Remember

Please join Temple Hesed, Temple Israel, the Scranton JCC and the broader Jewish community on April 8 at 6:30 pm at the JCC parking lot as we remember Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, for an outdoor*, socially-distanced program.

Masks and reservations will be required to attend. For those who prefer a virtual program, it will also be livestreamed on YouTube.

The following safety protocols will be followed:

- Ceremony will take place outdoors in the JCC parking lot on Jefferson Avenue.
- Masks must be worn at all times in the viewing area.
- Maximum of 50 people will be permitted in the viewing area.
- Reservations required.
- Social distancing will be enforced.

RSVP at: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a044cafaa2ea7f58-yomhashoah

*Note: this event will be held rain or shine. In the event of inclement weather, the evening’s program will be held in the JCC auditorium, which will only be able to accommodate up to 50 people.
Donations to Temple Hesed

BUILDING FUND
In Honor of the Yahrzeit of Beloved Mother, Sarah Harris Gromer
Lee Gromer
All Good Wishes to Paula Wasser
Audrey Harrell
In Honor of the Yahrzeit of Max Ballot
Bob Ballot
In Memory of Donald Dembert
Esther Friedmann
Eleanor and George Ginader

RABBI’S DISCRETIONARY FUND
In Honor of the Yahrzeit of Beloved Aunt Grace Pawlan
Deborah Orgill

LINDA LEE LEVENTHAL TOY FUND
In Memory of Donald Dembert
Jeff and Carol Leventhal

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL
In Memory of Jay Leiman, Beloved Father and Grandfather
Carol and Paul Leiman and family
In Honor of the Yahrzeit of Gertrude Diener
Patti Diener Lough
In Honor of the Yahrzeit of Carl Diener
Patti Diener Lough

TORAH RESTORATION FUND
In Memory of Donald Dembert
Esther B. Adelman

EMMA K. FRANK FUND
In Memory of Donald Dembert
David and Gail Dickstein
Richard and Carole Fine
Friends at the 900 Club

On Zoom in April — but in May???
The news on the COVID-19 front is still mixed: more vaccines are rolling out, but there’s still a lot of catching up to do. The number of people fully vaccinated is climbing at a faster and faster rate — but we’re also seeing some spikes in infections, as people become less careful and stop practicing important measures such as masking and social distancing.

Given these conflicting developments, all classes, programs, and services will still be on Zoom for April.

During this month, temple leadership will plan an orderly, safe route back to opening, and we’ll keep everyone informed as those plans develop.

Major credit or debit cards accepted.
Minimum $10 donation for acknowledgement in the Messenger.
To donate contact Marlene Gianzanti, Temple Administrator at 570-344-7201

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I’ll be down for the count for all of April and even a bit of May. No, I haven’t taken up boxing, though there was a time in the early 20th century when Jewish boxers often dominated the ring. What I’m talking about is the Omer Count — the tradition of counting each of the 49 days between Passover and Shavuot (Shavuot being the 50th day). So what, exactly, is an omer, and why is there a tradition of counting it? The omer was a sheaf, a bundle of grain stalks, from the earliest part the barley crop, that was harvested every day and brought as an offering. Since barley doesn’t grow this time of year in NEPA, and since even if it did, none of us are growing barley in any case, what has any of this to do with us today?

Well, as the Institute for Jewish Spirituality writes, “Over generations, counting the Omer has been embraced as a period of inner work and spiritual preparation for receiving the Torah anew. Our mystics associated each week and each day of the week with a particular spiritual quality, or middah—a way to experience transcendence in our lives, and express our desire to live in Godly ways. In Hebrew these midst are called: Chesed, Gevurah, Tiferet, Netzach, Hod, Yesod and Malkhut; we might call them loving connection, delimiting wise boundaries, balanced self, energetic response/persistence, gratitude, righteousness, and mindful speech.”

I think of it this way: Passover is a time of “freedom from,” which is a great start. But it’s not enough. At some point, we need to learn to move to “freedom to,” that is, to freely commit to some purpose in our lives. That’s what Shavuot, which is traditionally associated with the giving of the 10 Commandments, symbolizes. But how do we get from here to there? How do move from throwing off slavery, being stuck in the narrow, all the way to a deep commitment to a life of Hesed, of loving connection? One step at a time.

That’s why I find the Omer counting so useful. Each day I think, ok, what step can I take today? What one small thing can I do to bring myself closer to the bigger goal of loving connection? If I were to try to skip the small steps and look at the whole journey at once, I’d be completely overwhelmed. I used to do a lot of mountain climbing. Even with experience, if you start a climb by looking at how far away the top is, you’ll never start — it’s just too daunting. But if you plan a route and then focus on the first leg of that route, and then the next, and then the next, the top draws ever nearer.

