Temple Air Conditioning and Parking Lot Need Replacement; We Need Your Help

Dear Temple Hesed Family

We want to express our gratitude to all of you for continuing to support our beloved Temple with your trust in our present and future, given the ups and downs in our world as we know it. For the past several years, we have adjusted to conditions as they arise, with our first priority being the safety of all who enter here. We hope that you and your families have remained safe through it all.

In our building’s 49-year-old lifetime, there have been many needed repairs that have come along. We have done our best to address these normal signs of ageing as they have occurred. Sometimes we can deal with a problem in its entirety; sometimes a temporary fix will do.

We are now faced with two huge projects that must be addressed as soon as possible. First, our HVAC (Heating-Ventilation-Air Conditioning) system is way beyond the point of “treating it with Band-Aids”. We must replace the entire system. Because the units are located on the roof, a crane has to be involved, adding significantly to the cost. At this point, we are looking at an estimated cost of $150,000.

Second, as any of you who have been here recently have no doubt observed, the parking lot is a total disaster. It’s too far gone to be fixed by resealing. The cost for it to be completely redone is estimated at $172,000.

Here’s where you fit in. It would be wonderful if each of our families could help out with a one-time donation. We haven’t asked for anything but payment of your dues in a very long time. We are planning to seek out grants that may be available, and will need to invade our Building Fund, but any amount that you could spare would definitely ease our burden. Please consider opening your hearts, as well as your wallets. Your generosity will be felt for many years to come. (See page 2 for a list of donors.)

In Hesed,

Your Officers and Board
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

Next issue of the Messenger will be a combined July-August issue.
Deadline is June 22.

We would like to thank the following Temple members who have contributed, so far, to the Capital Campaign:

- Esther Adelman
- Michael and Cheryl Friedman
- Esther Friedmann
- Kenny and Nicole Ganz
- Mike and Gayle Greenstein
- Lee Gromer
- Beth Kaplan
- Harold and Nancy Kaplan Foundation
- Phil and Jane Knobel
- Jeff and Carol Leventhal
- Ken and Rose Levine
- Randy and Lisa Levine
- Saul and Sharon Levy
- Vivian Needle
- Steve and Ellen Seitchik
- Loren Selznick
- Joel and Karen Vener

June Chanting Circle — Revelation!
At 11:30 am on June 4, 11, 18 and 25

Revelation is the theme of June’s holiday, Shavuot. Usually we approach revelation from an intellectual standpoint, through Torah study. With our chanting circle, we’ll approach the idea of revelation from very different lenses: our intuition, feelings, spiritual sense, and of course, meditation and music. The Sinai experience was described in terms reminiscent of synesthesia — seeing sounds and hearing visions. Through our chants and sharing, we will try to take in words and music in a different way, feeling how they resonate in our bodies and souls. We’ll meet in person and online on June 4 for about an hour, and online only for about a half hour the other Saturdays.
To join us online, just click: [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83570030002?pwd=TE8xQ2NDti8xSk83cnRSQXFMY21Udz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83570030002?pwd=TE8xQ2NDti8xSk83cnRSQXFMY21Udz09)
Or from the Zoom app, enter Meeting ID: 835 7003 0002 and Passcode: Gratitude (make sure to capitalize the G)
Our diverse and welcoming circle comes together not only to chant, but to study, reflect, meditate, and support each other. So why not come and see what you’ve been missing.
What does “revelation” mean to us today?

Shavuot starts on the evening of June 4. Even though it is described as an agricultural festival in the Torah, from the earliest rabbis on, it has become a celebration of the Sinai Experience, the “revelation” of the 10 Commandments. But how, as modern Reform Jews, do we understand revelation? I doubt any of us hold the tradition that God dictated the entire Torah, word for word, to Moses on Mount Sinai, including the parts that hadn’t yet happened. Of course, that view comes much later than the Torah itself, and at least to my eyes, the Torah never makes the claim that all or even most of it was dictated by God in any fashion.

But then come the 10 Commandments, where the story we find in the Torah recounts that all of Israel was gathered at the foot of Mt. Sinai and witnessed (a key word here, since the senses seem to be mixed about in this experience, with sounds being seen and visions being heard) the proclamation of the 10 Commandments amidst thunder and lightning. Long before Reform Jews, however, even this experience was viewed as more subjective than objective. Very early sages note that the only the first two commandments are stated in the first person — God speaking as the “I” of the words. From the third commandment on, the wording switches to the third person, addressing God rather than addressed by God. They come to the conclusion that actually directly witnessing the Divine was too much for people, and (based on the verses immediately following the 10 Commandments) that they asked Moses to serve as an intermediary. Rabbi Menachem Mendl of Kotsk, an early Hasidic rabbi, went even further. He said that as soon as God spoke the Aleph, the first letter of the 10 Commandments, which is, in human understanding at least, a silent letter, as soon as the Israelites heard the silent letter uttered, they were overwhelmed — in modern terminology, their minds were blown.

