

שליח

MESSENGER



Temple Hesed, 1 Knox Road, Scranton, PA 18505

In-person events are iffy

Note: All plans for in-person events in January, including services, chanting circles, adult ed and the January 8th Family Education Program, are contingent upon the current COVID situation. Please look for emails either confirming or canceling in-person events. We will continue to have virtual options for all services and chanting circles.

Omicron puts Adult Ed Plans on Hold

We still hope to begin our joint Adult Ed program on the 10 Commandments, with Mother Rebecca Barnes and St. Luke's, as soon as possible. Because of rapidly changing COVID circumstances, however, the start of the program was not yet in place as this edition of the Messenger was being put together. We will send out a special notice as soon as plans solidify.

January 8th — The New Year of the Tree for the First of Monthly Family Education Programs 10 am to 11:30 am

We are hoping to launch a monthly Family Education Program in January, on the 8th, and each following month on the second Saturday of the month, from 10 am to 11:30 am. Each gathering will have a short, lively family service, some craft projects, and some learning around Jewish holidays and values. For our January meeting, we'll learn about Tu B'Shevat, the Jewish New Year of the Tree. We'll plant some parsley "trees," to be used at our Passover seders. We'll make pinecone bird feeders. And we'll bake some special 7-species bars, as we learn about Jewish traditions about nature and our role taking care of it. These programs will be free and open to all, so please share this with any family you think might be interested. If you have questions, suggestions for future programs, or would like to help out, please email Rabbi Daniel at rabbidaniel@comcast.net

Service Schedule for January

Given some confusion about service times in November and December, we've decided to simplify things a bit going forward. The first Friday service in each month will be at 6 pm, while the remaining services will all be at 7 pm. Thus, January 7 will start at 6, and the 14, 21, and 28 will all start at 7 pm. Depending on the COVID situation, we hope to be able to meet in person, but please check your email before each service. There will definitely be online options for all services (including if weather forces the cancelation of an in-person service). The Zoom link is

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89442525110?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89442525110?pwd=T1U0a0x1RjhoSnNPYXp4S2R4UG9tQT09)

[pwd=T1U0a0x1RjhoSnNPYXp4S2R4UG9tQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89442525110?pwd=T1U0a0x1RjhoSnNPYXp4S2R4UG9tQT09)

Or from the Zoom app enter Meeting ID: 894 4252 5110 and Passcode: Hesed

To view any service (including past services, which are available as recordings) from YouTube on the Temple Hesed channel go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwWXduQKzeDWe6lfbDSNLT>



In this issue:

- Rabbi turns 60
- Open Letter from Joan
- Chanting



Donations to Temple Hesed

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

DONATIONS WILL APPEAR NEXT MONTH



AN OPEN LETTER TO THE TEMPLE FAMILY

If you're sick, facing troubles, feeling alone or in need of some TLC, the Temple Hesed Caring Committee is here for you. My husband, Mark Davis, was the past Caring Committee Chairman and since his illness and passing, the position has been vacant. It was his pleasure to reach out to people in need. I decided that taking over the chairpersonship of this invaluable service for Temple members would be a way to honor Mark and carry out the work he began.

Our family appreciated so much those Temple members who reached out to us, offering a comforting hand and heart. Knowing that people cared helped all of us get through the dark times.

I will be reaching out to anyone who might need some extra support through cards, letters, and phone calls. Visits may have to wait for now.

If any Temple member is in need of this kind of outreach, please contact the Temple at (570) 344-7201 or myself at (570) 947-8450. And please be our best source by letting us know if you hear of someone who could benefit.

Our Temple members are a special kind of family and we want to help ease things for you however we can, even just a bit. We are the Temple of Lovingkindness and your Temple family is here for you.

In Hesed,

Joan Davis

January Chanting Circles: Getting Back on Track

The New Year, Jewish or secular, is often a time for resolutions, for an attempt at a fresh, clean start with a newly clean slate. But no matter how much we try to erase the past, we never have a completely clean slate, and fresh starts often go awry. When that happens, how do we get back on track? How do we avoid the temptation to say, well, I messed that up, so I just give up on exercising/dieting/staying off of social media or whatever our resolution was? In our January chanting circles, we'll learn chants and practices that can help us restart and get back on track, including a "heart-walk meditation" that can be used when making your bed, going for a morning walk, or taking a coffee



break. Please note that, because there is no chanting circle on January 1, our in-person circle (COVID permitting) will be on January 8, and because of the first Family Ed program that morning, it will start at noon instead of 11:30. The online gatherings on the 15, 22, and 29 will all start at 11:30. To join online, just click:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83570030002?pwd=TE8xQ2NDTi8xSk83cnRSQXFMY2lUdz09>

Or from the Zoom app, enter Meeting ID: 835 7003 0002 and Passcode: Gratitude



Rabbinical

Reflections

Rabbi Daniel J.
Swartz

Halfway to Moses: The Order of the Teaspoon and other thoughts upon reaching 60

Maybe you've heard this in some Jewish setting: "May you live till 120." This isn't an arbitrary figure — it's the age that Moses reached. I've now reached the halfway point, during this time that has been so trying for our community, our country, and our planet. I've buried far too many people, lost friends to cancer and Covid and simple human frailty. For a whole set of reasons, we live in a time when it's easy to despair. For me personally, when I think about what we're doing to our climate, our planet, and each other, I often get depressed. On other days, depression would be a step up, as I'm mired in a dystopian swamp of overwhelm, despair, and grief. But as I reach this milestone year, I try, like Moses, who faced infinitely more challenging circumstances, to focus on hope. I try to be part of the "Order of the Teaspoon," based on Amos Oz's observation that we all have a choice when confronting a huge conflagration: Do we run away, not worrying about those left behind? Do we find someone to blame? Or do we bring a bucket of water, or a glass, or, failing that, a teaspoon, knowing that our teaspoon will only make an infinitesimal difference, but also that there are millions of us with teaspoons.

But how do we find even a teaspoonful of hope? And would a million, or a billion, such teaspoons make any difference? As many of you have heard, in services and classes, my Vatican journey gave me some unexpected moments of hope. Some came from the document we wrote together, especially the concluding paragraph, which I composed the initial draft of: After several rounds of edits, it now reads:

Our hope: a time of grace, an opportunity that we cannot waste

We are currently at a moment of opportunity and truth. We pray that our human family may unite to save our common home before it is too late. Future generations will never forgive us if we squander this precious opportunity. We have inherited a garden: we must not leave a desert to our children. Scientists have warned us that there might be only one decade left to restore the planet. We plead with the international community, gathered at COP26, to take speedy, responsible and shared action to safeguard, restore and heal our wounded humanity and the home entrusted to our stewardship. We appeal to everyone on this planet to join us on this common journey, knowing well that what we can achieve depends not only on opportunities and resources, but also on hope, courage, solidarity and good will. In an age fraught with division and despair, we look with hope and unity to the future. We seek to serve the people of the world, particularly the poor and the future generations, by encouraging a prophetic vision, a creative, respectful and courageous action for the sake of the Earth, our common home.

The days at the Vatican were packed. We started with an evening meeting and reception, where I finally was able to meet in person all those I had witnessed in their little boxes on the screen for so many hours together. As blessed as we were to have been able to gather across such distances and through so much turmoil, finally being in each other's presence, sharing food together and having unplanned, unstructured conversations with each other reminded me how much is lost when we are only virtually together. Then came the official signing on October 4th, in the grand and ornate Hall of Blessings. It was a grand spectacle, with press from around the world, greetings from the president of COP26 and youth climate activists, and even a ceremonial tree planting.

But I personally found more hope in our private gatherings the rest of that day and in a smaller public meeting the following day. In private, we agreed to continue to work together, by, for example, reconvening in January to "grade" what did — and didn't — happen at COP26 according to the principles we laid out in the Appeal. Then, on October 5th, World Education Day, we met to discuss the connection between education and sustainability. Unlike the highly scripted signing, twenty of us sat around a table, together with Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO. Each of us was supposed to speak for three minutes, at which point we would present the Director-General with a "Global Compact on Education." Pope Francis spoke first, making a very eloquent statement about the need to move away from fundamentalism and beyond mere toleration to the intentional and passionate welcoming of diverse viewpoints, of really hearing and paying heed to different voices. He also highlighted the importance of educational rights for all, explicitly calling for greater resources directed toward the education of girls and women.

At that point, unfortunately, some of my colleagues did not manage to stay within their allotted time. The Vatican official who was chairing the meeting became more and more nervous, several times requesting us to be cognizant of the time but not actually cutting anyone off. Then, just before the 17th person spoke, he announced a change of plans. After that speaker, we would present our document to Ms. Azoulay, at which point the Pope would have to move on to another meeting. I was quite disappointed, not the least because I was supposed to be the 18th speaker. After the presentation, a cardinal came over to Pope Francis to escort him to the next meeting. But the Pope refused to budge. He had just noted the importance of hearing different voices, and he wasn't going to go back on his word.

