Virtual Sukkot Zooms on Friday

All the “ballots” have been counted, and while it was still close, the majority has spoken: we’re celebrating Zookot this year (Sukkot on Zoom), with Rabbis Daniel and Marjorie leading from the Sukkah in their backyard, and Ed Snitko providing music (on his accordion!) from a remote location, this Friday, October 2nd at 6pm (since it is also the First Friday of October).

We'll have all our usual fun Sukkot songs in this family-friendly service, open to everyone. But don't fret — if you want an in-person Sukkot experience, just email Rabbi Daniel at rabbi@daniel@comeast.net and he'll work out a time when, safely and with social distancing observed, you can visit the sukkah in person and shake the lulav! To join us on the 2nd, just click https://us02web.zoom.us/j/468408948?pwd=QFJRMVFZdW5azUvTzNPWmhhSXXrUT09

Or from the Zoom app, enter Meeting ID: 468 408 948 and Passcode: FFShabat

The service will also be on the Temple Hesed YouTube channel, https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwWxdQzCeD-We6lfbDSNI.Tw?

Simchat Torah — Together with Temple Israel of Lehighton

This year, Simchat Torah, our celebration of the Torah, when we end one cycle of Torah reading and start another, starts on Friday evening, October 9th. And this year, we’ll celebrate Simchat Torah (on Zoom) together with Rabbi Marjorie’s congregation, Temple Israel of Lehighton. Rabbi Daniel and Rabbi Marjorie will read from the Torah at their home (weather-permitting, in their Sukkah). Join us for this celebratory, joyful and inspiring service by clicking: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86018942990?pwd=VEzXZnphM3o4RG1LK2dpRnhYM3ArQT09

Or, from the Zoom app, enter Meeting ID: 860 1894 2990 and Passcode: Shalom

The service will also be on the Temple Hesed YouTube channel, https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwWxdQzCeD-We6lfbDSNI.Tw?
What’s Online and What’s Not

Rabbi Daniel will be visiting family in mid-October, so he is restricting in person contacts before leaving and will be self-quarantining after return. So all services, classes and programs he is leading will be online, on Zoom and simultaneously live-streamed onto YouTube.

Our own Harry Adelman will lead our monthly “Informal Service” on October 16th at 8 pm. That service will be led from Temple Hesed and people, properly masked, are invited to come in person, with seating arranged at safe social distances.

That service will not be on Zoom but will still be on the Temple Hesed YouTube channel, [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwWXduQKzeDWe61fbDSNLTw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwWXduQKzeDWe61fbDSNLTw)

Starting in November, we are hoping that more services and programs will be in person.

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Donations to Temple Hesed

Donations will appear 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.
Outtakes from the High Holy Days

Sometimes, anywhere from a few months to several years after a movie is released, a second version comes out, a “director’s cut.” At least in theory, these are scenes the director loved that for some reason — most often time or budget, but sometimes just story flow — were cut. Most of the time, as I write sermons for the High Holy Days, I come up with at least some great material that doesn’t make it into the final draft. But this year, we worked hard to cut down the time of every aspect of every service, so as to not subject everyone to endless hours on Zoom. Which meant that each sermon was less than half as long as usual — so what was edited out from each sermon was longer than what was left in.

So, for this month’s Rabbinical Reflections, I’m sharing with you one interesting text from each sermon that ended up on the metaphorical cutting room floor.

Just as a reminder, here is the basic text that I used for all four sermons: Ben Zoma said: Who is wise? One who learns from every person, as it is said: “From all who taught me I gained understanding.” (Psalms 119:99) Who is mighty? One who subdues one’s inclinations/impulses, as it is said: “Those that are slow to anger are better than the mighty; and those that rule their spirit than one who takes a city.” (Proverbs 16:32). Who is rich? Those who rejoice in their portion, as it is said: “You shall enjoy the fruit of the labor of your hands, you shall be happy and you shall prosper.” (Psalms 128:2) Who is honored? One who honors fellow human beings [as it is said]: “For I honor those that honor Me.” (I Samuel 2:36).

