



April 2021

Community Chaplain

Chaplain Larry Batchlear is available for Jewish Life-cycle events and can be reached at 352-7191

Business Office

Larry Batchlear (806-355-0023) or Bob Blinderman (806-372-9401)

Looking for articles.

Have you read a good book lately? Or perhaps an inspirational reading or poem? Do you have a recipe you would like to share?

Temple B'nai Israel newsletter is published monthly. Submissions for the newsletter are due the 21st of the prior month. Send to:

bnaisraelamarillo@gmail.com

Attn. Mary Blinderman

We welcome your contributions to the newsletter.

Know someone interested in becoming a part of our community? New to town? Or looking to find a way to connect with Temple B'nai Israel? Contact any of our board members and we will be glad to assist you.

President's Message

Shalom chaverim!

I hope you had a blessed Passover Seder, and when you said, "Next year in Jerusalem," I hope you added "and next year in the Temple!" I am optimistic that will happen!

Last night, we said farewell to our friend DeLana Honaker. Rabbi Goldmann led a lovely "Zoom" memorial service for her. Friends paid tribute to a beautiful woman, and words like "warm," "loving," "hugs," and "kind" abounded, from many people. We will all miss this sweet person, who we were just beginning to know.

Since her ceremony, I am reflecting on what are the important things in our life? How will each of us want to be remembered? Where are our priorities?

If you have ever thought that material possessions are important, go to an estate sale. There you will find loads of "stuff" that was probably important to the deceased, now being sold to a stranger for a few dollars. It truly is an eye-opening experience!

Our legacy, as is DeLana's, should be held in our actions. We should be remembered by the good we have done, the relationships we have had, and the fond memories that others have of us.

I admit, after a hellacious pandemic snowmageddon year, relationships seem very far away right now, and we are all becoming less patient with...well...everything. But Spring breathes new life into the Earth, and to me. The grass is beginning to turn green, leaf buds are on the trees, and my favorite fruits are beginning to appear in the grocery stores. I am hearing about people planning trips, going to see grandchildren who they have not seen for a year. Life renewed!

Plans are being made for our Temple annual meeting, and for beginning to reopen the Temple and meet in person. Discussions also include options for rabbinical services for the upcoming year.

As you ponder the priorities in your life, I ask you to include your Jewish community as a priority. Soon we will begin to meet in person, and I want to see you! I ask you to participate and to get involved. It seems that every year, I hear about another Jewish congregation merging, folding, selling their building....it is just so sad. In the past year, we have lost several members who have moved away or passed away. We truly do need the help of every one of you to keep our precious Temple going. Contribute, participate, encourage others to become an active member.

I look forward to seeing you at the Temple very soon!

With love and gratitude,

Candy

Adult Education Classes

Adult Education Class meets on Sunday mornings at 10:30 Central Daylight Time. Please join the class discussion on GoToMeeting. If you need the link information to join the class, contact Bob at bobbli@arn.net

Shabbat Services

Please join us for “virtual” services this month. Services continue to be held on “GoToMeeting” at Temple B’nai Israel and on “Zoom” at Congregation Shaareth Israel in Lubbock.

Check your email weekly for Candy’s announcement on the “virtual” time and place for Shabbat services.

Let’s stay connected. Connecting virtually is safe and meaningful. We can enjoy Shabbat service, see each other and visit at the “virtual” onegs. All of us greatly miss in-person fellowship, and we look forward to a return to connecting safely at our Temple.

To receive an invitation to all services, please send an email to: bnaiisraelamarillo@gmail.com

Get Your Vaccine as Soon as You Can

By Dan Schneider

My paternal grandmother, Florence Fine Schneider, at the age of six, lost her mother, my great grandmother, Esther Brenner Fine (who was only 31 years old), to the Spanish flu, during the great influenza pandemic of 1918/1919. It’s a story she told me many times, particularly how she and her 10-year-old brother were placed on a train for the trip from Providence, Rhode Island to Denver, Colorado, to live with her aunt, because her father was unable to take care of the two young children by himself (she and her brother later returned to her father after he remarried.) I really wish I had thought to make a tape recording or video of her telling the story.

This little bit of my family history leads into what I want to talk about today: the Covid-19 vaccine.

Beginning Monday, March 29, Covid-19 vaccines will be available in Amarillo to all adults age 18 and older.

I know many in our congregation have already gotten the vaccine. For those of us that haven’t yet, I’d like to encourage you to get it.

Why does getting vaccinated make sense? Vaccines provide two types of protection.

- 1) direct protection to the recipient and
- 2) indirect protection to others by slowing transmission of the virus through the community.

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Every vaccine is like a speed bump slowing community transmission down. More speed bumps mean fewer cases, which means it's easier to bring this pandemic to an end and return to normal activities like holding Shabbat services in person at Temple B'nai Israel. Even if you're relatively young, in perfect health, and at low risk of severe consequences from the virus, getting vaccinated helps you help others by removing yourself from the chain of community transmission.

I'm looking forward to returning to in person services at Temple B'nai Israel. I can't predict when that will happen, but I know that the more of us who get vaccinated, the sooner that date will arrive.

Presently the vaccine provided to the public in Amarillo is the Moderna vaccine, which consists of a 1st dose, then a 2nd dose 4 weeks later. Most people have very mild flu-like side effects, or nothing at all. I personally had very mild flu type symptoms for about 24 hours after the first shot, and then some shoulder soreness for about 48 hours after the second shot. But I'd do it again without hesitation.

The City of Amarillo has been a leader in vaccine distribution and it's very streamlined and easy to do. Vaccines are offered at the Civic Center downtown and they're absolutely free. Look online for updated information at: <https://amarilloalerts.com/vaccine>

Once more, beginning Monday, March 29, Covid-19 vaccines will be available in Amarillo to all adults age 18 and older. So please, everyone, go get your vaccine as soon as you can. Looking forward to seeing you in person at Temple B'nai Israel!

Thanks!

Dan

Dr. Daniel Schneider is a pathologist who is associated with Amarillo Pathology Group in Amarillo

REFUAH SHELEMAH

The following people are in our thoughts and prayers:

Joan Altman
Andrew Alpar
John Alpar
Alan Alpar
Mike Hibbs
Joel Kaplan
Larry Katz

Carrie Delaney (Yael bat Avraham Avinu)
Bruce Kriegel
Mabel Knox
David Altman
Harriette Tallert
Neal Scott

Please offer prayers that they all have a full and speedy recovery.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to all our donors for your continued support! (as of March 25, 2021)

General Fund

In Support of Temple B'nai Israel

Anonymous

Anonymous

Dorrie Carskadon

Alex Rimmel Toombs

Victoria Trambley

Kyla Fournier

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

4/9 Olivia Rachel Yarvis

4/11 Aaron Pan

4/11 Jennifer Hathcoat

4/13 Ben Schachter

4/20 Mary Blinderman

4/20 Paige Lincenberg

4/21 Jason Baum

4/22 Jeff Duman

4/23 Candy Alpar

4/30 Alex Rimmel Toombs

April Anniversaries:

4/1 Janet Meller and Joel Kaplan

4/6 Lisa and Archie Hunnicutt

4/13 Jennifer and Chuck Hathcoat

4/27 Judy and Leslie Reese

Note:

If you would like to be included in the birthdays and anniversaries, please send an email to bnaiisraelamarillo@gmail.com Attn: Newsletter Editor

CONDOLENCES

We mourn the passing DeLana Honaker who died March 16, 2021. DeLana became a member of our congregational family in October 2020. Many of us were blessed to have gotten to know her over this past year. It is with deep sadness that her time with us was so short. *May her memory be a blessing.*



Every Day is Earth Day: Jewish Holidays and Environmental Justice

By Rabbi Stephen Lewis Fuchs

Since 1970, the United States has celebrated Earth Day every April.

By contrast, ancient Jewish celebrations throughout the year remind us of our responsibility to safeguard the fragile planet God has entrusted to our care. Almost all of our Jewish observances reflect environmental concerns.

The festival of Passover celebrates our liberation from bondage in Egypt, but its earliest roots lie in ancient spring planting festivals as the *karpas*, the greenery on our seder plate, reminds us. If we do not care sufficiently for our earth, the ground will no longer be able to receive seed and sprout vegetation.

Shavuot became, for our Sages, the day we received Torah on Mount Sinai. In the Torah itself, though, Shavuot celebrates the first summer fruits and the barley harvest. Both Shavuot and the harvest festival of Sukkot remind us that unless we take pains to ensure an enduring supply of clean water and air, the growth and harvest of nourishing food stuffs cannot continue.

Rosh HaShanah is the anniversary of the creation of the world and a strong reminder that God entrusted this Eden-like orb to our care with instructions to “till it and to preserve it.” (Genesis 2:15)

And Tu BiShvat, known as the “Birthday of the Trees,” has been our Jewish Earth Day since the time of the Mishnah at least 1,800 years ago.

When Tennessee Senator Albert Gore, Jr., began his campaign of environmental awareness (which led to his receiving the Nobel Prize for Peace in 2007), he asked me to prepare “a closing homily” for the first meeting of the initiative held in Nashville, the city where I then served

as rabbi. On that occasion, I adapted a venerable Hasidic story told in many different ways about a magnificent goat that lived long ago.

The goat had horns so long and beautiful that when he lifted his head, he could touch the stars, and they would sing the most beautiful melody that anyone had ever heard. One day, a man walking encountered the goat, and a brilliant idea jumped into his head: “I could make my wife a gorgeous jewelry box for her birthday from a piece of one of the goat’s horns.”

The man approached the goat and explained, “I want to make a jewelry box from just a small piece of one of your horns. It won’t hurt when I cut it off, and I’ll just take a small piece. You won’t even miss it!” The friendly goat lowered his head to accommodate the man’s request.

The jewelry box the man made was indeed beautiful, and his wife adored it. Proudly, she showed it to all of her friends who soon wanted one just like it. Before long people inundated the goat with requests to “cut off just a small piece” of one of his horns. Soon, of course, the goat could no longer reach the stars, and that most beautiful melody was forever silenced.

In the Passover story, Pharaoh’s advisors warned him before the plague of locusts ravaged the land: “Do you not yet know that Egypt is nearly destroyed.” (Exodus 10:7) That warning should ring out to us across the millennia. Do we not realize that our earth is nearly destroyed?

Although it is too late for the goat to make the stars sing, it is not too late for us to save our planet and vouchsafe clean water, clean air, sufficient food, and a beautiful earth for future generations.

Rabbi Stephen Lewis Fuchs is a former president of the World Union for Progressive Judaism and rabbi emeritus of Congregation Beth Israel in West Hartford, CT. He currently serves Bat Yam Temple of the Islands in Sanibel, FL. Rabbi Fuchs earned a D. Min in Biblical Interpretation from Vanderbilt Divinity School, which, in 2017, named him its “Distinguished Alumnus of the Year.”



Holocaust Remembrance Day

Yom HaShoah 2021/ 5781 יום השואה

April 7, 2021

“What does it mean to remember? It is to live in more than one world, to prevent the past from fading, and to call upon the future to illuminate it.” Elie Wiesel.

El Malei Rachamim (“God full of compassion”) is a prayer for the departed that asks for comfort and everlasting care of the deceased. It is recited at funeral services, but different versions exist for different moments. The following is a version for the Shoah (Holocaust):

Fully compassionate God on high:

To our six million brothers and sisters
murdered because they were Jews,
grant clear and certain rest with You
in the lofty heights of the sacred and pure
whose brightness shines like the very glow of heaven.

Source of mercy:

Forever enfold them in the embrace of Your wings;
secure their souls in eternity.

Adonai: they are Yours.

They will rest in peace.

Amen.

Upcoming Media Events

Spiritual Audacity: Abraham Joshua Heschel’s Story

By Harold Kasimow

Religious Action Center
of Reform Judaism

Martin Doblmeier’s inspiring new documentary *Spiritual Audacity: Abraham Joshua Heschel’s Story* is a long-overdue homage to one of the great spiritual teachers and activists of the 20th century.

Heschel taught that one can experience the reality of God and find a meaningful life by relating to the world with awe, wonder, and radical amazement.

The film explores Heschel’s active support of civil rights, advocacy for the rights of Soviet Jews, and religious opposition to the Vietnam War.

It was Heschel’s work on the prophets that led to his strong affinity with Martin Luther King, Jr. As Susannah Heschel tells it, her father was impressed with the Southern Baptist minister’s reverence for the Hebrew Bible. In Germany, pro-Nazi Christian leaders had wanted to exclude “the Old Testament” from Holy Scripture, whereas in the U.S., Dr. King made the Hebrew Bible – particularly the Exodus story and the Prophets – central to his message in advancing civil rights.

Heschel believed that King truly represented the spirit of the Hebrew prophets, and King described Heschel as “one of the truly great men of our day and age...indeed a truly great prophet.”

Martin Doblmeier’s 35th documentary film on subjects of religion, faith and spirituality features an outstanding cast of commentators, including Heschel’s daughter, Susannah, a specialist on her father’s thought. She offers a window on her father’s early days as well as the last ten years of his life. Additional Jewish commentators include Arnold Eisen, the former chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, where Heschel taught from 1945 until he died in 1972, and interfaith expert and author Rabbi A. James Rudin.

This film comes at a time when we are facing again many of the evils Heschel vigorously opposed – a time to remember his admonition: “In a free society, some are guilty, but all are responsible.”

Spiritual Audacity: Abraham Joshua Heschel’s Story will air on PBS stations May 5 for Jewish American Heritage Month. View the trailer at www.journeyfilms.com.

Harold Kasimow is the George A. Drake Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies at Grinnell College. He is the author of several books on Abraham Joshua Heschel, including Interfaith Activism: Abraham Joshua Heschel and Religious Diversity.

Weekly Parsha ~ April



Chol Ha Mo'ed Pesach

April 2, 2021

As the observance of Passover draws to an end, the Torah portion includes the dramatic recounting of the splitting of the sea in the poem known as “The Song at the Sea.” Written with great emotion, this poem attempts to convey the power of “God’s might hand.” So powerful is the imagery that verses of this poem have become part of the Jewish liturgy. The poem comes to a climatic finish with Miriam, the prophetess, picking up her timbrel and leading the women in dance.

Shemini

April 9, 2021

Aaron and his sons begin to officiate as Kohanim (priests); a fire issues forth from G-d to consume the offerings on the Altar and the Divine Presence comes to dwell in the Sanctuary. Aaron’s two elder sons, Nadav and Avihu, offer a “strange fire before G-d, which He commanded them not” and die before G-d. Aaron is silent in face of his tragedy. G-d commands the kosher laws, identifying the animal species permissible and forbidden for consumption.

Tazria/Metzora

April 16, 2021

The Parshahs of Tazria and Metzora continue the discussion of the laws of tumah v’taharah, ritual impurity and purity. Tzaraat

(often mistranslated as “leprosy”) is a supra-natural plague, which can afflict people as well as garments or homes. If white or pink patches appear on a person’s skin (dark pink or dark green in garments or homes), a kohen is summoned. Judging by various signs, such as an increase in size of the afflicted area after a seven-day quarantine, the kohen pronounces it tamei (impure) or tahor (pure). A person afflicted with tzaraat must dwell alone outside of the camp (or city) until he is healed. The afflicted area in a garment or home must be removed; if the tzaraat recurs, the entire garment or home must be destroyed. When the metzora (“leper”) heals, he or she is purified by the kohen with a special procedure involving two birds, spring water in an earthen vessel, a piece of cedar wood, a scarlet thread and a bundle of hyssop.

Acharaei – Kedoshim

April 23, 2021

Following the deaths of Nadav and Avihu, G-d warns against unauthorized entry “into the holy.” Only one person, the kohen gadol (“high priest”), may—but once a year, on Yom Kippur—enter the innermost chamber in the Sanctuary to offer the sacred ketoret to G-d. The Parshah of Acharei also warns against bringing korbanot (animal or meal offerings) anywhere but in the Holy Temple, forbids the consumption of blood, and details the laws prohibiting incest and other deviant sexual relations. The Parshah of Kedoshim begins with the statement: “You shall be holy, for I, the Lord your G-d, am holy.” This is followed by dozens of mitzvot (divine commandments) through which the Jew sanctifies him- or herself and relates to the holiness of G-d.

Emor

April 30, 2021

Laws regarding the lives and sacrifices of the priests are presented.

The set times of the Jewish calendar are named and described: the Sabbath, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and the Pilgrimage Festivals of Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot.

Laws dealing with profanity, murder, and the maiming of others are outlined.

Yahrzeits for April

*Sam Raffkind 4/2
Rose Weinstein 4/2
Eva Novick 4/2
Paul Gens 4/2
Kalman Kaplan 4/3
*Ethel Abrahamson 4/3
*Philip Klapman 4/4
Sam Solnick 4/5
*H.S. (Benny) Benjamin 4/7
*Alfred Cohen 4/7
* Hermine Ruth Lachman 4/7
*Hannah Bluhm 4/8
*Anna Latman 4/8
Harriet L. Chorney (26 Nisan) April 8, 2021
*Maurece Saxe 4/9
Lillian Saxe 4/9
Louis Pilver 4/9
Kathryn Shapiro 4/9
Leon Cizon 4/10
Irving Jacklin 4/10
Dr. Nathan Welcher 4/12
Marty Steiman (1 Iyar) April 13, 2021
Henry Rochmill 4/15
Carl Lessing 4/15
Ted Shapiro 4/15
*Blanche Levy 4/17
Esther Baer 4/17
*Bernard Jacob Weinberger 4/18
Isadore Weinstein 4/19
Betty Goldstein 4/20
*Morris Solomon 4/20
Harold B. Culley 4/21
*Ramon (Ray) Lloyd Ashley 4/23
*Ruth Siegel 4/23
Bertha Harellick
Rabbi Kurt Reach
Donald Paul Katz 4/24
Edmund Stern 4/26
Glenna Scott 4/27
*Otto Josef Baruch 4/29
*Benjamin Gimp Raffkind 4/30
*Janet Reach 4/30
Marjorie Paisley 4/30
Louis Cowen
Sara Replin
Mary Goodman
Gussie Newman
Marion Gerber
William Ruback
David Teller
Ralph Kramer
Sig Anisman

The “” indicates individuals whose names are on the Yahrzeit boards in the sanctuary.*

If any member would like to add a name to the monthly yahrzeit list, please send the name, date of yahrzeit and your relationship to BnailsraelAmarillo.org, Attn: Mary Blinderman. Thank you.