moral reckoning when we are asked to be present and accounted for. “Ayecha?,” we are asked. “Where are you?” We respond with a full throated, “Hineinu.” “We are here.”

As Reform Jews committed to the spirit of this teaching, we say unequivocally, Black Lives Matter.

To affirm that Black Lives Matter is for white Reform Jews to pledge to be in solidarity with Black Jews and Black people from all backgrounds against racial injustice and to act accordingly.

To affirm that Black Lives Matter is to recognize the imperative to live with complexity and know that we can be steadfast in our love of and support for Israel while working side by side with those who hold differing views and express them respectfully.

To affirm that Black Lives Matter is to accept discomfort, knowing that actions or inaction of white Jews have contributed to ongoing racial injustice.

To affirm that Black Lives Matter is to move beyond allyship and commit to long-term solutions both internally in ourselves, our own organization, and externally in our communities to disrupt and dismantle white supremacy.

To affirm that Black Lives Matter is to acknowledge that Black people risk their personal comfort and safety every day in white dominated institutions, and that white Jews must commit to risking their personal comfort and even safety in the struggle for racial justice.

To affirm that Black Lives Matter is to ensure that People of Color can be whole, never expected to choose between aspects of their identity and celebrate the multifaceted nature of humanity.

To affirm that Black Lives Matter is to commit to individual and organizational antiracist trainings, identifying specific antiracist hiring practices and lay structures, and outlining goals around specific racial justice action steps.

To affirm that Black Lives Matter is for white Jews to reflect on their own thoughts and behavior, to build meaningful relationships with Jews of Color and People of Color generally, and to work for reforms that will achieve real, lived freedom for Black people.

We affirm that Black Lives Matter.
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;

- Temple personnel and officers

- Temple Hesed

- Scranton's first and oldest Jewish congregation

- One of the earliest congregations to join the Union of American Hebrew Congregations

- Member since Dec. 12, 1874

- Situated on Knox Road, off Lake Scranton Road

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- For more information, call the office