If you’re interested in Omer counting practices, you can check out www.jewishspirituality.org for a variety of resources. Or come to a chanting circle, or enroll in our Wilderness Journey adult ed class. You have a lot of options for a first step. But you can never get to the top of the mountain unless you choose one of them and take that step.

Rabbi Daniel J. Swartz
Numerous scientific studies have demonstrated the health benefits of gratitude — better sleep, less depression, increased self-esteem, more able to plan for the future, and even fewer aches and pains. But how do we become more grateful? As Temple Hesed Co-President Esther Adelman pointed out in her *Messenger* column last month, our chanting circle always begins with gratitude. But in April, we’ll focus even more on practices that can help us live more grateful — and thus happier and healthier — lives. Drawing on teachings from Judaism, Buddhism, and other faiths and philosophies, we’ll meet each Saturday at 11:30 am. No prior experience is required, and everyone, no matter their faith background, is welcome to join us. To join, simply go to: 

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83570030002?pwd=TE8xQ2NDTi8xSk83cnRSQXFMY21Udz09

Or from the Zoom app, enter Meeting ID: 835 7003 0002 and Passcode: Gratitude
Perhaps there's something in the air, or perhaps people have just had time to think things through due to the pandemic -- but for whatever reason, in the past couple of weeks, more than half a dozen people contacted Temple Hesed asking about conversion. So we've started up two Intro to Judaism classes, both on Wednesdays, one from 2:15-3:15 and the other from 6:15-7:15. While the classes have already started, Rabbi Daniel is happy to catch people up. You'd be most welcome to join us, and also to pass on the word to anyone you think might be interested -- these classes do not require any commitment to convert. If you are interested or know of someone who is, it's best if they email the rabbi first at rabbidaniel@comcast.net -- but they are also welcome to come check out a class. The link for both classes is the same: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81840316264?pwd=QVRNVHdQK3RKOXRLUUNpeDVrZjhLdz09

Or from the Zoom app, enter Meeting ID: 818 4031 6264 and Passcode: Gerut
### Holiday Calendar

**Rosh HaShanah** — Sept. 18-19

**Yom Kippur** — Sept. 27-28

**Sukkot** — Oct. 2-9

**Sh'mini Atzeret**— Simchat Torah — Oct. 9-10

**Hanukkah** — Dec. 10-18

**Tu B’Shevat** — Jan. 27-28

**Purim** — Feb. 25-26

**Passover** — Mar 27-Apr. 3

**Yom HaShoah** — Apr. 7-8

**Yom HaZikaron** — Apr. 14-15

**Yom HaAtzmaut** — Apr. 15-16

**Lag BaOmer** — Apr. 29-30

**Shavuot** — May 16-17

**Tishah B'Av** — July 17-18

**Selichot Service** — Aug. 28

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### Torah Portions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Civil date</th>
<th>Hebrew date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shemini</td>
<td>April 10 2021</td>
<td>28.Nissan.5781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarziya- Metzora</td>
<td>April 17, 2021</td>
<td>5.Iyar.5781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancestral - Kedoshim</td>
<td>April 24, 2021</td>
<td>12.Iyar.5781</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*More information available from URJ.org*

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“When a wise man talks to a fool, two fools are talking.”

*From 1001 Yiddish Proverbs—By Fred Kogos*
Week Ending April 3 (April 2)


Week Ending April 10 (Service April 9)


Week Ending April 17 (Service April 16)


Week Ending April 24 (Service April 23)


Week Ending May 1 (Service April 30)


*Donald F. Dembert, 89, Waverly, died March 12 at home. His wife is the former Carol Silberman Nelson Dembert.

Don was born in Scranton, the son of Florence Frank Dembert and Sander Ellsworth Dembert. He was the grandson of Emma Kleeman Frank and Samuel E. Frank and Rose Salsburg and Sol Dembert.

Don was graduated from Wyoming Seminary, Kingston, PA. Also a graduate of Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, Don earned a Masters Degree from Boston University while working in Filene’s Executive Training Program. Don served in the United States naval reserves during the Korean War before returning to Scranton.

Beginning his career as a stock broker with Bache and Co., Don retired as Vice President of Investments with Wells Fargo. He won many awards in his 45-year career and was respected by his clients and the entire financial 

See DEMBERT (Continued on page 8)
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.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, appointments should be made for all meetings with the rabbi.

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.

Don is survived by the children and grandchildren of his blended family: daughter Heather Dembert Rafter and her husband John Rafter (Portola Valley, CA), son Harley Frank Dembert and wife Amy Wessan (Tarrytown, NY); step-son Michael Nelson and his wife Madelaine Saldivar (Wayne, PA), and Daniel Nelson (Burlington MA). He will be greatly missed by grandchildren Alex, Jackson & Emma Laura Rafter, Lydia Dembert, Sarah, Alex, Vivian, and Luke Nelson.

Graveside services were conducted in Temple Hesed Cemetery in Dunmore.