“Deleted Scenes” from the “Who is Wise” sermon: First, a great, though complicated text I would have loved to include. Rav Abraham Isaac Kook, the first Chief Rabbi of (pre-state) Israel, wrote: “One must beware of the cancerous type of zealot-ness that is a result of a haughty presumptuousness that causes oneself to regard fragmentary intellectual spiritual expressions as though they stood at the heights of exalted comprehensiveness.” In other words, none of us really has the whole picture — but someone who believes that the fragment they understand is the whole Truth often becomes a dangerous zealot. And as if to prove Rav Kook’s point, here is a head-slapping text from an Orthodox rabbi whom I shall leave nameless, who completely misses the point of Ben Zoma, turning a plea for tolerance and diversity into an excuse for bigotry. He wrote, “This is what Ben Zoma is teaching us: Only an already wise person can learn from each person. A person who has not reached the level of being wise cannot learn from each person since he is not yet wise like a sage, so he may learn the wrong thing. If we are not wise in understanding the moral and ethical ramifications of various life styles, then how can we permit ourselves to be influenced by the media? It is possible that we may accept such behavior as being proper and cause ourselves great damage. A person who is already wise, he can learn from all persons, even from the perverts and homosexuals. But we who are not yet wise would be wise to distance ourselves from these people and spare ourselves of pitfalls that such life styles bring.” Wow! Hard to know how to respond to someone who manages to turn a text completely on its head to justify his discomfort with people who disagree. And finally, an alternative answer found in a section of the Talmud called Tamid, which depicts Alexander the Great asking 10 sages a series of questions, including who is wise, to which they answer, “One who knows what is being born.” I could imagine Yoda giving that answer!

From the “Who is Strong” sermon: First, a different version of Pirke Avot (where the Ben Zoma text is found) called Pirke d’Rabbi Nathan, which adds, “Some say, one who makes an enemy into a friend.” What a great thought for these times! And this thought from Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, former Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, who wrote about the difference between power (which kings hold) and influence (which was the realm of the prophets): He wrote, “Prophets, by contrast, had no power at all. They commanded no armies. They levied no taxes. They spoke God’s word, but had no means of enforcing it. All they had was influence — but what influence! To this day, Eliyahu’s fight against corruption, Amos’ call to social justice, Isaiah’s vision of the end of days, are still capable of moving us by the sheer force of their inspiration. Who, today, is swayed by the lives of Ahab or Jehoshaphat or Jehu? When a king dies, his power ends. When a prophet dies, his influence begins.” Something to think about, eh?

Rabbinical Reflections

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

I hope you’ve enjoyed the chance to peek behind the curtain a bit and learn some of what I had to cut out. Most of all, I hope that the High Holy Days, despite their unprecedented format, brought you comfort, insight, support, and hope. L’shannah Tovah!

From the “Who is Rich” sermon: From Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav, an interesting take on the line from Psalms that Ben Zoma quotes, “You shall enjoy the fruit of the labor of your hands.” He wrote, “Why does the text say, ‘hands?’ Our Sages highlight the idea that one’s work must be ‘the labor of your hands.’ A person’s heart and mind, by contrast, should be directed towards seeking spiritual fulfillment, rather than earning a livelihood. And it promises that the outcome of such an approach will be: ‘You will be happy.’” In other words, of course, you have to make a living. But that shouldn’t be where your heart resides, what your soul and mind emphasize. Rather, your job is one thing — but your deepest devotion should be to God.

And from the “Who is Honored” sermon: Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto wrote, “The desire for honor tugs at a person’s heart more than any other longing and desire in the world.” What an insight! It explains both some really problematic behavior — why politics can become so ego-driven, why people lie about their accomplishments, why people try to steal the credit for something from those who it should rightly belong to. But also some profoundly important movements, including all of civil rights, which is about people deserving to be treated fairly and equally.
Esther’s High Holy Days Message

(This message was delivered Rosh Hashana morning.)