So I had a chance to be heard. I spoke of texts showing the Jewish commitment to educational opportunity, such as Takanat ben Gamla (Hava Batra 21a), that laid out a societal commitment to publicly funded education, and how Kiddushin 29a, in discussing parental obligations to children, laid out something remarkably similar to modern calls for educating the whole student, developing not only a base of knowledge, but also teaching how to build healthy relationships, how to integrate head, heart, and hands, how to enjoy the outdoors, and how to take part in the building of society. I closed by talking about my daughter. I said, "21 years ago this summer, we welcomed our daughter, then 13 months old, into our home. As a family, we are all keenly aware of how many opportunities she has that might have been denied her, and since she was in preschool, she has remained steadfastly

(Continued on page 4)

Reflections continued: Climate at 60

(Continued from page 3)

committed to opening doors for others. I would let down both the little girl she was and the strong young woman she is if I were to leave here today without doing my utmost to ensure that all children are given the holistic education they, and our planet, deserve.” As I talked about her, I noticed that one of my colleagues, Ayatollah Prof. Seyed Mostafa Mohaghegh Damad, the head of the Islamic Studies Department at the Academy of Sciences in Teheran, had a visible change in affect. While he had been paying close attention throughout the gathering, he now leaned forward, nodded vigorously, and gave the sweetest of smiles. It was a transformational moment, and it led me to realize how little I knew about him, including (I read afterward) that he has made numerous public statements supporting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, has spoken out for greater rights for women and religious minorities and against any form of religious coercion, all stands that could put him very much at risk.

I was greatly buoyed by these personal interactions, and my hope grew further as my climate-faith colleagues in the U.S. helped me spread the message of the Appeal. They organized a demonstration in front of the State Department, where I spoke and they took turns reading the Appeal, a copy of which was presented to Secretary Kerry’s office. We read the Appeal again at a vigil on the Capitol steps during the debate on the bipartisan infrastructure bill. And so, as the date for the opening of COP26 drew near, I was inspired to write a version of tefilat ha-derech, the traveler’s prayer, for President Biden as he journeyed to Glasgow. I reached out to a variety of rabbis and climate-faith activists in the U.S., and within just a few hours, we had a notable list of leaders joining me in the prayer, which was also covered in the Jewish press. Again, as COP26 drew to a close, I wrote a variation on Birkat Levanah. This prayer, traditionally recited outdoors, marking the ending of one month and the growing hope symbolized by the growing light of the moon, seemed an appropriate way to bless the participants on their way home and to call for continued action past COP26. This time, I also reached out to my colleagues from the Vatican, so we took our first of what I hope will be many post-Vatican actions together.

I’ve also spoken, mostly virtually, at more than a dozen synagogues, churches, and interfaith settings since returning, trying to share a bit of the hope that I’ve felt, even as COP26 fell far short of taking the decisive action our planet needs. And in each of these settings, I’ve been asked, “what is one thing I could do to help.” Of course, I don’t stick to one, but I make three recommendations based on what I’ve learned in the past year. First, to love our neighbors more, and to continually broaden our definition of neighbor until it includes all life on earth. I firmly believe that we will not be able to take the necessary actions unless we more deeply feel our connection to each other, more deeply love each other, and more deeply understand the grand web of life that we are a part of. Second, take up your teaspoon and do one more thing than you are already doing. Change one more light bulb, walk instead of drive, wear a sweater instead of turning up the heat, eat more locally and lower on the food chain. It almost doesn’t matter what you choose, because it isn’t really millions of teaspoons that are needed — it is millions and millions of people taking action. When we take any sort of action, even a small, mostly symbolic one, we start to break out of depression and start to free ourselves from the paralysis of despair, stop running away or hiding our head and instead face the fire. Then we can take the third, crucial step: campaign and vote and demonstrate till the system itself is changed, till we stop investing in fossil fuel infrastructure, stop electing politicians in denial, stop supporting institutions that aren’t committed to sustainability right now.

This April, we have the rare convergence that gives us the perfect opportunity to do this work together: Ramadan starts on the eve of April 2 and continues through May 2. Mahavir Jayanti (Jain) and Vaisakhi (Hindu and Sikh) fall on April 14, Passover begins on the eve of April 15, Therevada New Year (Buddhist) is April 16, and Easter is April 17 or April 24 in the Orthodox tradition. With all these holy days of hope, who knows what we may be able to accomplish together? Here’s hoping that 2022 is a year filled with hope.



RAC Urges Funding for Early Childhood Education



Rabbi Pesner

November 18, 2021– As members of Congress consider the Build Back Better bill, Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner, director of the Religious Action Center, sent the following letter in support of robust funding for early childhood education and care with a system of mixed delivery and non-discrimination provisions.

Dear Member of Congress,

On behalf of the Union for Reform Judaism, whose nearly 850 congregations across North America encompass approximately 1.8 million Reform Jews, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, whose membership includes more than 2,000 Reform rabbis, I am writing to convey our strong support for the robust funding for early childhood education and care with a system of mixed delivery and nondiscrimination provisions within the Build Back Better Act (H.R. 5376).

As it currently stands, the Build Back Better Act would allocate \$450 billion to lower the costs of childcare and secure universal pre-K for three to four-year-olds. The investment this bill provides will help working families who have struggled to find affordable and consistent childcare, facilitating parents and guardians to return to work. The funding will also allow the vast majority of families to spend no more than seven percent of their income on child care.

Funding universal pre-K for three-to-four-year-olds is also a critical investment in the long-term educational success of children and our nation overall. Evidence shows that children enrolled in child care programs starting at a young age perform. Universal pre-K gives all children an opportunity to have this boost – regardless of their socio-economic status. The bill also includes \$15 billion for childcare facilities and establishing a Child Care Wage Grant program to increase wages for childcare providers,

Crucially, the funding included in the Build Back Better Act is a mixed delivery system. Many public schools do not currently have the capacity to add universal pre-k programs to their schools. Mixed delivery gives funding to create new programs in public schools, as well as support both public and private pre-existing pre-K and childcare programs. A mixed delivery system also gives parents the opportunity and access to choose childcare providers that meet their unique needs, whether public or private.

While we strongly support a mixed delivery system, we also maintain that taxpayer funds should never be used to discriminate within government-supported programs. Importantly, Subtitle D of Title II of the Build Back Better Act includes language that ensures childcare and preschool providers that accept these government funds cannot discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin (including language), disability, religion, or sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity and pregnancy status). No one should be denied access to federally funded childcare and education programs because of their religion or identity.

Our support for an investment in childcare is inspired by our Jewish values, including biblical and rabbinic teachings on the sanctity and welfare of children. In Jewish tradition, every person is created *B'tzelem Elohim* -in the image of God. It is humanity's obligation to protect and nurture this divine spark, enabling children to reach their fullest potential. Jewish tradition also teaches that God nurtured us in the desert after we left Egypt, ensuring our safe passage into the land of Israel. So, too, should we ensure the safe passage of our children from youth to adulthood by guaranteeing them the care necessary for proper growth and development.

Childcare and pre-K are crucial to many families' economic security and the long-term success of children. Now is the time for Congress to address America's childcare crisis with a significant investment in our early childhood education and care system to ensure every family can access care options that work for them, regardless of their religion or identity.

As the Build Back Better Act makes its way through the House and eventually to the Senate, I urge you to do everything in your power to ensure the bill includes a significant investment in our nation's childcare system, including a mixed delivery system and nondiscrimination provisions, so parents can have quality, affordable options for their children.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner

(Note: The Build Back Better Act bill is awaiting US Senate action.)

JAHRZEITS

December 19 – 25

15 – 21 Tevet

Service January 7

*Sarah Greenberger, *George Joseph Weisberg, *Margaret Smith, *Minnie Ginsburg, *Rebecca Newman, *Carolina Schwartz, *Goldie Neumann, *Morris Goldsmith, *Israel Greenberger, *Elliott Weisberger, *David Zukowski, *Edward Berger, *Chester Levy, *Bernard Rymland

December 26 – January 1

22 – 28 Tevet

Service January 7

*Isadore Adelman, *Harvey Sanford Siegel, *Gus Weinberger, *Meyer Davis, Ralph Myer, *David Rosenberg, *Martin Weilheimer, Jerry Kline, *Charlotte Milliken, *Herbert Smith, *Carole S. Goodman, Bessie Kaplan, *Jessica Parker Mannoff, *Judith Pell Weinberger, *Isaac Ziegler, *Janet Phillips, *Jennie Bakaley, Grace E. Davis, *Louis Kleeman

January 2 – 8

29 Tevet – 6 Shevat

Service January 7

*Olga Adelman, *Blanche Silverstein, *Isadore Levine, *Berniece Lenchner, *Alvin Ziegler, *Herman Schneider, *Dorothy Tapper, *Freda Ball, *Henrietta Jacobs, *Frederick L. Wormser, *Ruth Livingston, Jessie Samter Ellenbogen, *Samuel Feldman, *George Bauer, *Mabelle Druck, *Minnie Harris, *Tillie Lauer Marks, *Gertrude Ziegler, *George Joel, *Faye Bernstein

January 9 – 15

7 – 13 Shevat

Service January 14

*Eric S. Gardner, *Edward Denis, *George Phillips, *Marvine L. Dinner, *Ophelia H. Hefter, *Hattie Ross Lauer, *Anna Fragin, *Shirley Troy Cornfield, *Edna Kabatchnick, *Abraham Wolf

January 16 – 22

14 – 20 Shevat

Service January 21

*Jack Friedman, *Abe Newman, *Mary Freeman, *Ethel Friedmann, Emily Kominz, *Michael R. Graham, *Lena Berg, *Simon Lauer, *Herman Goodman, *Leonard A. Saltzman, *Harry Tapper, Anne Marie Heilbrunn, *Sadie R. Lichtman, *Morris Whitman, *Sarah Bloch, *Arthur L. Goldsmith, *Abraham Leventhal, *Dr. Morton Hodes, *Solomon Schudmack

January 23 – 29

21 – 27 Shevat

Service January 28

Anita Appleton, *Carl Goldman, *Alice Goldsmith, Barbara Ballot, Saul Kaplan, Theodore Kaplan, Robert Sundheim, Frimi Gromer, *Rebecca Levy, *Barbara Sapsowitz, *Monroe R. Smith, *Milton Aronsohn, *Carl Davis, *Lillian Goldfarb, *Madeline Goldsmith, *Jacob Sydansk, *Charles Noe, *Jennie Lehman, *Sadie W. Young, *Sol Davidow, *Frances Kaufman

January 30 – February 5

28 Shevat – 4 Adar

Service February 4

*Dorothy Rosenberg, *Pamela Tigrett, *Aaron Cooperman, *Emma L. Sarlin, *Stephen M. Simon, *Simon J. Freeman, *Maxwell M. Neumann, *Lena Weinberger, *Margaret L. Oettinger, *Leona Falk, *Tillie Ackerman, *Clara Lauer, *Harry M. Siegel, *Leon Joseph, *John Seagaard

Get

Wells

Michael Cornfield

Lynne Fragin

Kenny Ganz

Larry Golden

Ellen Kline

Phil Knobel

Maggie LoRusso

Rich Mates

Chelsea Minkoff

Harriet Noble

Charlene Ostro

Ceil Rydzewski

Joel Vener

January 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 NEW YEARS Day (Rabbi's Bday)
2	3	4	5	6	7 Services 6p* (SPECIAL BIRTHDAY AAY)	8 Family ed. 10a Chanting 12p*
9	10	11	12	13	14 Services 7p*	15 Chanting circle 11:30a*
16	17 TuB'Shevat New Year for Trees MLK DAY Community Service 7p*	18	19	20	21 Services 7p*	22 Chanting circle 11:30A*
23	24	25	26	27	28 Services 7p*	29 Chanting circle 11:30A*
30	31				*available on Zoom & YouTube	

5782 Holiday Calendar

Rosh HaShanah —
Sept. 6-8

Yom Kippur — Sept. 15-16

Sukkot — Sept. 20-27

Sh'mini Atzeret-Simchat Torah — Sept. 27-28

Hanukkah — Nov. 28
Dec. 6

Tu B'Shevat — Jan. 16-17

Purim — Mar. 16-17

Passover — Apr. 15-22

Yom HaShoah — Apr. 27-28

Yom HaZikaron — May 3-4

Yom HaAtzmaut — May 4-5

Lag BaOmer — May 18-19



Torah Portions

Name	Civil date	Hebrew date
Va'eira	Jan. 1, 2022	28.Tivet.5782
Bo	Jan. 8, 2022	6.Shevat.5782
Beshalach	Jan. 15, 2022	13.Shevat.5782
Yitro	Jan. 22, 2022	20.Shevat.5782
Mishpatim	Jan. 29, 2022	27.Shevat.5782

More information available from URJ.org

“God does not play dice.”
—Albert Einstein

(His usual reaction to quantum theory)



Rabbi Daniel's 60th



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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.

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

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.