All of this is recognition, long before modernity, of the overwhelming, and overwhelmingly subjective, nature of the experience of the Divine. And yet, for us today, our questions go further. Is there really any Divine to be experienced? And is there anything at all that we can say objectively comes from God, or is everything a human interpretation, even if there is a genuine experience?

Despite countless attempts through the ages, there has never been a successful proof of God, and it seems to me that a proof that would convince every single person is impossible. (After all, think of any of a whole set of much more tangible subjects, with concretely measurable evidence, where not everyone comes to the same conclusion!) All I can say is that I’ve experienced something that I regard as the Divine, and at the very least I’m convinced that some of the most important parts of our existence — such as love and creativity — are real and yet immeasurable and unprovable.

In terms of revelation and Torah, I find it most helpful to approach our tradition with some humility. First I try to see each passage, even the ones I vehemently disagree with, as being core messages of the Divine. Then I try to see the same passages, even the ones that I believe with all my mind, heart, and soul, as being entirely of human origin, with no inspiration behind them at all. This helps me question myself, as well as expose at least some of my cultural and time-bound biases. And it opens me up to the possibility of finding meaning even where I thought there was only human error.

I also find it helpful to understand that there are Jewish traditions, plural, not one tradition, and that that has been the case from the beginning. For example, this year, at our Shavuot Torah study at 8:30 on June 4, we’ll be studying some traditions that have often been overlooked — of women who functioned as rabbis even during Talmudic times, of Yiddish stories about everyday life that serve as their own sort of Torah, including the one Marjorie will teach that focuses on abortion, and some little-known, expansive ideas of gender that at least some sages have been teaching for hundreds of years.

I hope that this has been a helpful door-opener for you — and I’d love to hear your reactions to the above, and/or your own experiences of revelation.

In Hesed,
Rabbi Daniel
Annual Congregational Meeting
Set for June 22

Dear Temple Hesed Family,

You are all invited to our annual meeting on Wednesday evening, June 22, 2022 at 7:00 PM, immediately following our Board meeting at 6:00. Because we are committed to the safety of our family, both meetings will be held via Zoom; the information will be sent via email prior to the meetings.

The past two years plus have been challenging for us all. Our lives have been upended and adjusted to fit the conditions under which we are currently living. So too, we have had to adjust our Temple life. Thank goodness for today’s technology when it is used for beneficial purposes. Such technology as texting, emails, FaceTime, and Zoom are so important for us to stay in touch with family and friends, not to mention co-workers, board members, and our other contacts. Even though we do miss personal touches, we should be grateful that we can at least still feel somewhat connected.

Even though we haven’t done much in person at Temple Hesed, that doesn’t mean that we haven’t carried on with Temple life. By attending the meeting, you will see all that we have accomplished this past year and what we are planning for our future.

We hope to “see” you on June 22. (Next year at Temple Hesed!)

Esther Adelman, Co-President

June Family Program — Picnic and Planning, Jun 11 at noon

For our final family program of the school year, we’re going to gather for a picnic at Temple Hesed. Each family will bring its own food, with the Temple providing the paper goods, utensils, etc.

If the weather is nice, we’ll have an outdoor picnic, and if it’s not, we’ll still picnic, but indoors!

In addition to sharing food, we’ll also share plans. We’ve restarted family programs at Temple Hesed after a pause from the pandemic and a dearth of students.

Moving forward, we want to have a program that works for all our families with children, so we want to take this opportunity in June to listen, share, think and plan together. This meeting is open to everyone, whether or not they are currently Temple members, so feel free to pass the word on.

Please RSVP so we can plan for the right number of people — templehesed@comcast.net or call 570-344-7201
Support the Arts and the LGBTQ communities

Rabbi Daniel has participated twice before in the Scranton Fringe Festival’s Story Slams.

First, he told the story (with permission) of our own Jimmy Ellenbogen, publicly coming out at Temple Hesed for the first time in his 80s.

Then he spoke about his experience of the winter holidays growing up in a town with very few Jews.

On June 4, he returns as one of the featured storytellers at latest offering by the Scranton Fringe Festival -- another edition of the "Big Gay Story Slam," at 7 p.m. at the Radisson.

He’ll be telling a story he hopes everyone finds both entertaining and enlightening.