L’shana Tova and welcome.

Have you ever wondered why Rosh Hashanah, which begins on the first day of Tishrei, the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar, is called the Jewish New Year? In all of my studies, both with Rabbis and independently, it never occurred to me to ask that question. After some thought, I have come up with my own interpretation. Obviously, Rosh Hashanah does not symbolize the beginning of the calendar year, so it must have a deeper, more subtle meaning. To me, it marks the beginning of our spiritual year. We are ending one year on a somber note, atoning to man and to God for the transgressions that we have committed during that year. Then God is renewing our choice between good and evil, between life and death. He hopes that we choose life and goodness, but it is ultimately our choice. We begin each New Year spiritually refreshed.

The High Holy Days are a time for reflection and introspection. We are commanded to look back at the last year to ponder our actions. We are commanded to make amends to those whom we may have harmed in any way, be it on a personal, family, friend, or business level. Some of our actions may have left emotional or physical scars. Some of our actions may have taken out of our lives people who mean something to us. During the Days of Repentance, between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, it is the perfect time to make an honest effort to “put things right”.

It is also the time to make amends to God for our transgressions during 5780, as we look to the New Year ahead. As it says in the Yom Kippur memorial service: “Help us, Lord, to fulfill the promise that is in each of us, and so to conduct ourselves that, generations hence, it will be true to say of us: The world is better because, for a brief space, they lived in it.”

Here’s the part where I would ask everyone to look at getting involved in some way in the life of Temple Hesed. All of us have had to deal with becoming accustomed to an entirely different way of life for the past six months. COVID-19 is always lurking in the background, forcing us to rethink almost every move we make. So it has been with Temple Hesed, evidenced by the way we are virtually observing the High Holy Days and every other phase of Temple life. But life at Temple Hesed still goes on. There have been ongoing weekly virtual Shabbat services and chanting circles, with education sessions for children and adults coming in the near future. We have even had virtual Board meetings or votes via email when necessary. Our first obligation to everyone is safety. We are remaining in touch with our members, mainly via email, to inform all of you about what is happening. Please save your Messengers and read Rabbi Schwartz’s weekly emails for important information. You can always call 570-344-7901. Marlene will answer.

Steve, Cheryl, and I wish for our Temple family that we all be inscribed for blessing in the Book of Life, and that the New Year is a good year for us. Please stay safe and be well.

Next year at Temple Hesed!

Esther Adelman
ENTERING THE ORCHARD: AN INVITATION TO JEWISH MYSTICISM, BEGINNING OCTOBER 25TH AT 4 PM

Join us for five Sundays, starting October 25th and continuing through the first four Sundays in November, for an exciting venture into the realm of Jewish mysticism. Judaism, over the course of 3000 or so years, has developed rich, intricate and diverse systems of describing the metaphysical world and our mystical connections to the Divine. This adult education course will provide a brief introduction to the history of Jewish mysticism’s major trends and symbolic systems, and look at some of the mystical underpinnings of everyday Jewish practices. Many elements of the Friday night service, like the song L’cha Dodi, are filled with kabalistic references. Even the traditional way of holding the kiddish cup on Friday nights is based on turning our body into a conduit for the unifying the masculine and feminine elements of the Divine. The world of Jewish mysticism and Kabbalah is complex and multi-layered and can be studied for a lifetime and still remain shrouded in mystery. We will hope to lift the veil, at least for brief moments, and allow what is concealed to be revealed.

Please contact Rabbi Daniel at rabbidaniel@comcast.net if you are interested in participating. (Note: if the Sunday afternoon class time doesn’t work for you but you are still interested, please let Rabbi Daniel know as soon as possible and he will try to figure out how to accommodate you.)

