

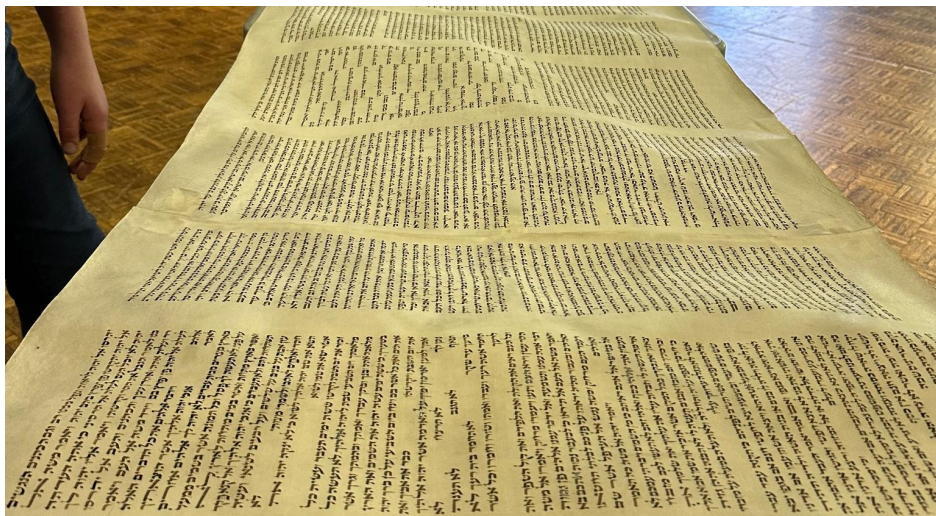


TEMPLE HESED
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MESSENGER

New format.



by

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Spiritual Leader

RABBINICAL REFLECTIONS — WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?



I'M writing this from New Mexico, where Rabbi Marjorie and I are on a retreat with one of our teachers, Rabbi Shefa Gold. During the retreat, we'll be focusing on spiritual practices such as chanting and meditation. But even here, we can't avoid the horrible news from around the world — the tragedies of war in Israel and Gaza, the continued suffering of Ukraine, human rights abuses in China, disasters linked to climate change, the dysfunctions of the House of Representatives and on and on. One could ask, how can I possibly go on retreat at such a time? Or more broadly, how can we continue to hold Shabbat services in such a world?

The great Buddhist monk and spiritual teacher, Thich Nhat Hanh, wrote the following about meditation — and you could substitute “prayer” or “services” for meditation and it would hold just as true: “Meditation means being aware of what is going on — in our bodies, in our feelings, in our minds, and in the world. Each day, thousands of children die of hunger. Plant and animal species are going extinct every day. Yet the sunrise is beautiful, and the rose that bloomed this morning along the wall is a miracle. Life is both dreadful and wonderful. To practice meditation is to be in touch with both aspects of life.”

That is one of the most important things we can do at times like these — to continue to in touch with both the dreadful and wonderful aspects of life. And we can support each other in this task by coming together, especially during Shabbat. Shabbat is simultaneously a refuge from the horrors of life and a time when we give ourselves enough spiritual space to be able to fully take in those horrors. To help accommodate these possibilities, I'm going to add two practices.

The first practice I've already started adding — having at least one “shalom” themed song. Shalom is often translated as peace, but it means much more. Peace can simply be the absence of open conflict. Shalom is the presence of wholeness and harmony. Enemies can be at peace with each other, though that is usually only temporary. But it takes building

something together, something sustainable, to achieve shalom. Shalom, I believe, should be the ultimate goal — building societies that feel respected and protected and can work together. We will hold out at least a bit of hope for shalom each week through our songs.

The second is a practice that used to be a common occurrence in Jewish services but now is usually only seen at the High Holy Days - a full prostration during the Aleinu prayer. The full prostration is a religious practice that actually is shared by Muslims and Jews, even though many Jews see the Muslim act of prostration as something foreign and strange. I hope by practicing it more often that we can see a point of commonality. The symbolism behind the full prostration is that we are supposed to fully submit to God's will. One of the tragedies in the present conflict, found both in the horrific violence of Hamas and in the increasingly violent behavior of Israelis in the West Bank, is using God to justify the most un-Godly of acts — in essence, trying to make God submit to our will. By doing a full prostration, I will try to remind myself how abhorrent it is to use religion in that fashion.

Of course, these are symbolic gestures that will have no impact whatsoever on the tragedies unfolding. But I hope they will help us navigate through these difficult times. And perhaps, as we address our heartbreak, however inadequately, we will be inspired to speak up and to do what we can to support those suffering the most. I'm also happy to hear whatever suggestions you have to help figure out where we go from here — please don't hesitate to share them!



CALENDAR *of* EVENTS

- **Grateful for each other: Multifaith Thanksgiving Celebration — November 17: Potluck dinner 6, service 7**

Once again, Temple Hesed is honored to be hosting the annual Multifaith Thanksgiving Celebration, co-sponsored by the Scranton Area Ministerium and the Friends of the Poor. The celebration/service will be on November 17 at 7 pm, with our theme this year being “Grateful for each other.” Our Thanksgiving Celebration is one of our most joyous services of the year, with participation from many faith groups, lots of great music, and a wonderful opportunity to celebrate with diverse people. This year, we will be returning to having a potluck dinner before the service, starting at 6 pm. Please RSVP if you'd like to join us for the dinner — email the Temple Hesed office at templehesed@comcast.net or call us at 570-344-7201

- **Service Schedule for November**

With the fall holy day cycle now complete, we will return to a more typical schedule for services in November. Friday, November 3 will be our usual 6 pm First Friday service. Services on the 10th and 17th will start at 7 pm, with a potluck dinner at 6 pm on the 17th. In observance of the Thanksgiving weekend, there is no service on November 24. All November services will be available on Zoom, with the services on November 3 and 10 also available on the Temple Hesed YouTube stream. The November 17th service will be on the Facebook page of the Scranton Area Ministerium.

- **Chanting Circle: Tuning In and Out — 11:30 am November 4, 11, and 18**

How can we engage in spiritual practices when our hearts are broken? It's hard NOT to have a broken heart, given all that is going on in our world. But being broken-hearted doesn't have to keep us from our connection with the Divine. Indeed, it can serve as an avenue toward greater empathy and presence. In our three chanting circle gatherings in November, Rabbi Daniel will share practices he learned at his recent retreat with Rabbi Shefa Gold, as well as some of his own, as explore navigating through these difficult times. And of course, we'll offer compassion and support to each other. The chanting circle will meet in person and online on November 4 and online-only on November 11 and 18. There is no chanting circle on November 25, in observance of the Thanksgiving weekend.

- **TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, National Mall, Washington, DC: 1:00pm – 3:00pm.**

Gates open at 10:00am. BE THERE, BE HEARD.

- **Yiddish: a Global Culture — Adult Ed Class on November 12 & 19, December 10 & 17; January 14 & 21 @ noon**

When we think of Yiddish, we often fall back on stereotypes — Fiddler on the Roof, life in Eastern European shtetls, matzah ball soup and corny jokes. But there is a whole world (literally!) of Yiddish culture that stereotypes ignore. Meeting at noon on the 2nd and 3rd Sundays in November, December, and January, this adult education class, open to all, will explore corners of the Yiddish world we rarely hear about -- not just great Yiddish phrases and jokes, but Yiddish communities in China and South America, early Yiddish feminists, great music, film clips and more. Taught by Rabbi Daniel and based on a new exhibit at the Yiddish Book Center, we will explore themes such as: Yiddishland: Transnational Yiddish; Expanding Horizons: Yiddish as a Gateway to New Worlds, New Lives; Women's Voices: Gender, Stereotypes, and the Struggle for Equality; The Hirshbein/Shumiatcher Trunk: The Steamer Trunk That Traveled the World; Music: Songs and Sounds of Synagogue, Street, and Second Avenue; and Press & Politics: Mass Newspapers and Mass Politics. The class will meet in person and on Zoom. In the late spring/early summer there will also be a trip, open to the whole community, up to the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst MA. If you are interested in taking part, please RSVP directly to Rabbi Daniel via an email to rabbidaniel@comcast.net or by calling the Temple Hesed office, 570-344-7201.

Religious School News

Our new school year has gotten off to a great start, as our students are diving into Hebrew lessons and celebrating holidays. Here are some pictures from our students getting ready for Sukkot.





To our readers:

Please pardon the delay in our compilation and distribution of this newsletter: the Messenger is currently undergoing a renovation in style and appearance. We would like to thank Rich Mates for his nearly 20-year devotion to the publication as Editor-in-Chief. As he passes the reins, we will use the opportunity to reevaluate the frequency, features and content of future issues. Our hope is to ensure we continue to provide relevant news and temple community connection in as timely and user-friendly a manner as possible. If you have any suggestions for changes or improvement, or would like to contribute to an upcoming issue, please contact Gary at HesedNews@gmail.com.

Our Leadership

2022-2023 Officers

President:	Cheryl Friedman
1st Vice President:	Jennifer Novak
2nd Vice President:	Jay Shechter
Treasurer:	Jeffrey Leventhal
Assistant Treasurer:	Josh Levine
Secretary:	Joan Davis
Assistant Secretary:	Donna Kurzweil

Board Members-9/1/22-8/31/25:

Susan Kalman	Randy Levine
Larry Milliken	

Board Members-9/1/23-8/31/26:

Susan Decker	Jane Kessler
Terry Luma	

Board Members-9/1/23-8/31/24:

Kerrie Gilbert	Judith Golden
Jane Knobel	

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.

To volunteer or donate, please contact Marlene Gianzanti, Temple Administrator at 570-344-7201. Major credit or debit cards accepted.

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