For tickets or to find out more click here: https://www.facebook.com/events/257043819970561

Two special Shabbatot in June:
Shabbat under the Stars, June 17
And Pride Shabbat, June 24

We have two special Shabbat services this June — come check them out.

First, on June 17 at 7 p.m, we’ll hold our annual Shabbat Under the Stars, enjoying Temple Hesed’s beautiful outdoor setting, weather permitting.

For many people, this is their favorite service of the year, and it’s also a great one to bring children to. (Note: with services starting at 7, we may be able to hold a second Shabbat under the Stars this year — let us know if you’d like that!)

Then on June 24th, also at 7 pm, we’ll hold our annual LGBTQ Pride Service. Guests of any faith (or none) are most welcome at either service.

Shavuot Torah Study: From Gender Roles to Abortion
June 4 at 8:30 p.m. at Temple Israel

At Temple Israel, on June 4 at 8:30 p.m. Rabbis Miriam, Marjorie, and I will be teaching as part of a ”Tikkun Leil Shavuot,” the custom of late-night Torah study in honor of the Revelation at Sinai.

We’ll be looking at gender roles from a variety of perspectives. Rabbi Miriam will be teaching a session on “She Taught – Women Rabbis in the Talmud”; Rabbi Marjorie will teach ”The Debt – A Yiddish Tale of Abortion”; and my session will be "How many genders are there? A view from Jewish traditions.”

There will also be fabulous snacks and desserts — so join us at Temple Israel for a great evening of fascinating topics. To view online, go to: https://venue.streamspot.com/fa7cfd7e
YAHARZEIT

May 29 – June 4
28 Iyar – 5 Sivan
Service: June 3

*Cora F. Reinhall, *Nellie Kramer, *Simon Smith, *Rochelle Goldman,

June 5 – 11
6 – 12 Sivan
Service: June 10

*Theodora Swartz, *Bela M. Davidow, *Clare Rice, *Jacob Rymland,
*Jennie B. Rosen, *Dr. Bernard Shair, Joanne Monahan, *Gertrude R.

June 12 – 18
13 – 19 Sivan
Service June 17

*Bettie Landau, Bess Fragin, *Viola Goldsmith, *Edward Apfelbaum,
Irving Rosen, *Esther Apfelbaum, Robert Baron

June 19 – 25
20 – 26 Sivan
Service June 24

*Ruth A. Cohen, *Sam Dinner, *Margery Freedman, *Dr. Maurice Mar-
melstein, *Ralph Gardner, *Muriel Stone Smith, Frank Seitchik,
*Maude Perlin, Sara Greenstein Rosenstein

June 26 – July 2
27 Sivan – 3 Tammuz
Service July 1

### June 2022

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*available on Zoom & YouTube
*** available online see page 5
**on Zoom only

### 5782

#### Holiday Calendar

- **Rosh HaShanah** — Sept. 6-8
- **Yom Kippur** — Sept. 15-16
- **Sukkot** — Sept. 20-27
- **Sh’mi mini Atzeret**
- **Simchat Torah** — Sept. 27-28
- **Hanukkah** — Nov. 28

#### Torah Portions

- **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
- **Shavuot** — June 4-5
- **Tishah B’Av** — Aug. 6-7
- **Selichot Service** — Sep. 17

#### Torah Portions

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More information available from URJ.org

#### Yiddish Saying:

“He who has not tasted the bitter does not understand the sweet.”

From 1001 Yiddish Proverbs-By Fred Kogos
RAC on Texas School Slayings

MAY 24, 2022, WASHINGTON, D.C. – In response to the horrific school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner, Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, released the following statement:

"There are no words left to describe the pain and horror of yet another school shooting. 21 lives cut short. The rage and heartbreak of living in a society that repeatedly permits the destruction of life. God forgive this country for loving guns more than children."

Rabbi Pesner

TEMPLE HESED
1 Knox Road
Scranton, PA 18505

Temple Hesed
Website: http://www.templehesed.org

OFFICERS

Esther Adelman, Steven Seitchik and Cheryl Friedman — Co-Presidents; Jeffrey Leventhal — Treasurer; Jennifer Novak — Secretary; Joan Davis — Assistant Secretary

Board Members: Kenneth Ganz, Robert Hersh, Natalie Gelb, Paula Kane, Carol Leventhal, Judith Golden, Donna Kostiak, Loren Selznick, Josh Levine

STAFF

Marlene Gianzanti—Temple Administrator (marlenecmg1@comcast.net)
Edward Snitko—Director of Music
Jennifer Rosen Novak—Director of Social Media
Rich Mates—Editor, Messenger (hesednews@gmail.com)
Jeff Heilbrunn—Webmaster

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.