The class will at least start on Zoom and, depending on conditions, will either continue solely on Zoom or may be a hybrid of zoom and in-person. To join us at 4 p.m. on Sunday, October 25th, just click https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83700031974?pwd=ekrzWE1Gek5Q7T3YQlBDcDlwbk5UT09
Or from the Zoom app, enter Meeting ID: 837 0003 1974 and Passcode: Zohar

(If you can’t click on this link, copy and paste onto your browser.)

Multifaith Chanting Circles for Oct. 3:

Our Multifaith Chanting Circle theme for October is “Harvesting Joy.” How can we find satisfaction in our accomplishments and present circumstances, despite messages from our society that we always need to be doing (and buying) more and more? And how, in a time of fear and division, can we find joy? Those are the questions we’ll explore through chant, study, and mutual support. Everyone is welcome, no matter their faith background, and no prior chanting experience is necessary. All chanting circles begin at 11:30 a.m. and are on Zoom. In October, we’ll gather on October 3rd for 1 hour and on October 24 and 31 for 1½ hour — there will not be a chanting circle on either October 10 or 17.
To join the chanting circle, just click https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83570030002?pwd=TE8xQ2NDTl8xSk83enRSQXFMY2lUdz09
Or from the Zoom App, enter Meeting ID: 835 7003 0002 Passcode: Gratitude
### October 2020

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#### 5781 Holiday Calendar

- **Rosh HaShanah**  — Sept. 18-19
  - Jan. 27-28
- **Purim**  — Feb. 25-26
- **Yom Kippur**  — Sept. 27-28
  - Oct. 2-9
- **Sukkot**  — Oct. 9-10
- **Sh’mini Atzeret**  — Oct. 9-10
- **Simchat Torah**  — Oct. 9-10
  - Dec. 10-18
- **Tu Bishvat**  — Apr. 29-30

#### Torah Portions

- **Passover**  — Mar 27-Apr 3
  - Yom HaShoah  — Apr. 7-8
  - Yom HaZikaron  — Apr. 14-15
  - Yom HaAtzmaut  — Apr. 15-16

#### Zoom Video Conferencing

**Name**  | **Civil Date**  | **Hebrew**
---|---|---
Bereishit  | Oct. 17, 2020  | 29 Tishrei 5781
Noach  | Oct. 24, 2020  | 6 Cheshvan 5781
Lech-Lecha  | Oct. 31, 2020  | 13 Cheshvan 5781

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

#### “A liar must have a good memory”

1001 Yiddish Proverbs by Fred Kogos
Yahrzeits and Personal Notes

Get Wells

Michael Cornfield Charlotte Milliken
Mark Davis Chelsea Minkoff
Don Dembert Harriet Noble
Jane Oppenheimer
Larry Golden Charlene Ostro
Maggie LoRusso Emily Trunzo
Rich Mates Joel Vener

Week Ending October 3 (Service October 2)

Week Ending October 10 (Service October 9)

Week Ending October 17 (Service October 16)

Week Ending October 24 (Service October 23)

Week Ending October 31 (Service October 30)

To Richard and Marieann Mates on the birth of their new granddaugh-
ter.

Mazel Tov

Violet Suzanne Mates was born to David and Katie Mates of Taylor on Sept. 7, 2020.
The Temple of Loving-Kindness
On the Web at: templehesed.org

Temple personnel and officers

Spiritual Leader

Rabbi Daniel J Swartz
570-877-3454 (cell)
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Esther Adelman, Steven Seitchik
and Cheryl Friedman — Co-Presidents
Jeffrey Leventhal — Treasurer
Jennifer Novak — Secretary
Joan Davis — Assistant Secretary
Board Members: Kenneth Gunz, Robert Hersh, Natalie Gelb, Paula Kane, Carol Leventhal, Judith Golden, Donna Kostka, Loren Selznick, Josh Levine

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Rich Mates - Messenger Editor
(hesednews@gmail.com)
Jennifer R. Novak - Social Media
Maven Jeffrey Heilbrunn

ABOUT TEMPLE HESED:

Temple Hesed, a Reform Synagogue founded Aug. 20, 1866, 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 Danmore.

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. Visitaton 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: